



2021 RECRUITING METRICS

Benchmark Data by Industry

INTRODUCTION

In CareerPlug's second annual Recruiting Metrics Report, we continue to analyze our hiring data to shed light on hiring metrics and trends for [small businesses](#) across various industries. Our team analyzed hiring activity in 2020 from **more than 12,000 companies** — covering more than **10 million applications**.

In this report, you will find analysis of data covering the hiring funnel from initial visit through hire, organized by industry.

This report will establish industry-level benchmarks for key hiring metrics, including:

- Average click and application rates
- Conversion rates from click to application, from application to interview, and from interview to hire
- The number of applicants typically needed to make one hire
- The average time it takes to contact applicants — and how long it typically takes to contact a hire
- The top sources for applicants and hires
- The times of the year that are most likely to produce the highest application rates

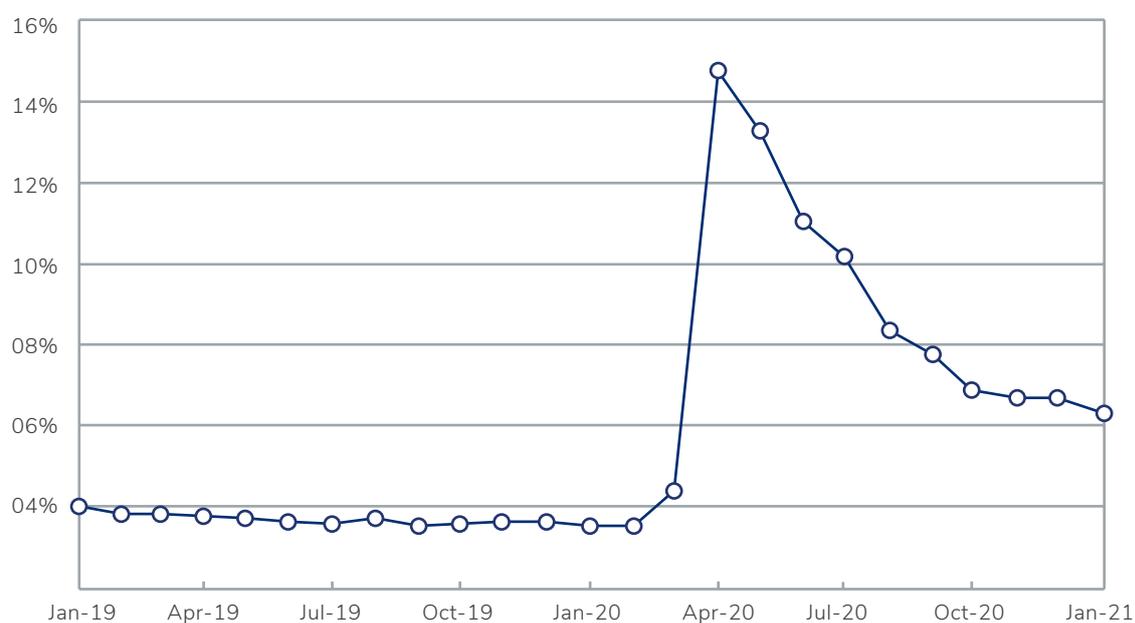
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The Impact of COVID-19 on Hiring

It's impossible to view 2020 as a normal year for employment. All the data we collected in 2020 should be viewed within the context of the COVID-19 job market. While the year began with a **low unemployment rate of 3.5%**, by April that figure had **soared to 14.7%** amid business shutdowns.

Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, January 2019 - January 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The summer months of June and July, which historically had been among the best months to post jobs, saw double-digit unemployment. Everything we knew to be conventionally true about hiring data had been complicated by the devastating effects of COVID-19.

Finally, while the year ended with a more favorable unemployment rate of 6.5%, it's still nearly double the rate of the previous year.

While we can't say that all of 2020's hiring data will be a true north star for 2021, we can say that **many trends we saw from companies that were hiring in 2020 will continue to remain relevant in the coming year**. For example, the most successful sources for high-quality applicants are still not the major job boards, but careers pages, custom sources, and referrals.

As always, our focus for this report will be to present data-driven advice on how [small businesses](#) can shape their hiring practices to become more effective so that they end up making the right hires.

Hiring Benchmark Metrics Defined



Views Per Job

How many views a job posting gets

Applicants Per Job

The number of applicants received divided by the number of jobs posted

Applicants Per Hire

How many applicants were received to make one hire

Average Days to Contact

The number of days it took to contact an applicant, starting from the minute the applicant applied

Average Days to Contact Hire

The number of days it took to contact an applicant who became a hire

Average Days to Hire

The number of days it took to hire an applicant, starting from the minute the applicant applied

Conversion Rate Metrics Defined



View-to-Applicant Conversion Rate

How many views of a job posting turn into applications



Applicant-to-Interview Conversion Rate

How many applications turn into interview invitations



Interview-to-Hire Conversion Rate

How many interview invitations turn into hires

What We Learned About Hiring in 2020

These were our most significant takeaways after analyzing the data.

1. How many job views convert to applicants?

Job view-to-applicant conversion rates vary widely between top performing industries and those that lag behind. Industries that perform well on this metric can see view-to-applicant rates of 11 - 12% and **all companies should be targeting at least a 10% conversion rate from job views to clicks.**

One thing to note is that conversion rates were down across all industries in 2020, but more profoundly in industries severely impacted by COVID-19, such as cleaning services, restaurant & food service, and hospitality, entertainment, & recreation. The previous year saw those industries holding the highest conversion rates, between 15-20%.

Views-to-applicant conversion

| INDUSTRY | VIEWS-TO-APPLICANT RATE |
|---|-------------------------|
| Automotive | 11% |
| Cleaning Services | 11% |
| Education & Child Care | 4% |
| Fitness | 5% |
| Healthcare | 6% |
| Home & Commercial Services | 6% |
| Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation | 7% |
| Personal Care | 6% |
| Restaurant & Food Service | 8% |
| Retail | 12% |

2. How many applicants convert to hires?

While there is variance across industries in the rate of applications that are invited to interview, the better indicator for a healthy overall applicant-to-hire ratio is the rate at which those [interview invitations](#) are turned into hires. **The top performing industries in our benchmarks need 69% fewer applicants to make a hire than the worst performing industries in our benchmark** — despite converting their applicants to interviews at similar rates. It's worth noting that this is on par with the previous year's numbers, so these are metrics that appear to be mostly unaffected by the pandemic.

Applicant-to-interview conversion

| INDUSTRY | APPLICANT-TO-INTERVIEW CONVERSION RATE |
|---|--|
| Automotive | 15% |
| Cleaning Services | 20% |
| Education & Child Care | 20% |
| Fitness | 9% |
| Healthcare | 19% |
| Home & Commercial Services | 17% |
| Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation | 16% |
| Personal Care | 14% |
| Restaurant & Food Service | 10% |
| Retail | 10% |

Interview-to-hire conversion

| INDUSTRY | INTERVIEW-TO-HIRE CONVERSION RATE |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Automotive | 7% |
| Cleaning Services | 2% |
| Education & Child Care | 8% |
| Fitness | 7% |
| Healthcare | 12% |
| Home & Commercial Services | 5% |
| Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation | 11% |
| Personal Care | 7% |
| Restaurant & Food Service | 17% |
| Retail | 12% |

Applicant-to-hire conversion

| INDUSTRY | APPLICANTS PER HIRE |
|---|---------------------|
| Automotive | 92 |
| Cleaning Services | 211 |
| Education & Child Care | 67 |
| Fitness | 177 |
| Healthcare | 42 |
| Home & Commercial Services | 122 |
| Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation | 56 |
| Personal Care | 107 |
| Restaurant & Food Service | 62 |
| Retail | 83 |

3. What are the best times of year to post jobs?

The metrics most affected by the pandemic are those that determine the best and worst months to post jobs. In 2019, normal seasonality was the biggest factor affecting success, with January and the summer months of June and July seeing the highest applicant flow.

However, in 2020, COVID-related shutdowns brought all typical seasonality to a grinding halt in March, skewing our hiring data with far more applications received in the pre-pandemic months of January and February than any other time of the year. So while we can say the data indicates that **January and February were the best months to post a job in 2020**, only time will tell if this remains the case.

When it came to determining the months that saw the fewest applicants, the data shows more signs of typical seasonality, with the holiday months of **November and December being the worst months to post a job**.



Best Months to Post Jobs

January and February



Worst Months to Post Jobs

November and December

4. Where are the best places to post jobs?

Job boards are the most common source for applicants, producing an average of **82% of applications** across every industry in our analysis. If absolute volume is your goal, [posting your job](#) to job boards is your best bet. But despite being the source of most applicants, **job boards do not produce hires at nearly the same rate as other sources.**

Applicant Hire Rates



1.3%

Job Boards

Job boards produced 82% of all applications but **less than half of the hires** in our analysis. Companies that rely solely on job boards are likely to find that the applicants they receive are less responsive and of lower quality than applicants generated through other means, including their own careers page, referrals, and custom links.



8.9%

Careers Page

In our analysis, an applicant who applied directly from a company careers page was **7 times more likely to be hired** than an applicant from a job board.



16.7%

Referrals

An applicant who applied from a referral was **13 times more likely to be hired** than an applicant from a job board.

Job Boards Produce Quantity, But Not Always Quality

The reasons for these stark differences in applicant-to-hire rates based on source may vary, but our experience shows us that applicants who apply from job boards are more likely to be sending out dozens of applications in short order, with less consideration for their qualifications or their interest in the specific job. An applicant who takes the time to research a role and apply directly through a company careers page is more likely to have considered their own fit for the role and the company, and an applicant who is referred to a job is much more likely to be excited about the position and to be a good match.

Hiring Data by Industry

The following sections of this report are analyses containing comprehensive hiring data for the following industries:



01

Automotive

02

Cleaning Services

03

Education & Child Care

04

Fitness

05

Healthcare

06

Home & Commercial Services

07

Hospitality, Entertainment,
& Recreation

08

Personal Care

09

Restaurant & Food Service

10

Retail

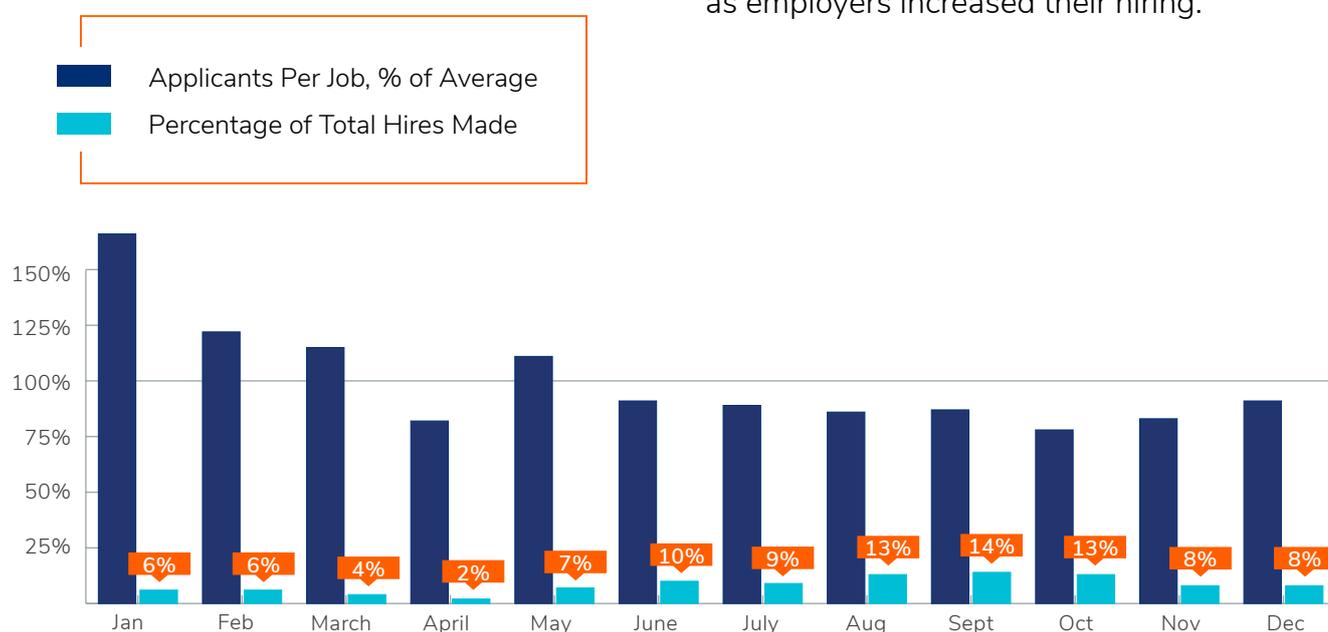
Automotive Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 261
- **Applicants Per Job:** 28
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 92
- **Average Days to Contact:** 4.76
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 5.75
- **Average Days to Hire:** 21.6

THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

As with all industries in our report, **January** and **February** saw the highest percentage of applicants. Interestingly, after a sharp dip in April that coincides with COVID-related shutdowns, applications were back up to above average in **May**. Applications dropped off again for the remainder of the year, even as employers increased their hiring.



APPLICANT SOURCES

While job boards produce 76% of applicants, they only produce 38% of hires. Compare that to custom links as a job source, which accounts for a similar share of 31% of hires, but only 2% of applicants. Similarly, the company careers page for an automotive company produces only 5% of applicants but 21% of hires.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 76% | 17% | 5% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 38% | 7% | 21% | 31% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | <1% | 4% | 24% | 12% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Automotive Industry 11%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Automotive Industry 15%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>4.76 days</p> <p>Automotive Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Automotive Industry 7%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ Employers and applicants were simply not on the same page in the automotive industry in 2020. This industry saw a **huge disparity between the number of jobs posted and applicant flow from August to October**. These were the months in which employers were making the most hires but doing so from the smallest applicant pool.
- ➔ Until the applicant flow normalizes, competition for talent could be high in the automotive industry in 2021. In a candidate's market, **businesses should focus on employer branding** to attract the highest quality candidates by marketing your business as a better place to work than your competitors.
- ➔ High view-to-applicant conversion rates mean that **your competition is writing compelling job postings** that persuade people to apply. Take the time to make sure your job postings are equally as enticing, giving applicants a sense of what they can expect from the job, your company culture, and the benefits offered.
- ➔ Knowing that employers in the automotive industry are quick to contact (at 4.76 days from the time of application), **make sure you're contacting your applicants quickly**. A great candidate won't be on the market for long in this industry.

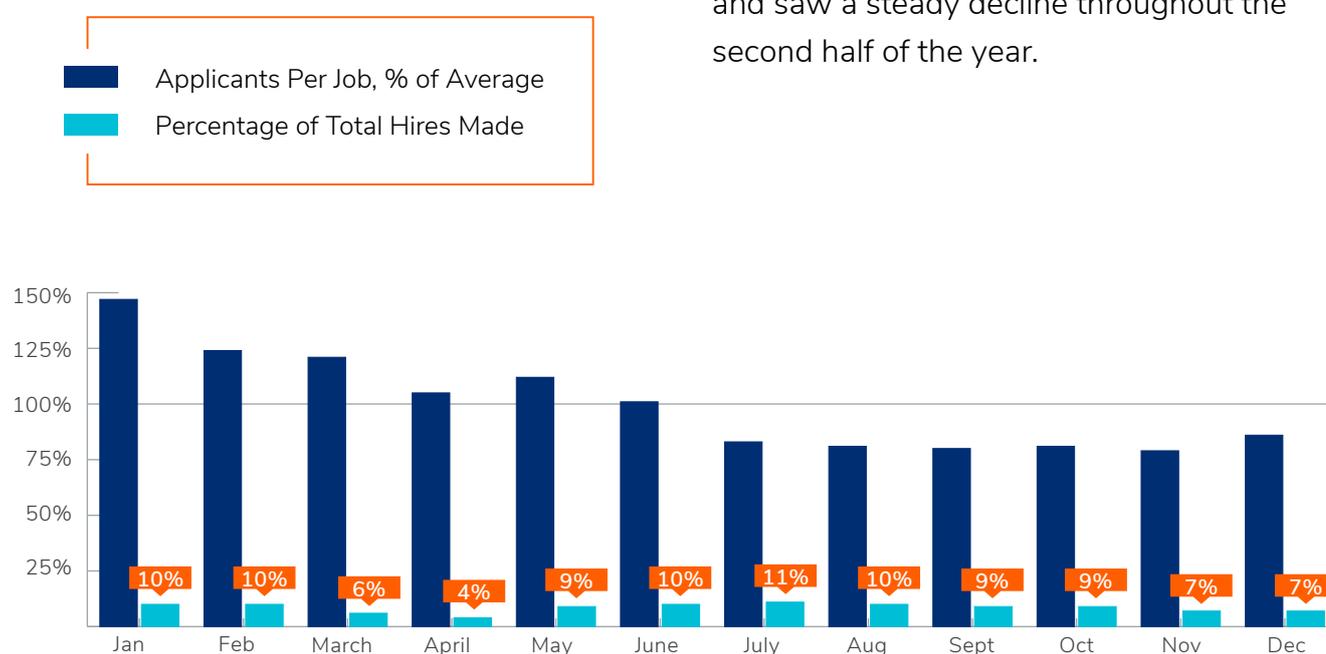
Cleaning Services Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 785
- **Applicants Per Job:** 83
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 211
- **Average Days to Contact:** 6.27
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 3.14
- **Average Days to Hire:** 19.85

THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

While the pre-COVID months of **January** and **February** saw the highest applicant volume, this industry actually fared much better in terms of applicant volume in the first six months of the year than other industries in our study. Then, beginning in July, applicant volume dropped dramatically and saw a steady decline throughout the second half of the year.



APPLICANT SOURCES

Employee referrals see tremendous success in the cleaning services industry. While referrals account for less than 1% of applicants overall, 20% of candidates who come from referrals convert to hires, dwarfing the success rate of job boards, which bring in the most applicants (81%) but convert only 1% of those candidates into hires.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 81% | 14% | 4% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 69% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | 1% | 2% | 8% | 20% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Cleaning Services Industry 11%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Cleaning Services Industry 20%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>6.27 days</p> <p>Cleaning Services Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Cleaning Services Industry 2%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

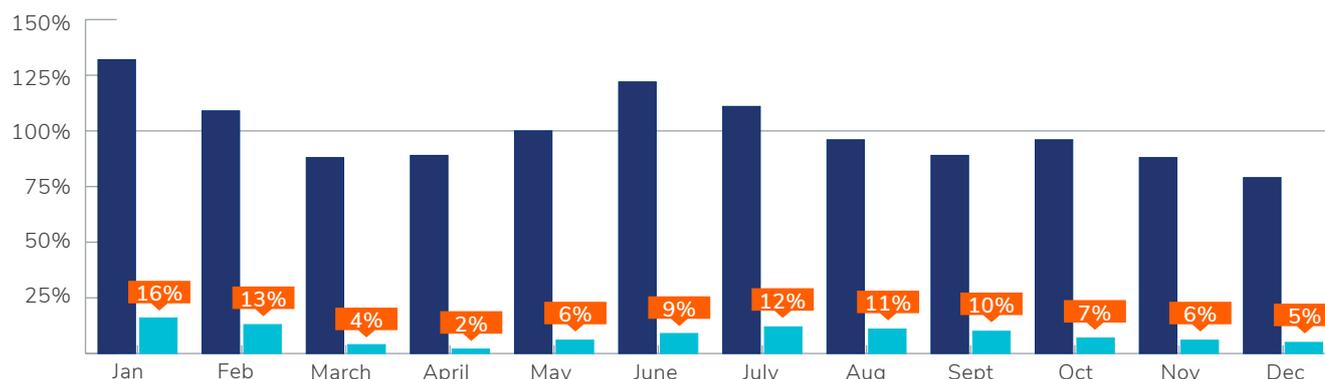
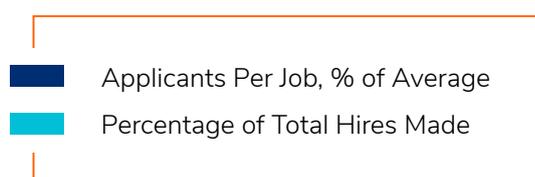
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ This industry saw low applicant volume in the second half of 2020. Until applicant flow increases, competition for talent could be high in 2021. **Cleaning businesses should focus on [employer branding](#)** to attract the highest quality candidates by marketing your business as a better place to work than your competitors.
- ➔ The average job posting in this industry receives many applicants, and hiring managers invite a high percentage of them to interview. However, very few of these interviews result in hires – at only 2%, this is the lowest interview-to-hire rate of all industries in our study. If you're looking to improve your results, consider investing in [interview scheduling tools](#) to **remind candidates of upcoming interviews** or **sending clear follow-up communication** after an applicant applies to keep them engaged throughout the hiring process.
- ➔ Cleaning service businesses are underutilizing an untapped source of high quality applicants – referrals. While referrals bring in less than 1% of applicants in this industry, they convert to hires at a staggering 20%. You can **increase the quality of your applicant pool by asking existing employees for referrals**.

Education & Childcare Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 842
- **Applicants Per Job:** 30
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 67
- **Average Days to Contact:** 9.21
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 4.41
- **Average Days to Hire:** 28.31



THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

Pre-pandemic **January** was the best month to find applicants. After in-person classroom operations stopped nationwide in the spring, the summer months of **June** and **July** saw another increase in applicants. This heightened applicant activity during the summer months is actually on par with our data from 2019, indicating that some degree of normal seasonality occurred in the education and childcare industry in 2020.

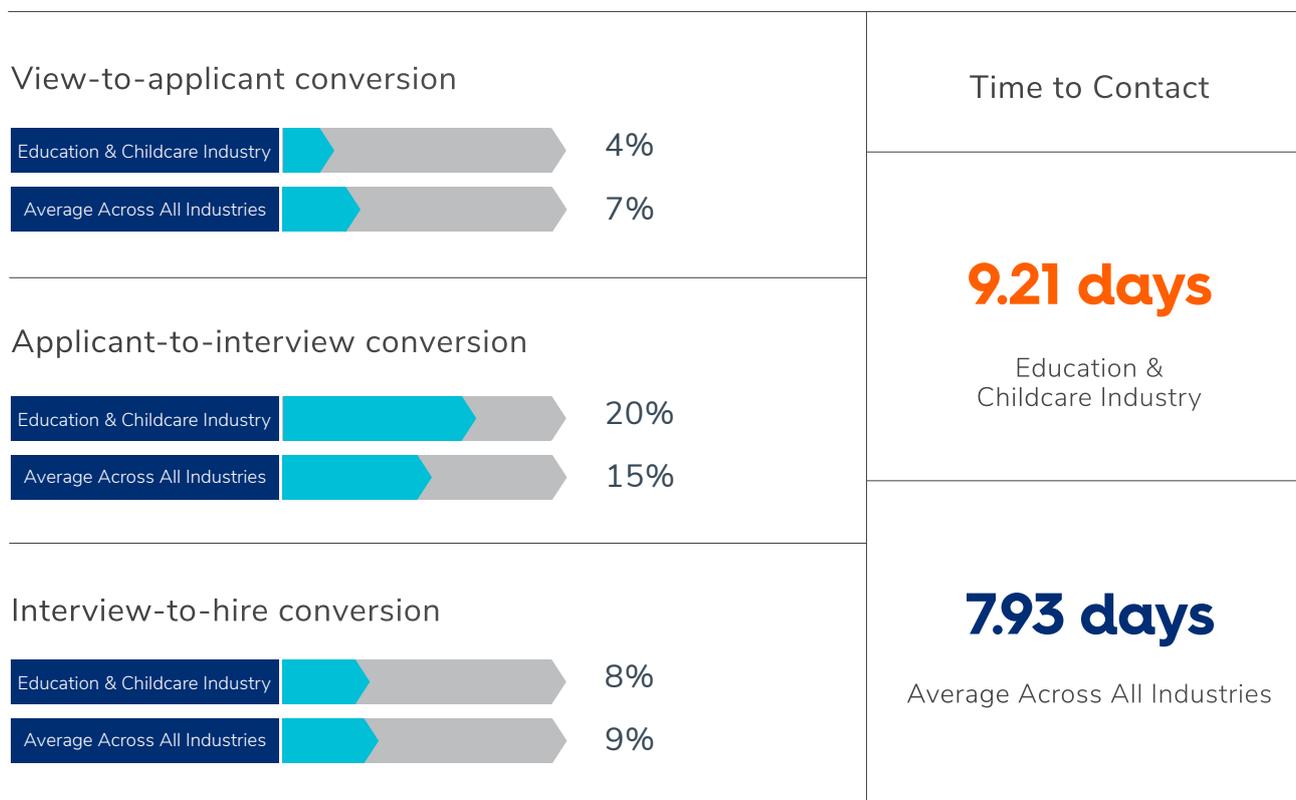
APPLICANT SOURCES

This industry finds job boards producing 79% of applicants, but those applicants convert to hires at only a 2% rate. Compare job boards to referrals, which account for less than 1% of applicants overall, but these applicants convert to hires 21% of the time. Similarly, custom links bring in only 1% of applicants, but they convert to hires 18% of the time.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 79% | 9% | 11% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 51% | 4% | 35% | 8% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 2% | 1% | 8% | 18% | 21% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS



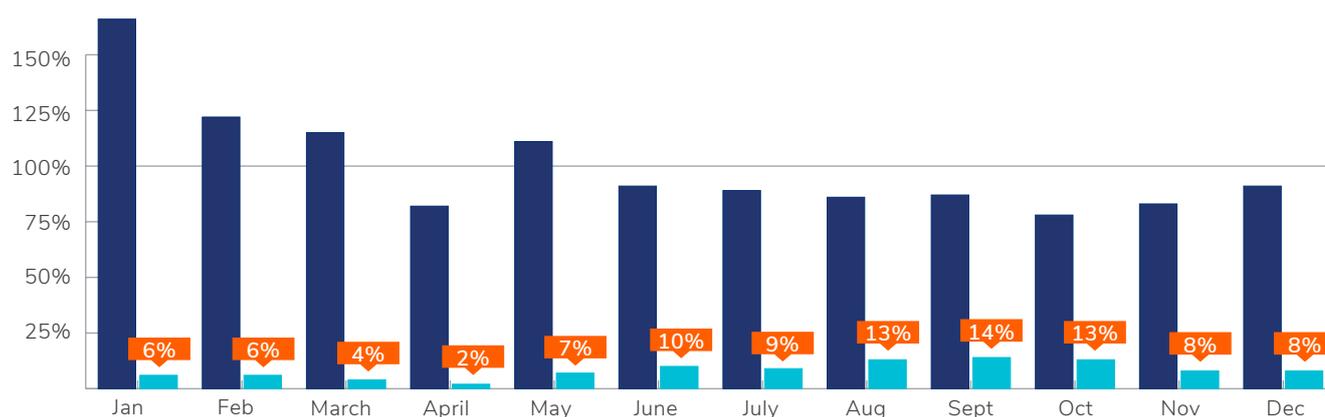
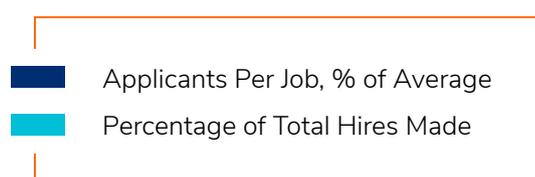
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ Because this industry has the lowest view-to-applicant conversion rate, we know that the candidate pool starts out very small. From this small group, applicants convert to interviews at the highest rate in our study. This means that companies in this industry are less selective about candidates they invite to interview, as the high applicant-to-interview rate does not carry over into a high interview-to-hire rate. You'll want to **broaden your applicant pool to ensure you're not picking from a limited selection of talent**. Our data finds that one consistent source of high quality applicants across all industries is **referrals** – a source being woefully underutilized in the education and child care industry. Ask your employees for referrals to get better results out of your next round of hiring.
- ➔ Because job boards result in so few hires, hiring managers in education and child care should **focus your efforts on improving your online presence in places other than job boards**. Since company careers pages yield 35% of hires, it's important to ensure that you have an attractive careers page that results in more applications from high quality talent. Similarly, custom links provide an effective source of hires, so make sure your jobs are posted in places like industry-specific job boards or local university job boards.

Fitness Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 1331
- **Applicants Per Job:** 64
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 177
- **Average Days to Contact:** 13.74
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 9.16
- **Average Days to Hire:** 34.62



THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

One of the industries hardest hit by COVID-related health concerns, the fitness industry saw the vast majority of applicants in the pre-pandemic months of **January** and **February**. Except for a brief spike in new applicants in **June**, fitness businesses that were hiring in 2020 were doing so from a small pool of applicants for most of the year.

APPLICANT SOURCES

Company careers pages are responsible for a whopping 43% of hires despite only bringing in 12% of applicants. Compare that to job boards, which bring in 83% of applicants, but convert to hires at a much lower rate, resulting in 51% of hires overall – not much more than careers pages. This is typical of the fitness industry, which saw careers pages bring in a staggering [74% of hires in 2019](#).

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 83% | 4% | 12% | <1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 51% | 1% | 43% | 4% | 1% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | <1% | 7% | 21% | 14% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Fitness Industry 5%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Fitness Industry 9%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>13.74 days</p> <p>Fitness Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Fitness Industry 7%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ Because the industry is trending below average in all key metrics, it will become important for fitness companies to invest time into improving their hiring processes. With only 5% of job views resulting in applicants, it may be a good idea to start by **ensuring your [job postings](#) are high quality**. Optimize postings with accurate job titles and keywords that resonate with job seekers in this industry.
- ➔ One explanation for the extraordinary careers page hire rate is that fitness is an industry with a huge overlap between customers and potential employees – the people who love coming to your gym are often the people who are best qualified and most interested in joining your team. **Focus your efforts on marketing your employment opportunities to your customers**. Investing in a [strong careers page](#) and making it visible and accessible to your customers is a great way to maximize this source. If it's hard for them to find your open positions, you might lose great potential candidates to a competitor.
- ➔ The fitness industry has the longest time-to-contact figure in our study. **Contact applicants sooner** so that you can [convert more of them into interviews](#) and have a larger talent pool to choose from the further you get down the hiring funnel.

Healthcare Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 516
- **Applicants Per Job:** 32
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 42
- **Average Days to Contact:** 9.33
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 4.34
- **Average Days to Hire:** 29.84

THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

Like most industries in our study, healthcare saw the most applicant activity at the beginning of the year (peaking in **January**). But unlike other industries, healthcare businesses enjoyed a greater applicant flow throughout the early pandemic months spanning the entire first half of the year. July saw a decline that continued through the second half of the year, with **December** being the worst month for applicant volume.



APPLICANT SOURCES

The clear winner for this industry is custom links. Health care companies find 36% of their hires from custom sources, which can include industry-specific job boards, local job boards, Craigslist, and more. While custom links bring in only 4% of applicants overall, they convert to hires at a very high 21%. Compare that to job boards, which bring in 77% of applicants, but convert them to hires at a rate of only 1%.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 77% | 13% | 6% | 4% | 1% |
| % of Hires | 40% | 8% | 13% | 36% | 4% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | 1% | 6% | 21% | 15% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Healthcare Industry 6%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Healthcare Industry 19%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>9.33 days</p> <p>Healthcare Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Healthcare Industry 12%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ Because we know that the highest quality candidates come from custom links, healthcare employers should take the time to **explore niche applicant sources**: industry-specific job boards, local and university job boards, Craigslist, and more. [CareerPlug](#) integrates with two major healthcare industry job boards – [myCNAjobs](#) and the [Home Care Association of America](#) – which means that with just one click, your jobs are automatically distributed where the best applicants are searching.
- ➔ The healthcare industry sees a below average view-to-applicant conversion rate, which means that job seekers are reading job postings, but aren't applying. **Make sure your job postings are compelling** and are updated to reflect COVID-19 safety protocols that will be implemented during the hiring process and in the workplace. For more advice on hiring in the healthcare industry, check out our in-depth article, [Home Care: A Guide to Recruiting Caregivers During COVID-19](#).

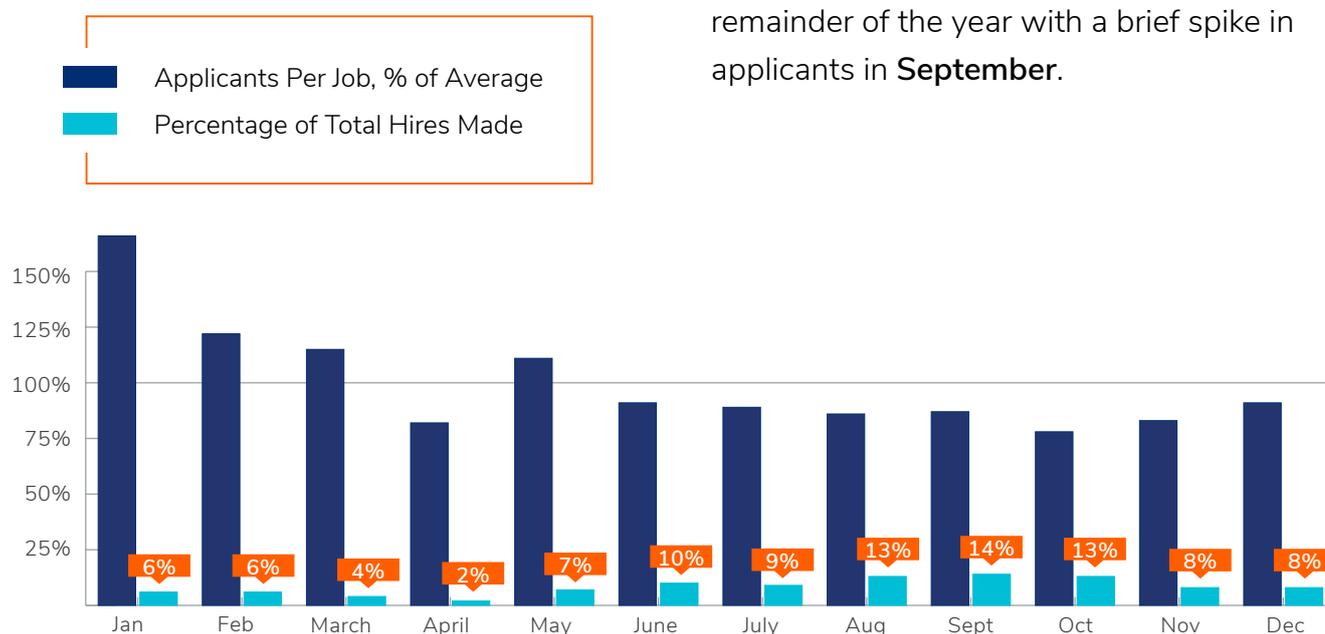
Home & Commercial Services Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 885
- **Applicants Per Job:** 53
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 122
- **Average Days to Contact:** 6.28
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 3.08
- **Average Days to Hire:** 22.69

THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

Like most industries in our analysis, home & commercial service employers saw the most applicants in **January** and **February**. But unlike other industries, the applicant flow remained steady through the early months of the pandemic, only beginning its decline in May. Applicant decline lasted throughout the remainder of the year with a brief spike in applicants in **September**.



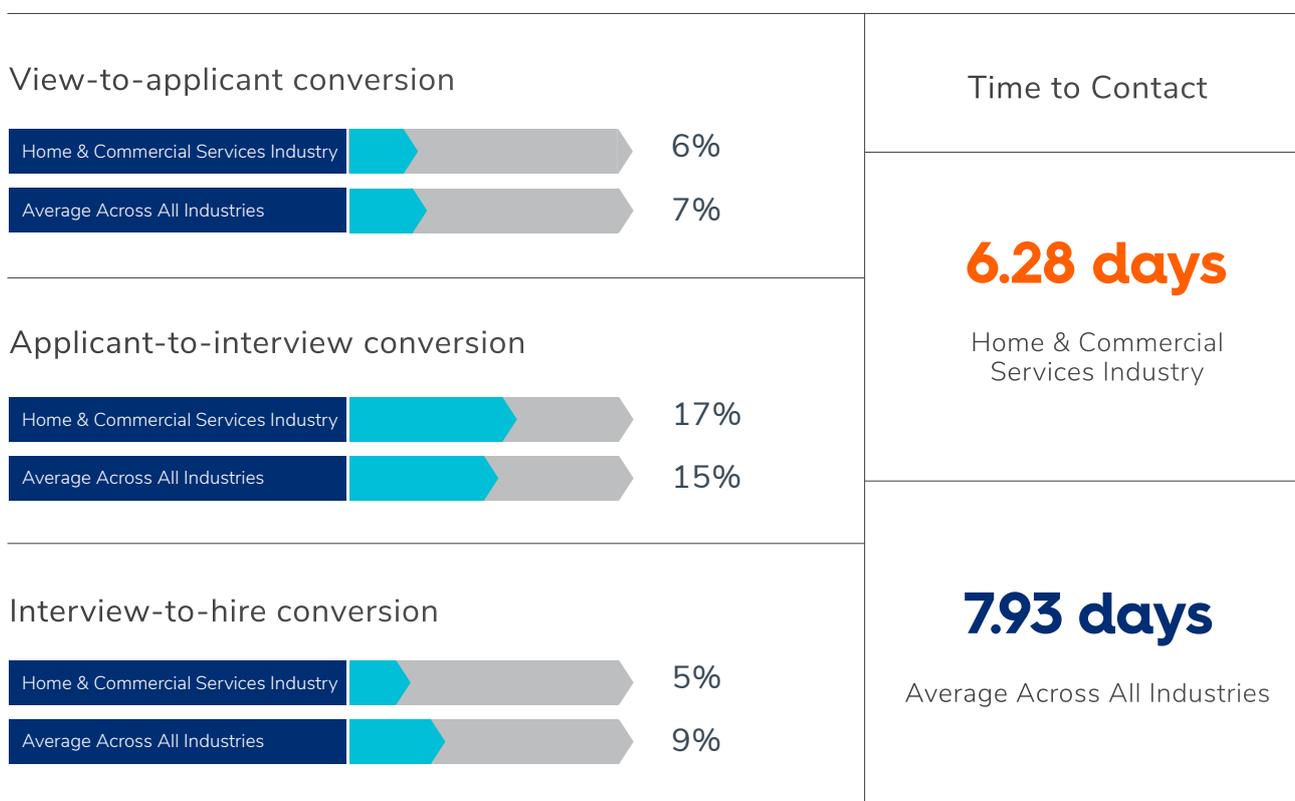
APPLICANT SOURCES

Job boards may bring the largest share of applicants at 83%, but they only convert to hires at a rate of 1%. For comparison, custom links bring in only 1% of applicants, but they convert to hires at a 20% rate. This means low quality applicants are coming from job boards and high quality applicants are coming from custom sources. Referrals also convert to hires at a very high rate (15%).

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 83% | 12% | 3% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 59% | 8% | 13% | 19% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | 1% | 5% | 20% | 15% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ One troubling trend in this industry is a high applicant-to-interview conversion rate (17%) that doesn't actually result in more hires. To the contrary, home & commercial services has one of the **lowest interview-to-hire conversion rates in our study, at 5%**.
- ➔ Be more selective about applicants you invite to interview. Interviewing 1 in every 6 applicants you receive is not advisable, especially when so few of those interviews result in hires. **Add pre-screen questions and assessments** earlier in your application process to better [screen candidates](#) before you invite them to interview.
- ➔ This industry suffers from a high rate of no-show interviews as candidates drop out of the process after applying or interviewing. You can help increase conversions by **reaching out to high quality applicants quickly** and **communicating why you are the best option for them**, since high competition for skilled labor and a [poor interview experience](#) can drive a low interview-to-hire rate.
- ➔ Many applicants come from job boards, but they don't result in a high number of hires. Focus on **marketing your jobs in places other than job boards**, such as careers pages, custom sources, and referrals – all sources that produce hires with more success than job boards.

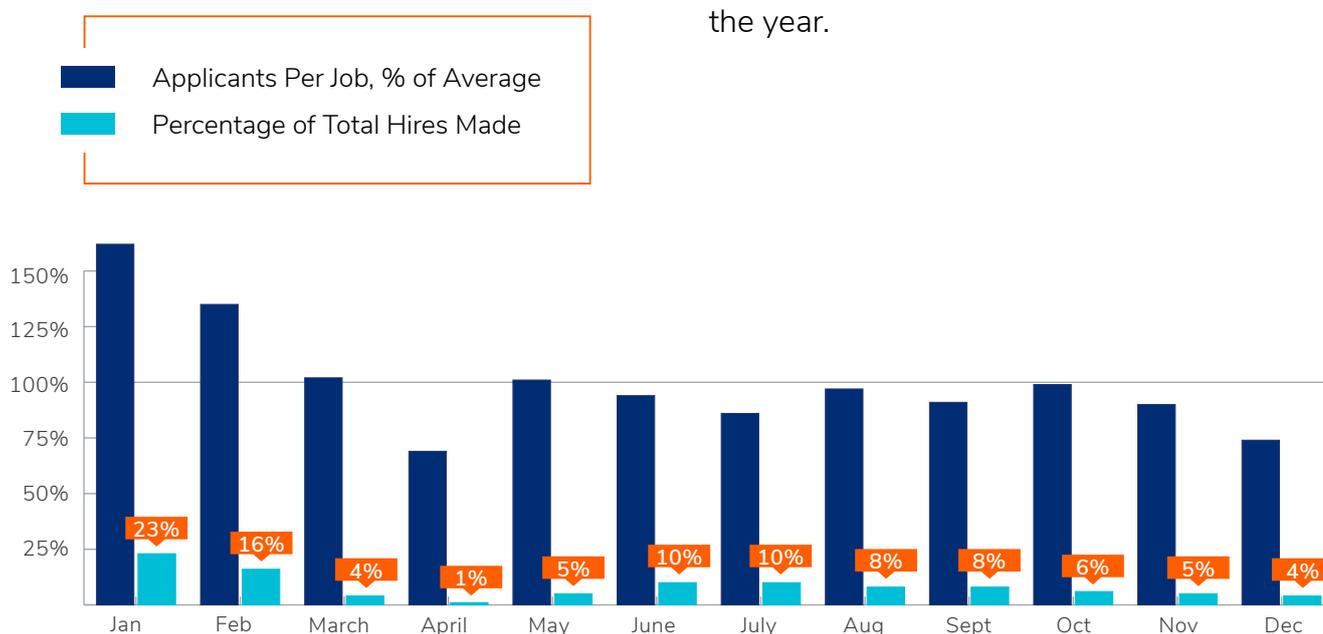
Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 783
- **Applicants Per Job:** 54
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 56
- **Average Days to Contact:** 5.28
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 5.08
- **Average Days to Hire:** 20.43

THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

This industry was among those most severely impacted by COVID-19 health and safety measures. Nearly a quarter of all hires in this industry came in **January**, which saw the highest applicant flow in the year. **April** was the worst month overall, in which employers made only 1% of their hires for the year.



APPLICANT SOURCES

Company careers pages have the highest ROI for this industry. Despite bringing in only 10% of applicants, careers pages account for 38% of all hires made, resulting in a high conversion rate of 18%. Custom links also have a high success rate, with 14% of hires made from only 3% of applicants. Job boards produce the most applicants, but their quality is low – resulting in less than half of all hires made.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 83% | 4% | 10% | 3% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 46% | 1% | 38% | 14% | 1% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 3% | 1% | 18% | 25% | 17% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p>  <p>Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation 7%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p>  <p>Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation 16%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>5.28 days</p> <p>Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p>  <p>Hospitality, Entertainment, & Recreation 11%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

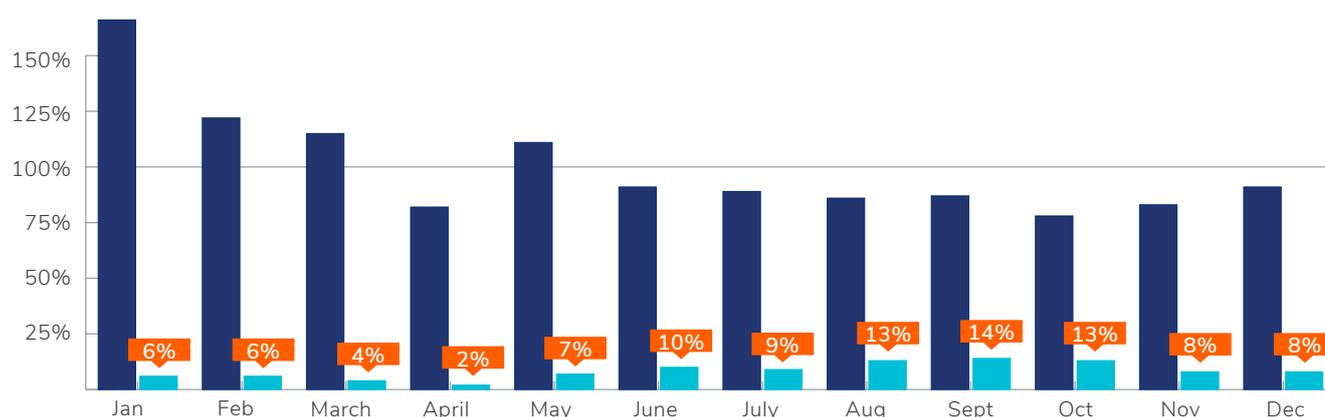
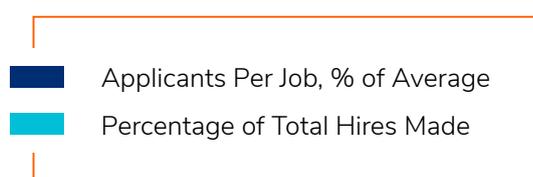
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ While the pandemic may have altered the job landscape in this industry, those businesses that were hiring were doing so well. Key metrics look strong in this industry, particularly in applicant-to-interview and interview-to-hire conversion rates. Hiring managers are also **quicker to contact applicants** than most industries – a practice that may be driving their high conversion rates.
- ➔ Focus on candidates who come from your biggest drivers of hires – [company careers pages](#) and links from custom sources. Don't expect much from job boards, but do **ask employees for referrals more often**, as referrals are an untapped source of high quality applicants that frequently convert to hires.
- ➔ Applicant flow was down in this industry throughout much of 2020, which means employers have a smaller talent pool from which to hire. In a candidate's market, **businesses should focus on employer branding** to attract the highest quality candidates by marketing your business as a better place to work than your competitors.

Personal Care Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 995
- **Applicants Per Job:** 56
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 107
- **Average Days to Contact:** 8.17
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 4.17
- **Average Days to Hire:** 25.47



THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

Interestingly, the personal care industry did not suffer from the same drastic declines in applicant flow as most other industries in our study. Except for the early pandemic months of March and April, applicant flow remained steady throughout much of the year. This industry even saw high applicant flows through the summer months.

January and **May** resulted in the highest application numbers.

APPLICANT SOURCES

Two sources produce the applicants with the highest rate of success for this industry: careers pages and custom links. While bringing in only 9% of applicants, careers pages account for 34% of all hires made, resulting in a conversion rate of 8%. Compare this to job boards, which bring in the vast majority of applicants (84%) but convert to hires at a rate of only 1%. Custom links (such as local and industry-specific job boards) are another underutilized applicant source, accounting for 1% of applicants who convert at a rate of 21%.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 84% | 7% | 9% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 58% | 2% | 34% | 6% | <1% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | 1% | 8% | 21% | 9% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Personal Care Industry 6%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Personal Care Industry 14%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>8.17 days</p> <p>Personal Care Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Personal Care Industry 7%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

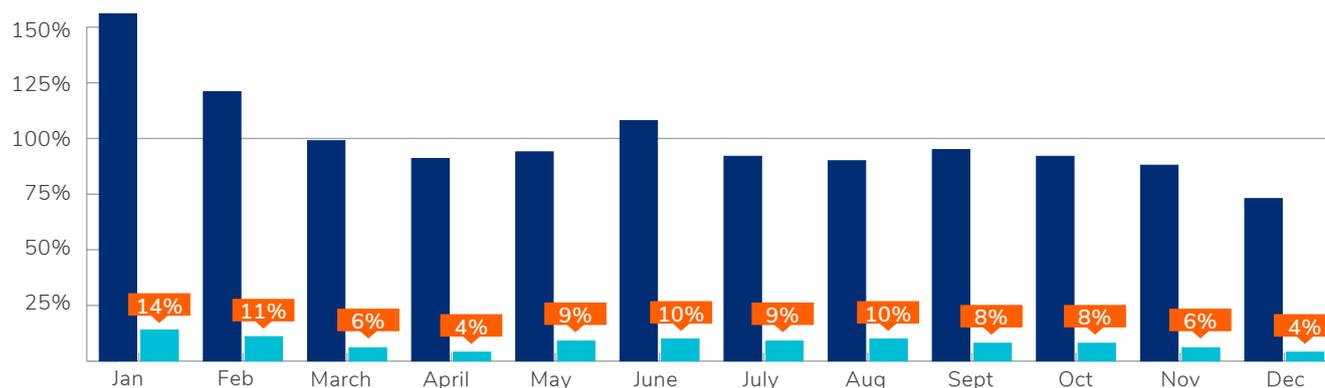
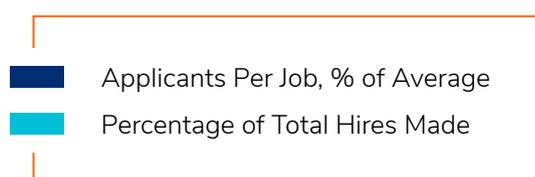
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ In some ways, our hiring data for the personal care industry might suggest that it was largely unaffected by the pandemic. What's interesting is that the **applicant flow closely matched the demand for jobs throughout the year**. The early pandemic months of March and April saw employers bring their hiring to a grinding halt – which coincided with applicant reduction. But as businesses began hiring again in May, applicant flow increased accordingly. This was one of the better industries for employers looking to hire from a robust talent pool in 2020.
- ➔ Applicants in this industry who apply through company careers pages are 8 times more likely to be hired than applicants who apply from job boards. In our experience, applicants who take the time to research a company on their careers page tend to be the most motivated candidates and are more selective about where they choose to apply. Personal care employers should **invest the effort into creating attractive and compelling [careers pages](#)** to entice these high-quality candidates to apply.

Restaurant & Food Service Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 857
- **Applicants Per Job:** 71
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 62
- **Average Days to Contact:** 9.39
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 4.64
- **Average Days to Hire:** 20.87



THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

With indoor dining curtailed throughout much of the year, the restaurant industry saw most applicant flow and jobs posted in **January** and **February**. The industry had another spike in **June** when warmer weather made it possible for restaurants to implement outdoor dining options. However, as weather cooled in November and December, new jobs and applicant flow dropped to their lowest numbers of the year.

APPLICANT SOURCES

Company careers pages have the highest ROI for the restaurant industry, bringing in 11% of applicants and resulting in 43% of hires overall – the highest of any industry in our study. Custom links also generate high quality applicants who convert to hires 30% of the time. Like all industries in our study, job boards bring quantity, but not quality, accounting for just 41% of hires from 80% of applicants – a success rate of only 2%.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 80% | 7% | 11% | 2% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 41% | 2% | 43% | 12% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 2% | 1% | 17% | 30% | 21% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>View-to-applicant conversion</p> <p>Restaurant & Food Service Industry 8%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 7%</p> | <p>Time to Contact</p> |
| <p>Applicant-to-interview conversion</p> <p>Restaurant & Food Service Industry 10%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 15%</p> | <p>9.39 days</p> <p>Restaurant & Food Service Industry</p> |
| <p>Interview-to-hire conversion</p> <p>Restaurant & Food Service Industry 17%</p> <p>Average Across All Industries 9%</p> | <p>7.93 days</p> <p>Average Across All Industries</p> |

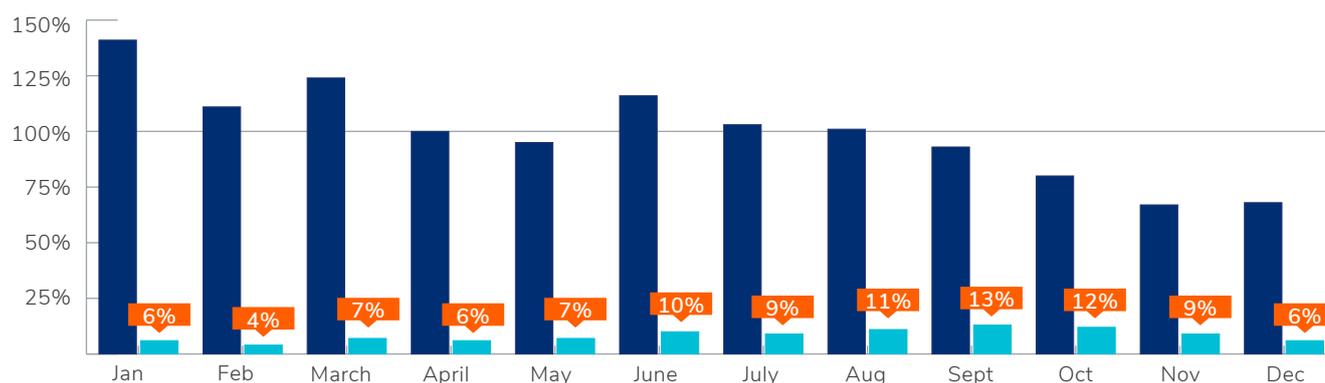
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ There is an opportunity in this industry to improve success in the middle of the hiring funnel. Restaurants are generally good at getting people to apply to job postings, but once in the hiring funnel, applicants convert to interviews at a lower-than-average rate. Businesses that struggle to convert applicants into interviews despite having a high volume of applicants are likely receiving unqualified applicants in the first place. The low success rate but high volume of job board applicants may be partially to blame. Focus your efforts on **pre-screening candidates** through questions and assessments early in the application process.
- ➔ In this industry, company careers pages are a key driver of hires. This isn't surprising, as this is an industry in which your customers and your potential employees have significant overlap, especially in quick-serve and fast-casual dining. People who know and love your brand will be motivated to apply to your business when they're on the job market. Make sure you're prepared to capture that inbound traffic by **having an accessible and attractive careers page** where your customers can easily find available jobs.

Retail Industry

BENCHMARK DATA

- **Views Per Job:** 507
- **Applicants Per Job:** 60
- **Applicants Per Hire:** 83
- **Average Days to Contact:** 6.87
- **Average Days to Contact Hire:** 4.58
- **Average Days to Hire:** 23.76



THE BEST TIME TO HIRE

Interestingly, our data indicates that retail businesses enjoyed a steady flow of applicants for the first three quarters of 2020 – a significant difference from many other industries in our study. **January through March** were the best months to hire. October through December were the worst months to hire. This seems to be the polar opposite of normal seasonality for this industry, which, in 2019, saw October through December as the best months to hire.

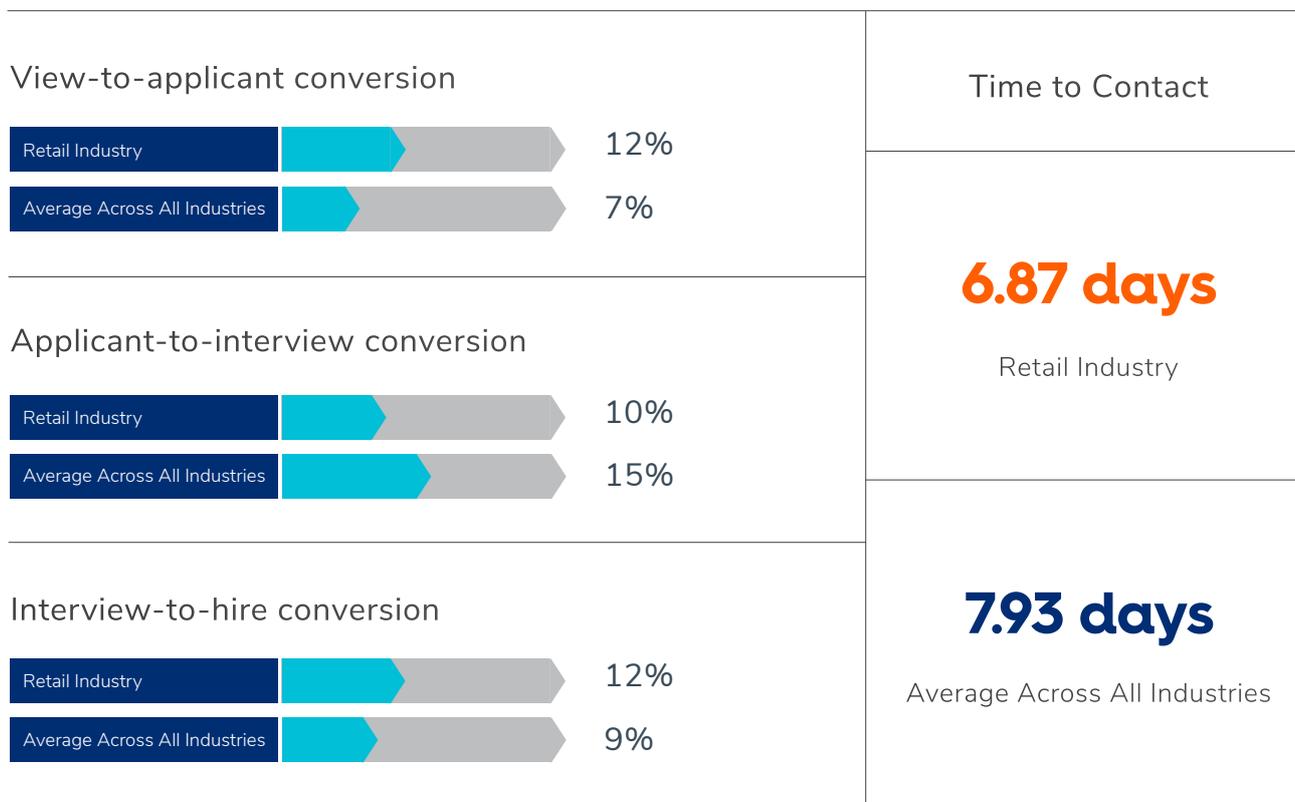
APPLICANT SOURCES

For retail, job boards produce quantity but not quality, bringing in 86% of applicants but only 40% of hires. Retail employers have better luck with careers pages, which account for 29% of hires from only 8% of applicants. Candidates who apply from custom links (such as university job boards, email marketing campaigns, and Craigslist) convert to hires at a staggering 51%.

| SOURCE | JOB BOARDS | SPONSORED JOB ADS | CAREERS PAGE | CUSTOM LINK* | REFERRAL |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| % of Applicants | 86% | 5% | 8% | 1% | <1% |
| % of Hires | 40% | 2% | 29% | 27% | 2% |
| % of Applicants Hired | 1% | 1% | 5% | 51% | 20% |

*Custom link: A source to which an employer manually shared a job posting (industry job board, local university, Craigslist, etc.)

KEY METRICS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ➔ Retail experiences a high view-to-applicant conversion but a low applicant-to-interview conversion. Businesses that struggle to convert applicants into interviews despite having a high volume of applicants are likely receiving unqualified applicants in the first place. The low success rate but high volume of job board applicants may be partially to blame. Focus your efforts on **pre-screening candidates through questions and assessments** early in the application process.
- ➔ The data shows that job boards aren't providing this industry with much success, so **focus your efforts on applicant sources other than job boards**. Make sure your [careers page](#) is engaging (e.g. showcase employee testimonials or create a brand employment video). Don't forget to explore custom sources like local and community job boards, university job boards, Craigslist, and email campaigns to your existing customers asking for employee referrals.

Preparing for the Future

With COVID-19 vaccines being deployed at a rapid pace in early 2021, business leaders remain optimistic that soon the world will begin to return to normal. While we transition back into a world with fewer health and safety restrictions, it remains uncertain when employment numbers will return to pre-COVID levels.

Still, there are steps businesses can take now to put themselves in a position to recruit top talent regardless of the state of the job market.

1. Build your employer brand.

The data shows that company careers pages are a hugely successful source of hires but an untapped source of applicants overall, with no industry reporting more than 12% and some reporting as low as 3%. Invest in creating an engaging and attractive [careers page](#) that showcases employee testimonials, your company culture, and your core values.

2. Create a job marketing strategy that doesn't rely on job boards.

Compile a list of custom sources like industry specific job boards, community message boards, local university job boards, and more. Compile another list of employees, friends, and colleagues in your personal network to whom you can reach out for referrals. Our data shows these sources produce the highest percentages of hires and yet the lowest percentages of applicants. Plan on targeting these sources before your next round of hiring. Hiring software like CareerPlug makes this process easier by allowing you to [post your jobs to multiple sources](#) and track which sources produce your best candidates.

3. Optimize your job postings sooner rather than later.

Ask yourself, "Would I want to apply for this job?" Research which job titles resonate best with job seekers in your industry. Remember: the best candidates will always have the freedom to be picky about where they choose to work. Make every [job description a high-quality one](#) so that when your ideal candidate reads it, they'll be compelled to apply to your business and not your competitors'.



ABOUT CAREERPLUG

CareerPlug is a software company on a mission to solve the #1 challenge of running a business: attracting and hiring the right people. More than 12,000 clients love working with us because we give them a proven playbook to make the right hires. And you don't need to be an HR pro to succeed, since our software is easy enough for anyone to use. We're so committed to Making Hiring Easier that we require every one of our employees to become a certified Hiring Expert so that they can contribute to our mission.

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