



RECRUITING METRICS

Benchmark Data by Industry

INTRODUCTION

In CareerPlug's fifth 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 2023 from **more than 60,000 small businesses** — covering more than **10 million job 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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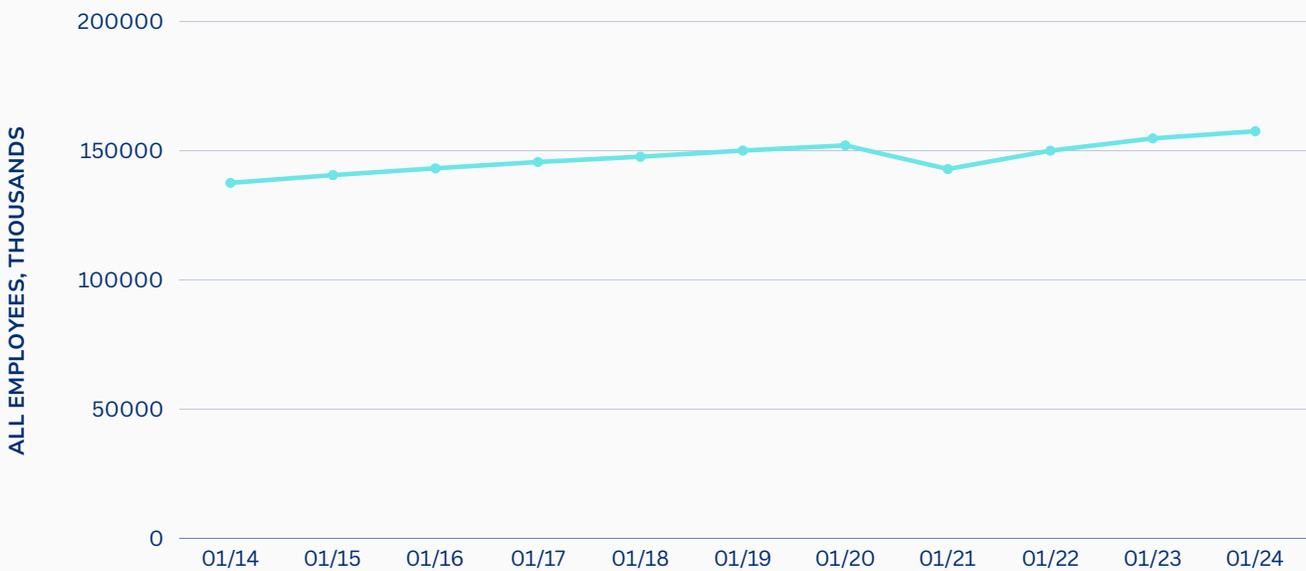
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THE LABOR MARKET OF 2023

Economists have witnessed an interesting dichotomy in recent years. Even though some signs have pointed to an impending recession, the labor market has held strong, and unemployment (typically a leading indicator of recession conditions) has remained at an all time low.

2023 was a great year for the labor market, with a total of 2.7 million jobs added and an average unemployment rate of 3.7%. It's predicted that things will slow down a bit in 2024, and that the unemployment rate will reach closer to 4%.



Job seekers have more options these days than ever before, and many employees are relishing in wage increases across the board. The increasing demands of job seekers and employees have pushed employers to make positive changes to their hiring processes and work environments to hire and retain their teams.

We hope that the hiring data in our latest Recruiting Metrics Report empowers small businesses with insights and advice on how they can better shape their hiring practices to make the right hires – even in a very competitive labor market.

BENCHMARK METRICS DEFINED

Hiring Benchmarks

» **Clicks Per Job**

How many views a job posting gets

» **Average Days to Contact**

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

» **Applicants Per Job**

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

» **Average Days to Contact Hire**

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

» **Applicants Per Hire**

How many applicants were received to make one hire

» **Average Days to Hire**

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

Conversion Benchmarks



Click-to-Apply Conversion Rate

How many views of an job posting turn into applications



Applicant-to-Interview Conversion Rate

How many applications turn into interview invitations



Interview-to-Hire Conversion Rate

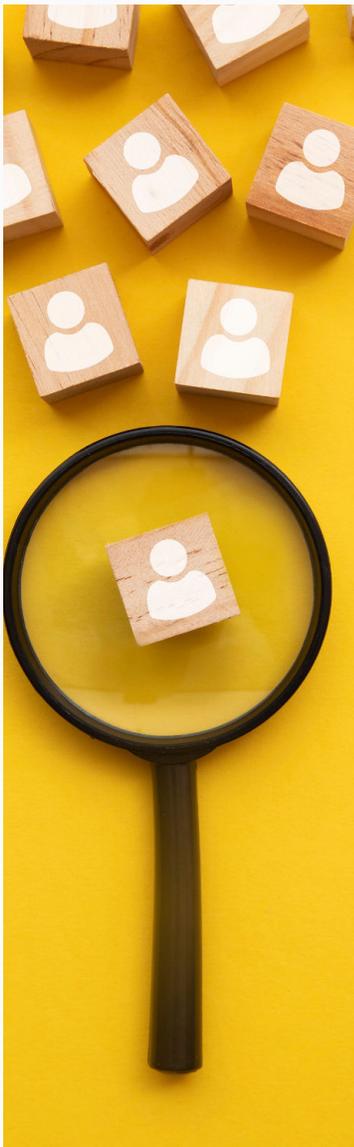
How many interview invitations turn into hires

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT HIRING IN 2023

In analyzing data, we found the most significant takeaways are the answers to the following questions:

How many job views convert to applicants?

With the influx of new jobs created, applicants had plenty of options to choose from. This means that in 2023, the **click-to-apply conversion rate averaged 5% across all industries**. This is up slightly from last year’s average of 3%, which means that employers are converting more job seekers to applicants.



Industry	Click-to-apply rate
Automotive	7.3%
Cleaning Services	3.4%
Education & Child Care	2.7%
Fitness	2.5%
Healthcare	3.8%
Home & Commercial Services	3.2%
Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation	7.3%
Personal Care	3.5%
Restaurant & Food Service	6.8%
Retail	5.3%

How many applicants convert to hires?

Many employers want to know how many applicants it takes to make one hire. But that’s a tricky question to answer without looking at a few other variables:



The applicant-to-interview conversion rate



The interview-to-hire conversion rate

Employers in our study received an average of **69 applicants per hire made**. When we examine the hiring funnel by stage, we see that employers invited an average of just **2% of applicants to interview** for their open roles, but were far more efficient later in the hiring process, converting **36% of interviews to hires**.

These figures vary widely based on the industry and we’ll provide a detailed analysis of each industry’s benchmarks later in this report.



Applicant-to-interview conversion

Industry	Applicant-to-interview conversion rate
Automotive	1.4%
Cleaning Services	2.1%
Education & Child Care	4.9%
Fitness	1.7%
Healthcare	2.6%
Home & Commercial Services	2%
Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation	3.7%
Personal Care	2.2%
Restaurant & Food Service	3%
Retail	2%

Interview-to-hire conversion

Industry	Conversion Rate
Automotive	33%
Cleaning Services	20%
Education & Child Care	38%
Fitness	49%
Healthcare	39%
Home & Commercial Services	23%
Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation	35%
Personal Care	41%
Restaurant & Food Service	41%
Retail	46%

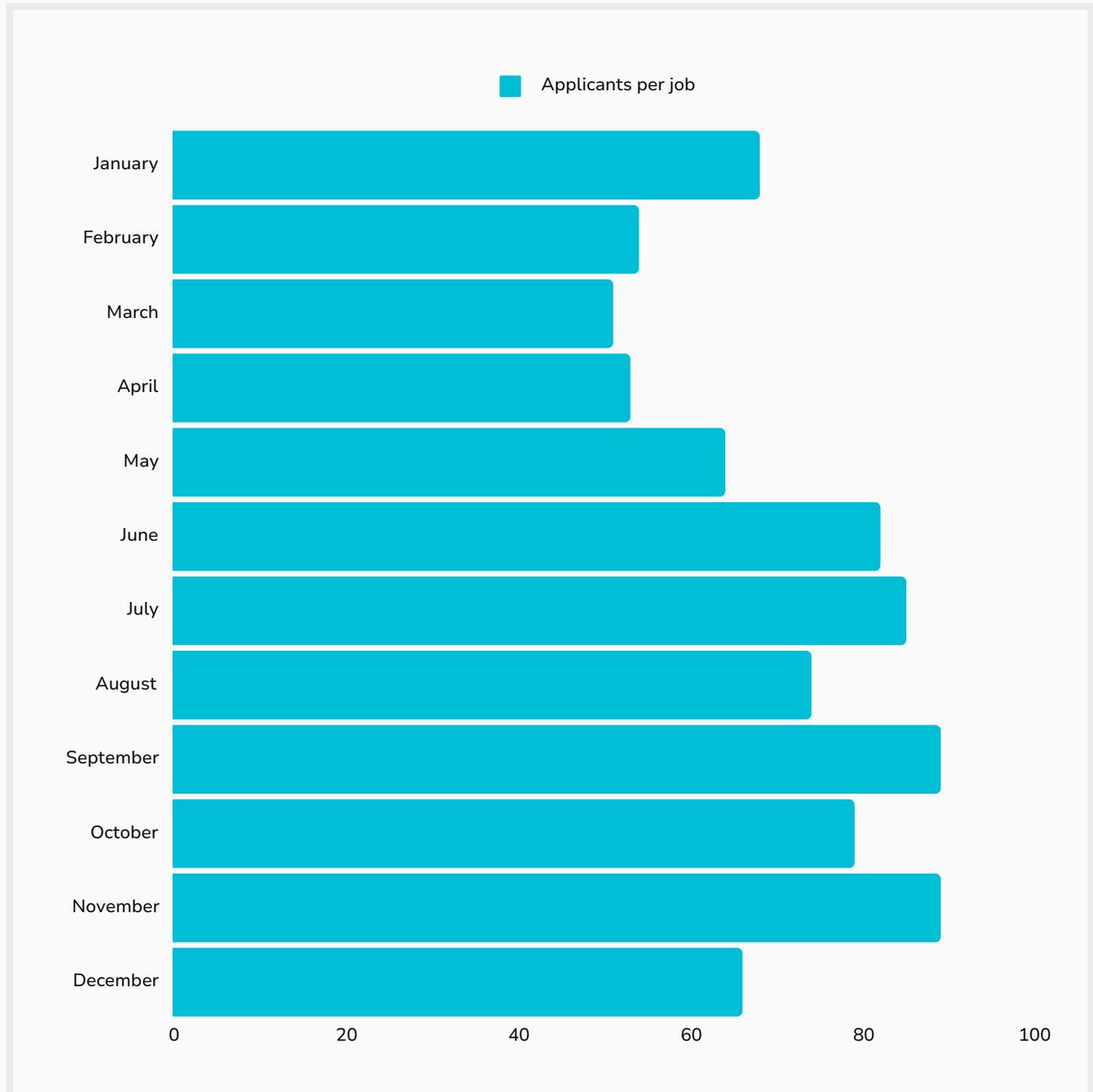
Applicant-to-hire conversion

Industry	Applicants Per Hire
Automotive	212
Cleaning Services	233
Education & Child Care	53
Fitness	123
Healthcare	99
Home & Commercial Services	225
Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation	77
Personal Care	110
Restaurant & Food Service	162
Retail	116



What are the best times of year to post jobs?

We saw a fairly steady rate of applicants month over month. As usual, the first half of the year was a little slower with applicant counts averaging in the 50s and 60s. June to November saw the most applicants, with a sizable dip in December.



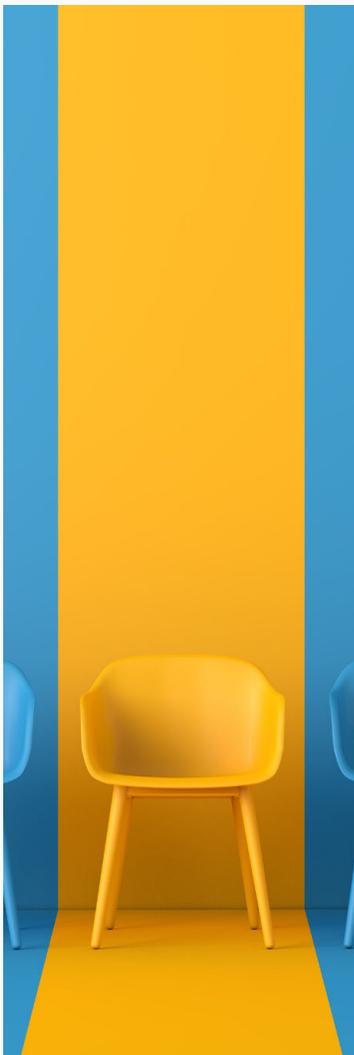
**Best months to post in 2023:
September or November**



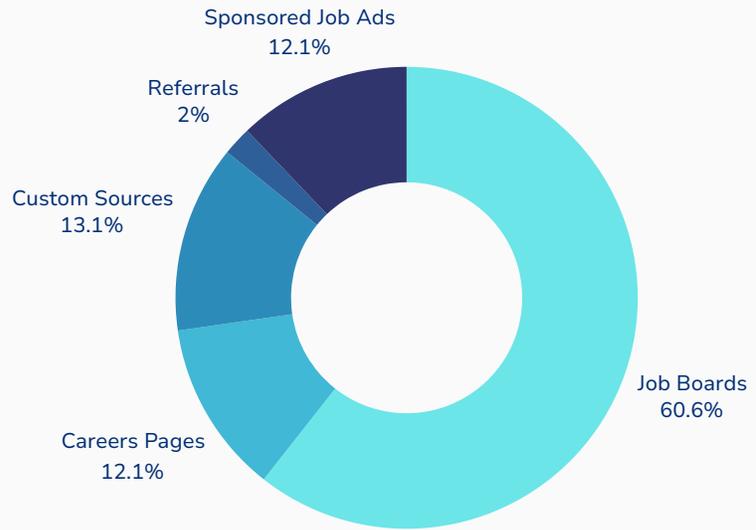
**Worst month to post in 2023:
March**

Where are the best places to post jobs?

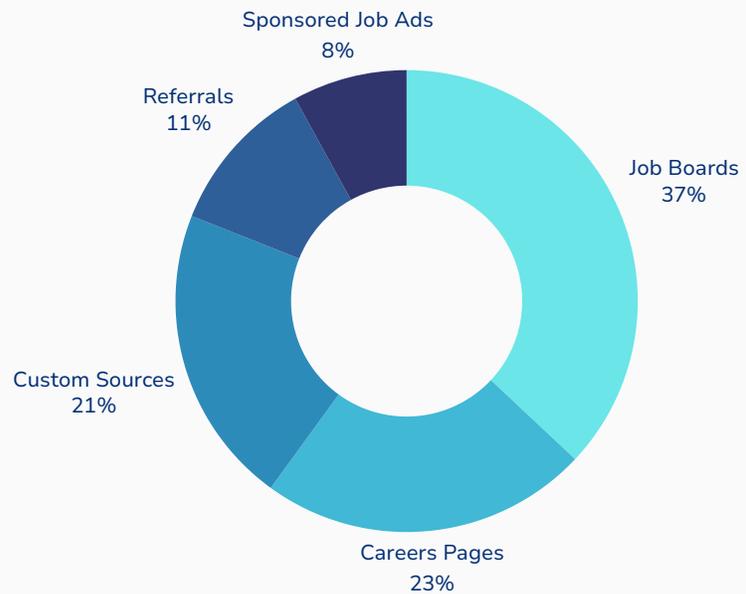
Job boards are the most common source for applicants, producing an average of **60% of applications** across all industries in our analysis. If absolute volume is your goal, [posting your job](#) to job boards is your best bet. But despite being the source of most applicants, **job boards do not produce hires at nearly the same rate as other sources.**



Applicants by source



Hires by source



Applicant Sources Explained



Job Boards

Job boards produced 60% of all applications **but only 37% of 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.



Careers Page

Careers pages bring in just 12% of applicants, but 23% of hires, meaning that applicants who apply directly from a company careers page are **4 times more likely to be hired** than those from job boards.



Custom Sources

These are sources in which an employer manually shares a job posting (industry-specific job boards, local and niche job boards, Craigslist, etc.) Custom source applicants are **3 times as likely to be hired** than those from a job board, likely because they target an employer's ideal applicants.



Referrals

Referrals account for just 2% of applicants, but 11% of hires, meaning they're **11 times more likely to be hired** than applicants from a job board.



Sponsored Job Ads

While sponsored job ads bring in 12% of applicants, they account for the lowest percentage of hires at only 8%.

Job Boards Produce Quantity, But Not Always Quality

The reasons for these stark differences in applicant-to-hire rates may vary, but our experience shows us that applicants who apply from job boards are more likely to be sending out many applications in short order, with less consideration for their qualifications for the role or their interest in the specific job.

By comparison, an applicant who takes the time to research a role and apply directly through a company careers page is more likely to have spent time considering their own fit for the role and the company. Likewise, an applicant who is referred to a job is much more likely to be familiar and engaged with your employer brand. And while custom sources vary among industries, employers that use them consistently find high-quality candidates they may not have found on the major job boards.

HIRING DATA BY INDUSTRY



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

Automotive

Cleaning Services

Education & Child Care

Fitness

Healthcare

Home & Commercial Services

**Hospitality, Entertainment,
& Recreation**

Personal Care

Restaurant & Food Service

Retail



AUTOMOTIVE

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	730
Applicants Per Job	54
Applicants Per Hire	212
Average Days to Contact	4.1
Average Days to Contact Hire	2.59
Average Days to Hire	17.4

The Best Time to Hire

Applicant volume rose during the summer months, and stayed pretty strong throughout the rest of the year. Automotive businesses did a lot of their hiring during the middle of the year when applicant volume was high. There was also a significant increase in applicants in September and November, but hiring didn't coincide as closely.



Applicant Sources

Job boards produce 66% of applicants and 52% of hires, which is certainly significant for employers. But compare that to sources that bring in fewer applicants, but result in hires at an outsized rate – like company careers pages, which account for only 5% of applicants, but 13% of hires. Referrals also bring in 1% of applicants, but 11% of hires, making an applicant from a referral 3x more likely to become a hire than an applicant from a job board.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	66%	14%	5%	14%	1%
Percentage of Hires	52%	7%	13%	17%	11%

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

Key Metrics	Automotive Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	7.3%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	1.4%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	33%	36%
Time to contact	4 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » Employers in the automotive industry have a lower than average 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. Focus your efforts on **pre-screening candidates through questions and assessments** early in the application process.
- » Automotive employers found success in hiring outside the major job boards (e.g. Indeed, LinkedIn, etc.) by recruiting heavily from **employee referrals** and posting their jobs to **custom sources**, such as Craigslist and sending referral email campaigns to their existing customer base.
- » Company **careers pages** have proven to be a great source of high-quality applicants in this industry. **Automotive businesses should focus on employer branding** on their careers pages to attract candidates by giving them a sense of what they can expect from the job, your company culture, and why your business is a great place to work.

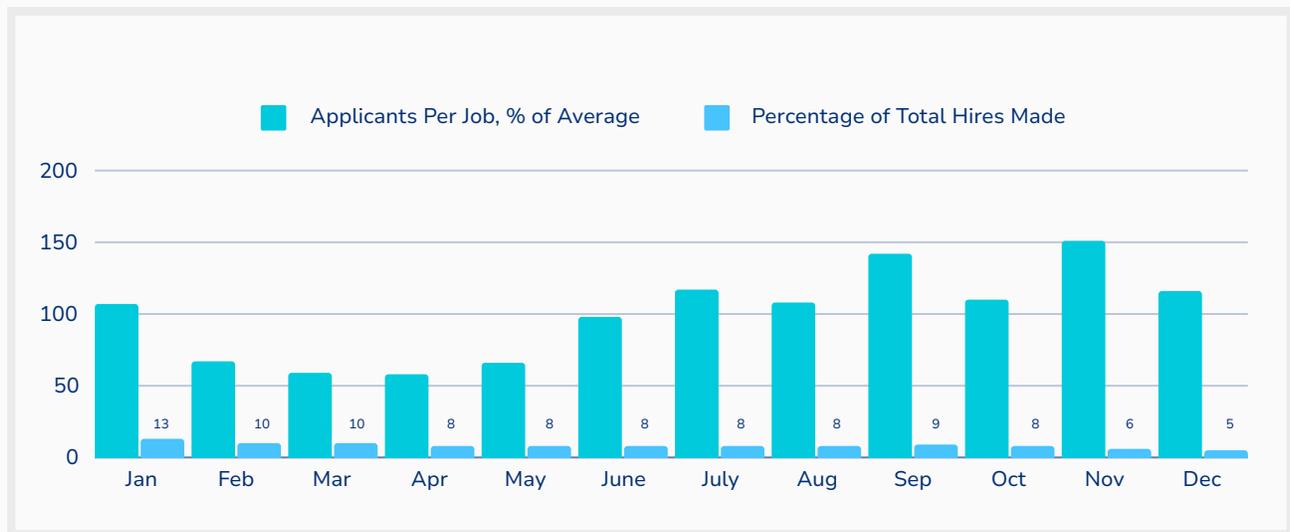
CLEANING SERVICES

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	2753
Applicants Per Job	93
Applicants Per Hire	233
Average Days to Contact	4
Average Days to Contact Hire	2.3
Average Days to Hire	16.2

The Best Time to Hire

Job postings in the cleaning services industry received the highest number of applicants in November, but applicant volume ebbed and flowed overall with the most significant dips February through May. Surprisingly, some of the months with the least amount of applicants overlapped with when cleaning service employers made most of their hires, January, February, and March.



Applicant Sources

Job boards produce 66% of applicants and 52% of hires, which is certainly significant for employers. But compare that to sources that bring in fewer applicants, but result in hires at an outsized rate – like company careers pages, which account for only 5% of applicants, but 13% of hires. Referrals also bring in 1% of applicants, but 11% of hires, making an applicant from a referral 3x more likely to become a hire than an applicant from a job board.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	58%	10%	19%	10%	2%
Percentage of Hires	46%	10%	14%	22%	8%

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

Key Metrics	Cleaning Services Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	3.4%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	2.1%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	20%	36%
Time to contact	4 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » The cleaning services industry's click-to-apply rate is below average. Employers in this industry should make an effort to improve job descriptions to encourage more applicants. We recommend **including compensation and benefits information early in the job posting**, and giving job seekers as much information about the role as possible to help them align themselves with the position.
- » A 20% interview-to-hire conversion rate is one of the lowest in our study. Cleaning services employers should **focus on evaluating candidates more thoroughly earlier in the hiring process** – through pre-screen questions, phone screens, or assessments – so that you're only inviting qualified candidates to interview. An [applicant tracking system](#) like CareerPlug can automate this kind of top-of-funnel candidate screening for you.
- » Custom sources have proven to be a highly successful recruiting method for this industry. Employers found success posting on local job boards and Craigslist, but the most effective custom source of all was **referral emails to customers**. Cleaning services businesses should consider emailing their customers to let them know when they're hiring, as it's proven to be a great source of high-quality applicants in this industry.

EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	1958
Applicants Per Job	54
Average Days to Contact	4
Average Days to Contact Hire	2.6
Average Days to Hire	20.5

The Best Time to Hire

Education and childcare hiring in 2023 reflected normal seasonality for this industry. The end of the school year saw applicant volume skyrocket in May and remain high through September. Employers hired at more steady rates throughout the year, and did the least amount of hiring in Q4.



Applicant Sources

This industry has more success with **sponsored job ads** on major job boards (like Indeed and ZipRecruiter) than any other industry in our study. At the same time, the organic (non-sponsored) job postings on those same job boards produce the fewest applicants among our industries. **Careers pages** and **custom sources** continue to be better sources for candidates that convert to hires at a much higher rate.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	33%	27%	11%	28%	2%
Percentage of Hires	23%	19%	22%	25%	11%

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

Key Metrics	Education & Childcare Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	2.7%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	4.9%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	38%	36%
Time to contact	4.1 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » More hires in this industry come from custom sources than job boards. This is significant, and means that employers should continue leaning on custom sources like industry-specific job boards, social media, and college recruitment events to find top talent.
- » You should also focus your efforts on **improving your employer brand online**. Since company career pages yield 22% 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.
- » This industry has a below average click-to-apply conversion, meaning that many job seekers aren't applying once they view the job posting. To help, consider putting **compensation and benefits at the top of the job posting**, and let job seekers know if you're offering any additional perks like a sign-on bonus or flexible scheduling.

FITNESS

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	3136
Applicants Per Job	79
Applicants Per Hire	123
Average Days to Contact	6.2
Average Days to Contact Hire	4.8
Average Days to Hire	22.4

The Best Time to Hire

In years past, our studies showed that the fitness industry saw most of its applicants in January. But in 2023, applicant volume picked up over the summer months instead – with an initial spike in volume occurring in June and additional spikes in July and September. Hiring stayed pretty consistent throughout the year, with a surprising dip in December.



Applicant Sources

Company careers pages are responsible for 36% of all hires despite only bringing in 23% of applicants. Compare that to job boards, which bring in 65% of applicants, but convert to hires at a much lower rate, resulting in only 41% of hires overall. Fitness employer careers pages remain among the highest performing of any industry in our study, year after year.



Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	65%	5%	23%	4.6%	2.5%
Percentage of Hires	41%	4%	36%	8%	11%

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

Key Metrics	Fitness Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	2.5%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	1.7%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	49%	36%
Time to contact	6.2 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » One explanation for the extraordinary careers page hire rate is that fitness is an industry with a huge overlap between their customers and their potential employees – people who love coming to your gym are often the people that 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.
- » One underutilized source of high-quality applicants is referrals. Like careers page applicants, **referrals convert to hires at a very high rate.** Create an [employee referral program](#) that incentivizes your current employees to recruit from their own networks. You can also prospect your customers for referrals. Consider emailing your customers to let them know when you're hiring and including a link to your careers page that they can easily share with others.
- » The fitness industry has the slowest time-to-contact figure in our study. **Contact applicants sooner** so that you can convert more of them into interviews. Consider using [automated interview scheduling](#) or [text recruiting](#) to speed up your contact times and avoid losing quality applicants to competitors.

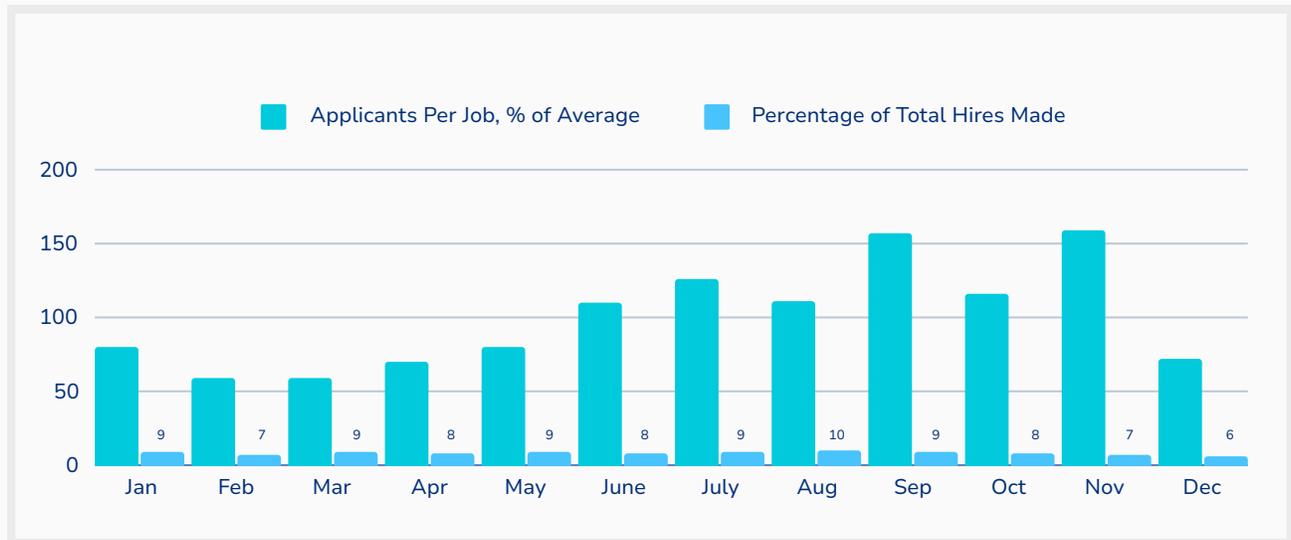
HEALTHCARE

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	736
Applicants Per Job	28
Applicants Per Hire	99
Average Days to Contact	4
Average Days to Contact Hire	3.7
Average Days to Hire	19

The Best Time to Hire

Healthcare saw the most applicant activity starting in July with the biggest upswings in September and November. However, hiring activity by employers remained fairly consistent throughout the year with a slight increase in August.



Applicant Sources

Custom sources are very effective channels for recruiting high-quality candidates in the healthcare industry. **Healthcare companies receive 16% of their applicants from custom sources but a whopping 26% of hires.** In 2023, our clients made use of custom sources such as industry-specific job boards like [myCNAjobs](#), local and state government job boards, career fairs, and referral programs for employees and customers.



Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	63%	13%	6%	16%	1.6%
Percentage of Hires	38%	11%	15%	26%	9%

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

Key Metrics	Healthcare Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	3.8%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	2.6%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	39%	36%
Time to contact	4 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » Our healthcare clients (largely home healthcare businesses) typically see a lower-than-average number of applicants per job, likely because the field is more specialized than our other industries. In 2021, that number was 14 applicants per job posting; in 2022, just 12. This year brought a bit of an increase, but it still remains lower than average at just 28.
- » Because of the low applicant-per-job rate, it's important for home healthcare businesses to **contact applicants quickly** (using automated interview scheduling software can help you engage your applicants earlier in the process) and **create a great candidate experience** to get more candidates to say yes to your offers. The data shows that home healthcare employers contact candidates within 4 days – **we suggest contacting within 24 hours**. An ATS like CareerPlug can automate this fast candidate outreach for you.
- » Healthcare employers should take the time to **explore niche applicant sources**: industry-specific job boards, local and university job boards, and in-person events like career fairs. CareerPlug integrates with two major home 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.

HOME & COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	2353
Applicants Per Job	74
Applicants Per Hire	225
Average Days to Contact	4.4
Average Days to Contact Hire	2.8
Average Days to Hire	17.8

The Best Time to Hire

Home & commercial services job postings received the most applicants in the second half of the year, with applicant volume peaking in November. However, this didn't coincide with when employers were doing the most hiring in March. As a result, they may have missed out on that heightened applicant activity.



Applicant Sources

Job boards may bring the largest share of applicants at 63%, but just 40% of hires. Compare that to custom sources, which bring in just 13% of applicants, but 23% of all hires, or referrals, which bring in 1.6% of applicants, but an outsized 8% of hires.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	63%	12%	11%	13%	1.6%
Percentage of Hires	40%	12%	16%	23%	8%

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

Key Metrics	Home & Commercial Services Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	3.2%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	2%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	23%	36%
Time to contact	4.4 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » Home & commercial services employers have below average conversion rates throughout the hiring funnel, with one of the lowest interview-to-hire conversion rates in our study.
- » One explanation for the low applicant conversion rates is that this is an industry that suffers from a high rate of low-quality applicants and candidate ghosting as job seekers drop out of the process after applying or interviewing. You can help increase conversion rates by **reaching out to high-quality applicants quickly** to engage them earlier in the hiring process. Using an automated interview scheduling software can help, along with text recruiting. The goal is to identify quality talent quickly and engage them before your competition scoops them up.
- » Major job boards like Indeed and ZipRecruiter are a great source for applicants, but employers in this industry see great success by **diversifying their applicant sources** to include company careers pages, employee referrals, and custom sources such as local and state government job boards, college job boards, Facebook groups, Craigslist, as well as sending referral emails to customers.

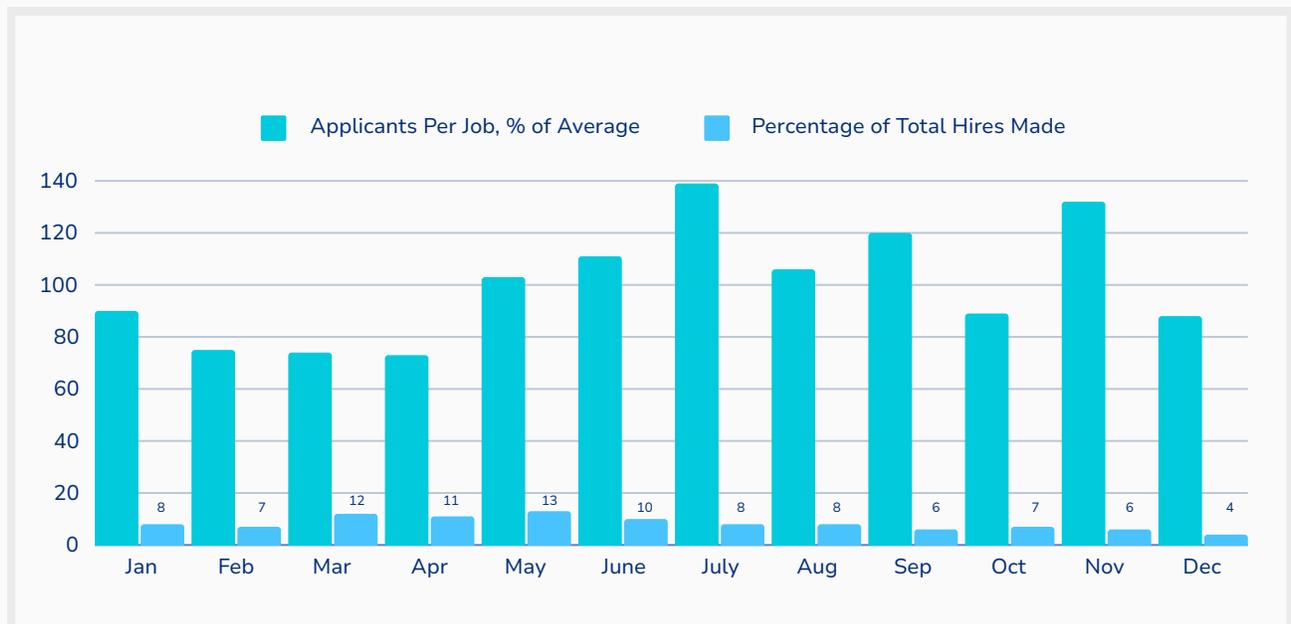
HOSPITALITY, ENTERTAINMENT, & RECREATION

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	1483
Applicants Per Job	108
Applicants Per Hire	77
Average Days to Contact	4.9
Average Days to Contact Hire	3.9
Average Days to Hire	15.5

The Best Time to Hire

Employers and applicants in this industry were not always on the same page in 2023. Job postings received the most applicants in the second half of the year, with applicant volume peaking in July. However, employers in this industry missed out on this high applicant flow, making most of their hires from March through May, when applicants were less active.



Applicant Sources

While job boards bring in 63% of applicants total, they account for just 28% of hires. Compare this to company careers pages, which bring in only 11% of applicants, but 29% of all hires. This year, referrals were a great source of hires in this industry, bringing in 11% of hires from just 3% of applicants.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	63%	11%	11%	13%	3%
Percentage of Hires	28%	5%	29%	26%	11%

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

Key Metrics	Hospitality, Entertainment & Recreation Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	7.3%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	3.7%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	35%	36%
Time to contact	4.9 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » While employers in this industry could never quite get the timing right on peak applicant volume, they still enjoyed a high number of applicants per job and required a lower number of applicants to make a hire. They also had higher than average click-to-apply conversions.
- » Job boards may not produce the kinds of results you're hoping for. Instead, businesses should **focus on the biggest drivers of hires – [company careers pages](#), [employee referrals](#), and [custom sources](#)**, such as local and university job boards, career fairs, and referral emails to customers.
- » This year, employers took longer to contact applicants than the year before, and their overall time to hire increased by two days. In 2024, you'll want to move fast before your competition scoops up quality candidates. **Try [text recruiting to communicate with candidates faster](#) and [automated interview scheduling to move them along your hiring process](#)**. An applicant tracking system like CareerPlug can help with both.

PERSONAL CARE

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	1198
Applicants Per Job	42
Applicants Per Hire	110
Average Days to Contact	4.7
Average Days to Contact Hire	2.7
Average Days to Hire	18.1

The Best Time to Hire

Our data shows that applicant volume peaked in June, with another big uptick in October. This didn't line up with the months that employers were doing the most of their hiring: January and November.



Applicant Sources

Employers in the personal care industry benefited from diversifying their applicant sources in 2023, finding a relatively consistent percentage of hires from job boards (39%) and custom sources (29%) such as local and community job boards. Company careers pages weren't far behind, bringing in 18% of hires.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	58%	13%	14%	13%	1.8%
Percentage of Hires	39%	7%	18%	29%	7%

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

Key Metrics	Personal Care Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	3.5%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	2.2%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	41%	36%
Time to contact	4.7 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » The personal care industry saw lower than average click-to-apply and applicant-to-interview conversions this year. Creating thorough job descriptions with clear and accurate information about the role (including benefits and compensation) can help you receive more high-quality applicants.
- » Job boards may produce the majority of applicants, but personal care employers can expect to get only 39% of their hires from this source. **Diversify your applicant sources** to decrease your reliance on the job boards. **Referrals** are a great option. This year they brought in 7% of hires, even though they only accounted for 1.8% of applicants – this means a referral is around 3x more likely to become a hire than a candidate from a job board.
- » Personal care employers also reported success from **referral email campaigns to customers**. If you already have a mailing list to market your services to customers, you already have an audience that loves your brand. Take this opportunity to market your employer brand to them as well.

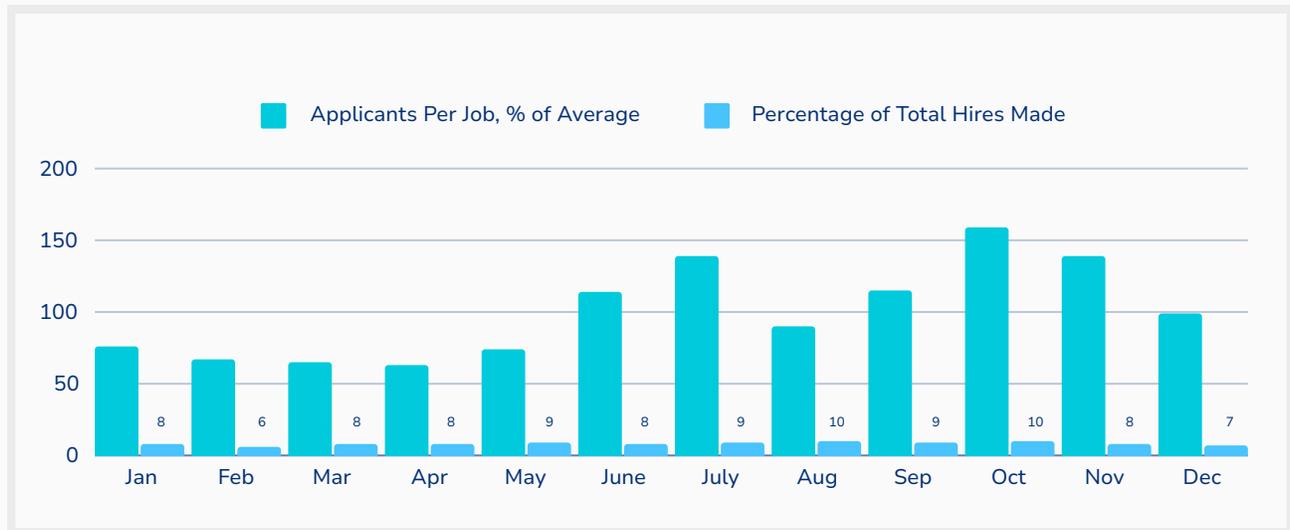
RESTAURANT & FOOD SERVICE

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	1164
Applicants Per Job	79
Applicants Per Hire	30
Average Days to Contact	4.8
Average Days to Contact Hire	3.5
Average Days to Hire	8.5

The Best Time to Hire

July, October, and November were the best months to hire in 2023 for the restaurant industry, with applicant volume reaching its peak. Employers took the best advantage of high applicant volume by ramping up hiring in October. They hired just as much in August, even though applicant volume was down at that time.



Applicant Sources

Year after year, company careers pages consistently produce high-quality candidates for restaurants. While bringing in only 15% of applicants, company careers pages account for the majority of hires (36%). Compare that to the major job boards, which bring in the vast majority of applicants (69%), but just 26% of total hires. Custom sources and referrals also bring in fewer applicants, but they convert to hires at much higher rates than job boards.

Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	69%	6%	15%	7%	3.8%
Percentage of Hires	26%	3%	36%	18%	17%

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

Key Metrics	Restaurant & Food Service Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	6.8%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	3%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	41%	36%
Time to contact	4.8 Days	4.5 Days

Key Takeaways

- » Restaurant employers were slightly slower to initially contact candidates, but made the hire quicker than any other industry – in some cases, **nearly 10 days faster than other industries!** This reflects the urgency of filling open positions in this industry.
- » Restaurant company careers pages are the primary driver of high-quality candidates and hires. This isn't surprising, as this is an industry where 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 apply.
- » Custom sources were another source of high-quality applicants that turned into hires for this industry, including **Craigslist, Facebook groups, and referral emails to customers.**

RETAIL

Benchmark Data

Clicks Per Job	1493
Applicants Per Job	79
Applicants Per Hire	116
Average Days to Contact	4.5
Average Days to Contact Hire	3.8
Average Days to Hire	17.9

The Best Time to Hire

Retail employers and applicants were mostly on the same page in 2023, with applicant volume picking up in September, which coincided with an increase in employer hiring activity. However, there was one point of mismatch – the best month for applicant volume was November, but employers began to decrease hiring in that same month.



Applicant Sources

Job boards produce the vast majority of applicants (67%), but 36% of hires. Meanwhile, company careers pages account for just 10% of applicants, but 26% of hires – a great ROI for retail recruiting. Equally as impressive: Candidates who apply from employee referrals make up only 3.4% of applicants, but 15% of hires.



Sources of Applicants and Hires	Job Boards	Sponsored Job Ads	Careers Page	Custom Source*	Referral
Percentage of Applicants	67%	9%	10%	10%	3.4%
Percentage of Hires	36%	5%	26%	18%	15%

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

Key Metrics	Retail Industry	Average Across All Industries
Click-to-apply conversion	5.3%	5%
Applicant-to-interview conversion	1.2%	2%
Interview-to-hire conversion	46%	36%
Time to contact	4.5 Days	4.6 Days

Key Takeaways

- » Retail sees a slightly above average click-to-apply conversion rate, but a low applicant-to-interview conversion 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. Focus your efforts on **pre-screening candidates through questions and assessments** early in the application process.
- » Another factor that may be contributing to a low applicant-to-interview conversion rate is an increase in **candidate ghosting** – when candidates stop responding to businesses after submitting an application and drop out of the hiring process without explanation. **Consider using automated interview scheduling** to instantly engage high-quality candidates early in the hiring process, while also identifying unengaged applicants you shouldn't waste your time on.
- » Careers pages and referrals are huge drivers of hires for retail businesses. **Make sure your careers page is engaging** (e.g. showcase **employee testimonials** or create a brand employment video). Create an **employee referral program** that incentivizes your current employees to recruit from their own networks. You can also prospect your customers for referrals. Try emailing your customers to let them know when you're hiring and including a link to your careers page that they can easily share with others.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HIRING IN 2024

2023 was a tough year for recruitment, but we've gained insights into what steps businesses can take now to hire top talent regardless of the state of the job market.

Build your employer brand and showcase it on your careers page.

Company careers pages are a hugely successful source of hires, but an underutilized source of applicants overall. Candidates who take the time to research a company tend to be high-quality candidates who are more selective about where they choose to apply. **Invest in creating an engaging and attractive careers page that showcases employee testimonials, aspects of your company culture, and your core values.**

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 and university job boards, and email campaigns to customers. Compile another list of employees, friends, and colleagues in your personal network to reach out for referrals. Our data shows **these sources produce the highest-quality candidates, yet the lowest percentage of applicants**. Plan on targeting them before your next round of hiring.

Develop a passive recruiting strategy so you don't miss out on great candidates.

Many industries missed out on the highest applicant volume. At CareerPlug, we have a saying, "Always be hiring." This refers to creating a passive recruiting strategy, where you have a pipeline of ideal candidates waiting in the wings. This can look like storing the contact information of candidates you were impressed by but didn't hire and posting a job to your careers page or website that's labeled as a "future opening" so you can accept applications all year long.

Communicate with candidates faster.

Our data shows that over the last 3 years, small businesses have been speeding up their hiring processes as competition in the labor market increases. In 2023, you'll want to move fast before your competition scoops up quality candidates. **Try text recruiting to communicate with candidates faster**. Text messages receive an 8 times higher response rate than email, along with a much faster response time. An applicant tracking system like CareerPlug can also help you quickly evaluate candidates using a proven hiring process, allowing you to accelerate your hiring decisions without sacrificing quality.

Use hiring software with automations to reduce candidate ghosting.

One major pain point that employers report year after year is an increase in candidate ghosting – when candidates stop responding to businesses after submitting an application and drop out of the hiring process without explanation. Candidate ghosting can lead to low applicant-to-interview conversion rates. **Consider using automated interview scheduling software** to instantly engage high-quality candidates early in the hiring process, while also identifying unengaged applicants you shouldn't waste your time on.



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 60,000 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. Get a demo of CareerPlug today and speak with an expert about how we can help you hire better.