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Career Site Mobile-Optimisation in Australia

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Executive Summary

Mobile devices and social media are shaping the future of talent acquisition. Job seekers are ready and willing to use their mobile devices, not only to search for positions, but also to apply for them. Many companies however, are lagging in the execution of their mobile strategy, evidenced by a misalignment between the expectations of job seekers and the reality of the mobile recruitment experience. How big is the gulf and what is the impact? We looked at Australia's 100 largest companies and found:

What we found

Why it matters

First impressions matter
- Nearly 40% of career sites provided a poor search experience.
- Over one-quarter had no online application process.

If job seekers can't find relevant information about why they should work for you, or apply online for positions, you don't exist.

Mobile is a competitive advantage
- Nearly three-quarters of Australia's largest 100 companies do not have mobile-optimised career sites.
- Approximately two-thirds of career sites only have basic functionality.

It is no longer enough to have a career site; it needs to be mobile-optimised and engaging. 25% of job seekers will not apply for a job if the career site is not mobile-optimised.[1]

Missed opportunities
- Only half of the top 100 companies are using social referral to reach untapped talent.
- Only 40% of companies provided job seekers with the ability to receive job alerts.

Job alerts, referrals and ability to share jobs via social media increase exposure to passive candidates. Companies that embrace social sourcing increase the likelihood of producing qualified candidates.[2,3]

Engage candidates on their terms
- 45% of career sites allowed candidates to pre-populate their application form from social media profiles or resumes. This speeds up the process.
- 66% of sites required a resume which is one of the biggest deterrents to applying from a mobile device.

Effective recruiting means connecting with candidates on their terms. Over one-third of job seekers don't complete online applications because the process is too much of a hassle.[2]

Embrace all platforms
- 29% of companies inadvertently halved their candidate pool by not being compatible with iOS devices (iPads and iPhones).
- One-third of sites were mobile device-agnostic (iOS, Android), allowing candidates to attach a resume from cloud storage rather than from the mobile device.

Globally Android is increasing its market share,[4] especially in emerging markets, but in developed economies data usage is fairly evenly split between iOS and Android mobile devices.[5]

Agnostic sites saw all talent, blocking iPhone users from applying just because they're using an iOS device is unwise in a tight talent market.

Vendor matters
- Of the vendor hosted career sites surveyed, only those powered by PageUp enabled 100% of candidates to apply via a mobile-optimised experience.

The ability to attach the resume from the cloud is vendor dependent functionality. Being device agnostic is crucial and appears to be an overlooked factor leading many companies to miss key talent.

Companies that execute well on their mobile strategy are more likely to build a strong employer brand, reach passive candidates and engage active job seekers. Globally 58% of companies find it difficult to source high quality candidates.[6] Being mobile ready provides a competitive advantage when faced with scarcity of talent and hard-to-fill positions.

Why it's Important to Have a Mobile-Optimised Career Site

The war for talent continues to rage. Hard-to-fill positions, developing a strong talent pool and improving employer brand are all challenges faced by today's talent managers. The advent of social media and mobile devices are influencing the direction of talent acquisition strategies but many recruiters feel they either don't have the adequate technology or it is not being used effectively. Many companies are lagging and despite abundant evidence that candidates have embraced social applications and mobile devices, 70% of Fortune 100 companies do not have mobile-optimised career pages.[2]
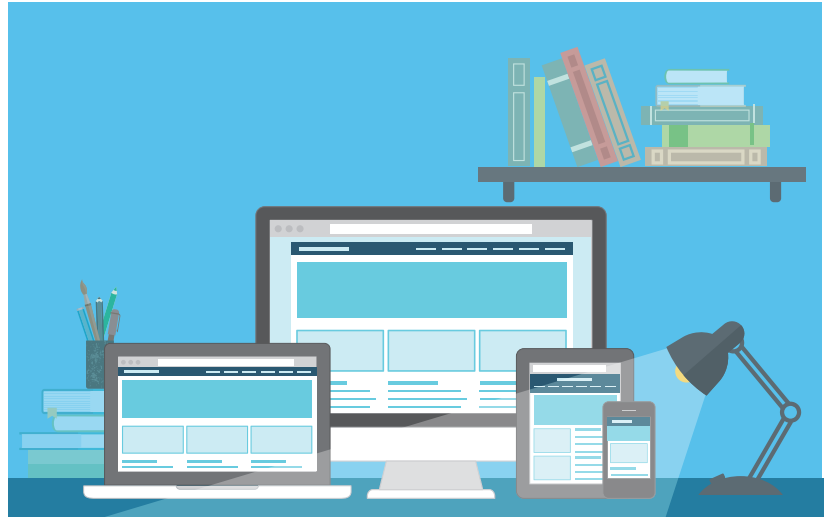
Two-thirds of job seekers search for jobs on their mobile devices and 84% believe this will become the most common way people will search over the next five years.[7] At the same time, 46% of recruiters are dissatisfied with their current recruiting tools[6] and only 20% of talent acquisition leaders believe their career sites are optimised for mobile.[1]

Does the misalignment matter? Surely candidates will still apply even if the experience is not as optimal as it could be. Yet, with 58% of companies finding it difficult to source high-quality candidates and 42% having problems competing for highly skilled workers[6] organisations cannot afford to make this assumption. Research has shown 25% of job seekers will not apply for a job if a company's career site was not mobile-optimised[1] and 34% of candidates don't complete online applications because the process is too much of a hassle.[2]

"Can you afford to miss a quarter of the talent because your career site is not mobile-optimised?"

First impressions matter

A company often makes its first impression via its website and corresponding social media and mobile-enabled career offerings.[2] The career site is important from an employer branding perspective – it informs candidates about a company's priorities. Are they tech savvy and forward thinking? Do they understand how to engage today's candidates? More than 40% of recruiters say that enhancing their employer brand is currently an obstacle and only 14% are confident their online application process aligns with their employer brand.[6] Research by Aberdeen has shown mobile strategies play a pivotal role in improving employer branding and recruitment marketing efforts.[8] You have to be in it to win it. If job seekers can't find relevant information about why they should work for you, or apply for positions, you don't exist.

Mobile is a competitive advantage

It is no longer enough to have a career site; it needs to be mobile-enabled and engaging. Resting on your laurels means you'll be overtaken and risk losing quality candidates to your competitors. Are you a laggard or an innovator? This could be one of the most compelling arguments when pitching the idea of mobile recruiting to executives as no company can afford to be behind its competitors when it comes to attracting talent.[1]

Missed opportunities

Both active and passive candidates use their mobile devices to find out more about companies. Over 70% of active candidates[1,9,10] and 62% of passive candidates have used a mobile device to visit a company site and learn about career opportunities and search for roles.[1] Options such as signing up for job alerts, referrals and the ability to share jobs via social media increase exposure to passive candidates. Social media continues to rise and research has shown that companies that embrace social sourcing increase the likelihood of producing qualified candidates.[2,3]

Embrace all platforms

Mobile devices have catalysed our approach to the Internet with the paradigm shift from desk-based to on-the-go Internet access. Many have by-passed the desktop for the laptop and some have by-passed the laptop for the tablet. If a job seeker only has access to a tablet at home, it makes it diffcult to find and apply for jobs if career sites are not mobile-enabled. In 2013, mobile devices and connections reached seven billion.[5] By 2018, over half of all devices connected to the mobile network will be smart devices (compared to 21% in 2013) and 96% of mobile data traffic will originate from these devices.[5] By 2018, the amount of mobile data traffic generated by tablets will be nearly double the traffic generated by the entire global mobile network in 2013.[5]

Engage candidates on their terms

Effective recruiting means connecting with candidates on their terms. If the experience of applying on a mobile device is time consuming, inconvenient or frustrating, candidates will not apply. Although mobile capabilities are gaining adoption as candidates expect to search and apply for jobs, receive communications, and manage schedules via mobile devices,[11] only a minority of organisations (13%) have adequately invested in making the recruitment process mobile-friendly.[1] A mobile-friendly application experience is not about providing a seamless process just for the sake of it. Research has shown 34% of job seekers don't complete online applications because the process is too much of a hassle,[2] and completion rates were 50% higher for jobs with a simple and mobile-friendly application process than those with a more complex experience.[1]

How Mobile-Optimised are Career Sites?

There is a gulf between candidates' expectations and the reality of mobile talent acquisition practices. Research has shown 89% of job seekers think organisations should have mobile-optimised sites[9] but in 2013, less than a third of companies did.[2] Given the pace of mobile adoption and the increasing awareness that a mobile strategy is required to secure talent, has this gap narrowed?

We looked at two aspects:

1.   Mobile Experience – does the site look and feel like it's been built for mobile content?

2.   Recruitment Experience – does the career site allow candidates to search and apply for jobs in a mobile-optimised manner?

Mobile experience – functional capabilities

The desktop version of a website squashed to fit onto a mobile screen is not a pleasant viewing experience. A simplified version with content arranged to fit the screen of the mobile device is required. Specific elements include responsive design, clean design, rendering, cross-linking and redirection (see methodology for definitions). For a career site to be considered mobile-optimised this should occur throughout the entire experience.

Our research found that of Australia's top 100 career sites only 29% of companies have sites that are mobile-optimised. A further 17% have a compilation of mobile-optimised features and desktop features. A mobile-optimised career site is no longer an optional feature; it's essential. Failure to do so means missing an opportunity to build a strong employer brand, but more importantly, talent will look elsewhere.

Nearly three quarters of Australia's largest 100 listed companies do not have mobile-optimised career sites

Mobile-optimisation of functionality

29%

17%

54%

- Mobile-optimised
- Mix of mobile-optimised & desktop features
- Negligable mobile-optimisation
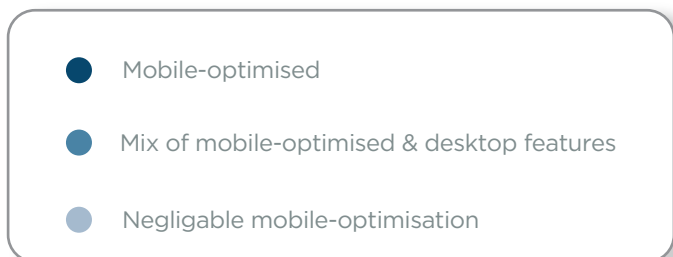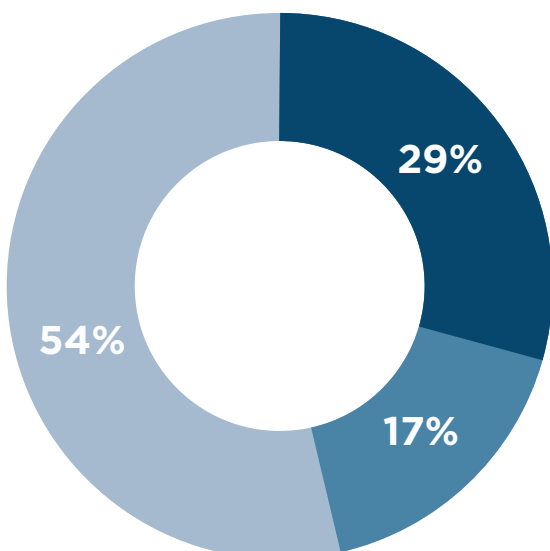
Mobile functionality of career sites
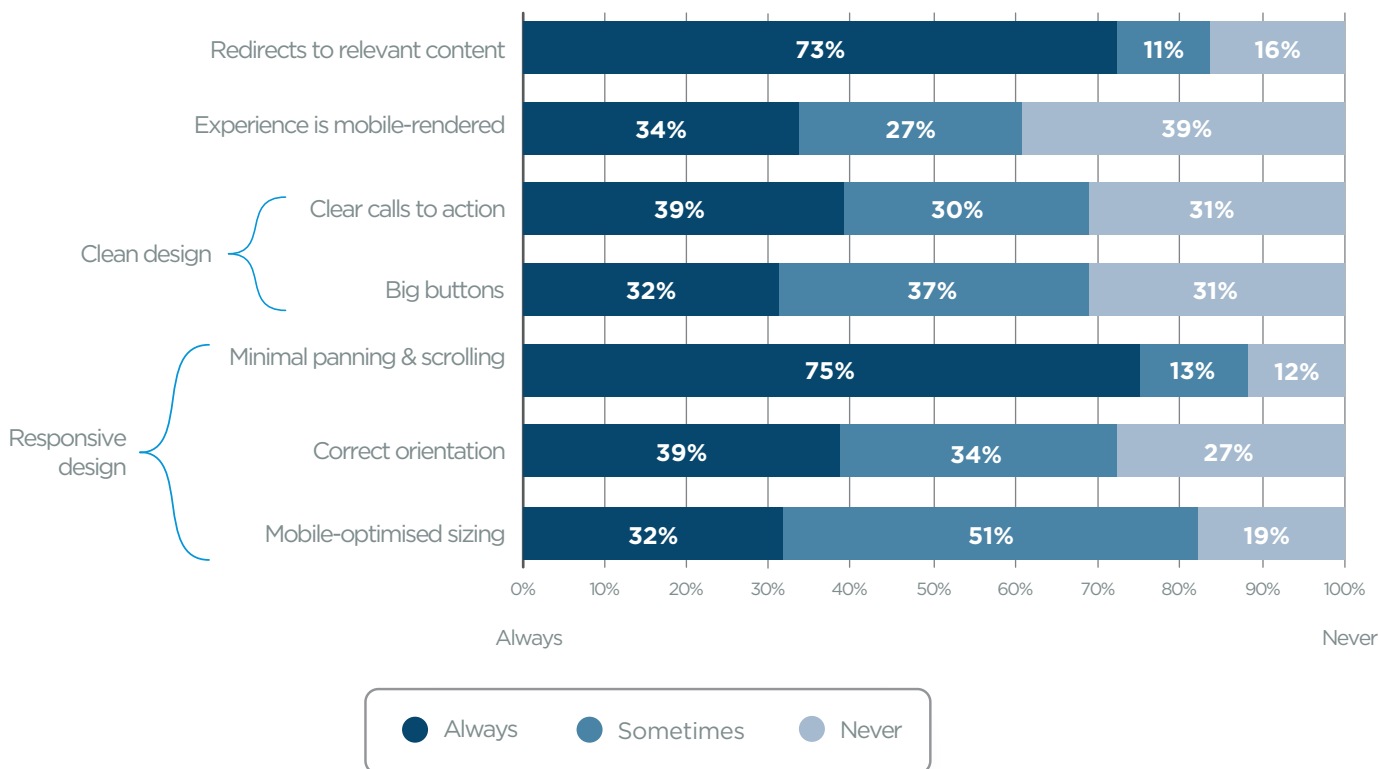
Our research also found 75% of career sites have the basic functionality of automatic re-orientation of content and the majority can correctly redirect candidates to pages involved in the recruitment experience (73%).

Responsive design had both the strongest and weakest elements. Three-quarters of sites orientated correctly but content was only resized to fit the screen one-third of the time, requiring candidates to pan and scroll or pinch to be able to see information.

Roughly a third of career sites have big buttons, clear calls to action or render graphical images properly. If the experience feels clumsy or difficult, jobseekers will not persist. Candidates need to be engaged on their terms, and expect sites to be mobile-optimised.

Two-thirds of companies have only basic functionality in their career sites

Recruitment Experience

Mobile-optimisation is not an end in itself: sites can be mobile-optimised and still provide a poor recruitment experience. Big buttons, resizing, correct orientation, scrolling and cross-linking are important to enable a simple, easy and quick process. If the recruitment process is not relevant or streamlined, companies will fail to create an experience that engages job seekers. A bad recruiting experience can not only frustrate candidates, but also alienate them and their peers.

Most career sites of large organisations, at a minimum, will list open positions. However, applying online requires more effort and commitment and should be of greater importance to the job seeker than simply viewing open positions. Many companies rationalise an emphasis on search over application functionality, assuming candidates will take the application step via a more traditional channel such as a desktop. Evidence suggests that many job seekers prefer applying via mobile devices and become frustrated if they can't. A LinkedIn study found nearly half of active job seekers have used a mobile device to apply for a job. This is true even of passive candidates, nearly a quarter of whom have applied on a mobile device.[1]

We looked at two aspects of the talent acquisition process – the search experience and the application experience.

1. The search experience includes the ability to search for jobs, filter jobs, subscribe to email alerts, save jobs, refer jobs and share a job on social media.

2. The application experience includes the ability to start the application process, the application form, requirements for attachments (e.g. resume, cover letter), and the ability to complete and submit the application.
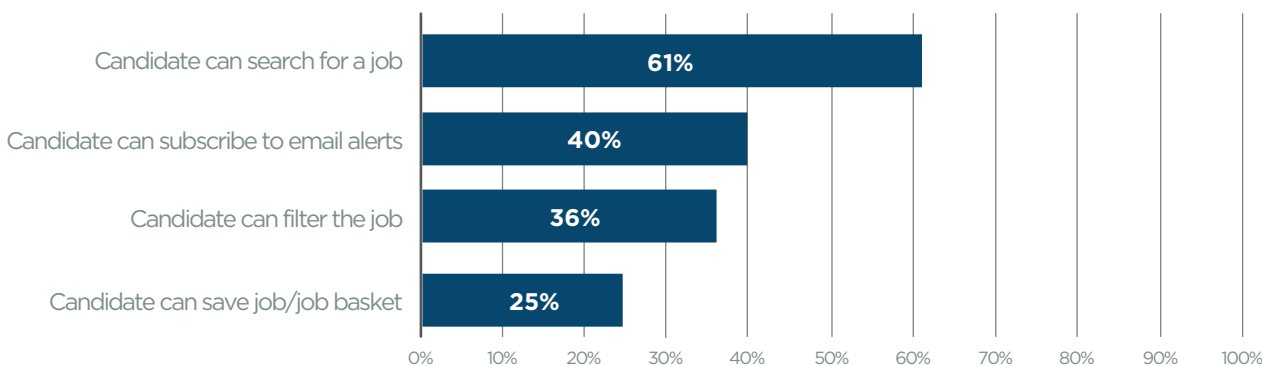
Search experience

Search for a job

The majority (90%) of companies have job search functionality but only 61% provided an experience that was mobile-optimised. Job search alone is no longer enough to stand out amongst the crowd; sites which provided a better experience also had functionality for filtering or saving searches.

Many companies are missing the opportunity to engage talent and build out their talent pool pipeline, with less than half providing candidates with the ability to subscribe to email alerts.

Job search features most likely to be mobile-optimised

Feature	Percentage
Candidate can search for a job	61%
Candidate can subscribe to email alerts	40%
Candidate can filter the job	36%
Candidate can save job/job basket	25%

61% of sites provided an optimised search experience for candidates

If the search experience is cumbersome or frustrating a company reduces the likelihood that job seekers will persist and apply for the job via their mobile device. It is a misconception that job seekers will search for jobs on their mobile device and then wait to apply from a desktop. You may lose talented candidates to your competitors who are able to secure the talent with their mobile-optimised process.

Social referrals

53% of Australia's top 100 company career sites allow candidates to forward a job to a friend via email and 49% allow social sharing. Unfortunately, Australian companies are lagging their global counterparts, where 85% of the Fortune 100 are allowing candidates to share job opportunities via email, and 51% via social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.[2] Embracing a social-enabled sourcing effort increases the likelihood of reaching qualified candidates and tapping into a passive audience.

Social referral mobile-optimisation

Candidate can refer job to a friend	**53%**
Candidate can share job on social media	**49%**

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
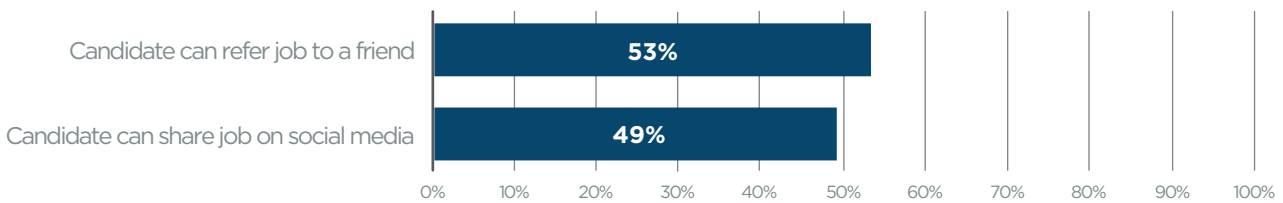
**Only 50% of companies are using social referrals to reach untapped talent**

Application experience

The conversion rate from search to application is influenced by the candidate's initial experience on the career site. The conversion rate from application to submission is further influenced by the application experience – the ability to apply online, the application form and the need for attachments.

Applying online

Almost one-quarter of Australia's top 100 career sites provide no online application process. Requiring candidates to email their application to the HR department is archaic. Whilst your recruiters are checking their inbox, the competition is reviewing online submitted applications.

Application experience provided by the top 100 career sites

9%
14%
77%

- Cannot apply online
- Email only
- Can apply online
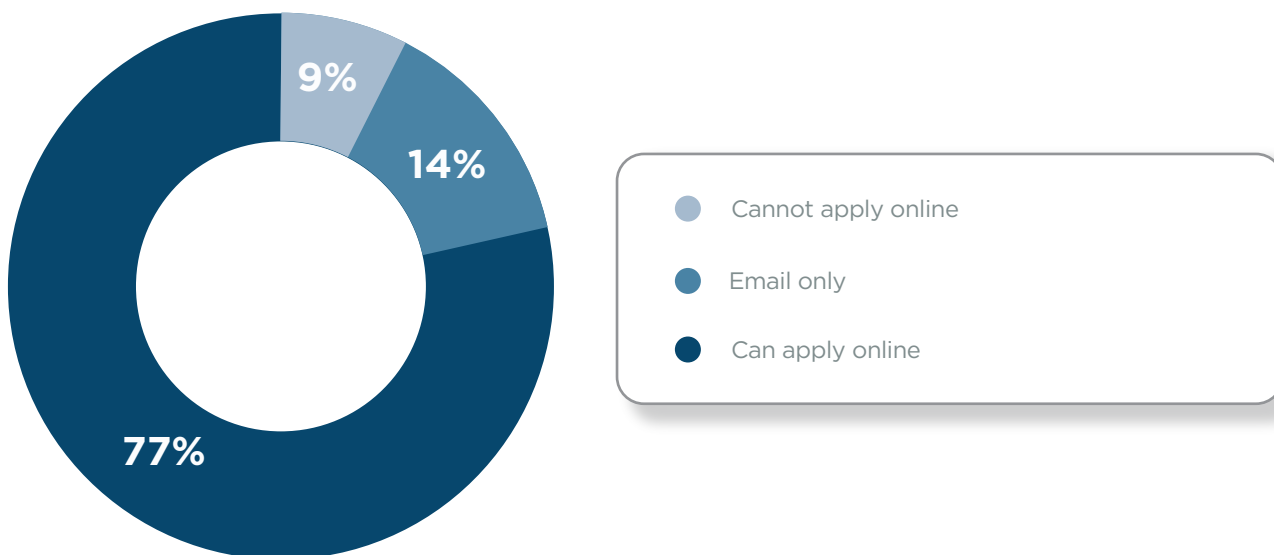
23% of sites have no online application process

Filling in an application

Minimising data entry simplifies and speeds up the application process, however the vast majority of organisations fail to minimise the data entry required by candidates. Social media sites and job boards such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Seek provide functionality which allows career sites to pull information from the social profile of the candidate.

The majority of companies however, fail to effectively utilise this functionality. Only 45% of career sites enabled candidates to pre-populate the application form with personal information stored in their social profile (LinkedIn, Facebook, Seek), cloud-based resume (Google Drive or Dropbox) or a resume stored on their mobile device.

The issue with pulling data from these sources is that it's unstructured, requiring candidates to edit or correct the data. Pulling data from a resume is even less convenient than using a social profile as it requires the candidate to have easy access to their resume. Editing of auto-filled information was required for all sites that used pre-fill functionality.

Nearly one-third of the Top 100 Australian company career sites had no prefill capability; candidates were required to manually fill in data to begin the application process.

Ability to pre-populate application form
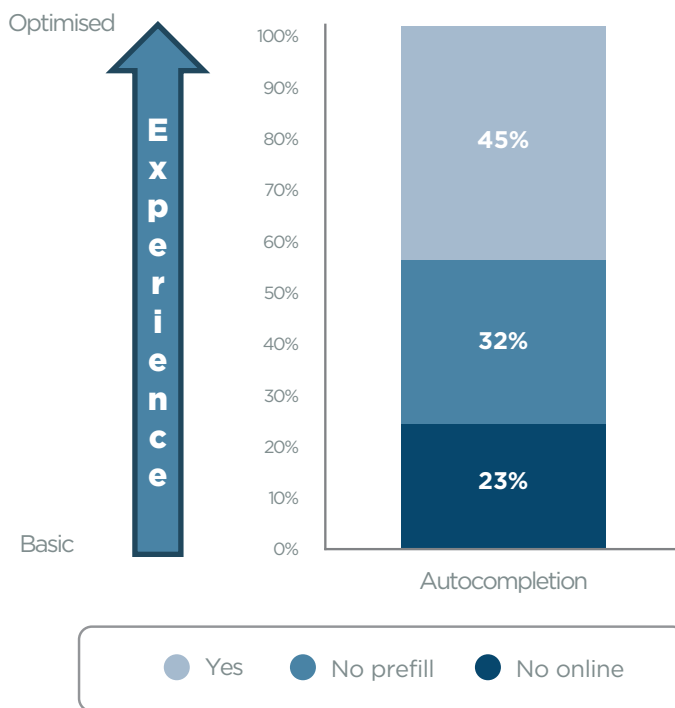
Only 45% of sites effectively utilise data pre-population from online sources

Submitting an application

66% of sites required candidates to attach a resume to submit their application

Data entry is a real hassle for candidates and assumes in a large part that candidates have stored their resume on their phone or in the cloud. Research shows that 40% of professional and 50% of active candidates have not applied to a job via a mobile device because they didn't have a stored resume.[1] For many job seekers the need to attach a resume negates the whole purpose of applying to a mobile-enabled career site.

Some roles require a resume – namely technical, specialist or senior positions, where there is a need to demonstrate experience and skills. The resume is the quickest and easiest way to communicate this information, and preferable to lengthy and unwieldy online application forms. Many companies are embracing Talent Relationship Management (TRM) and for forward-looking companies, the resume may become a thing of the past as the ongoing relationship between the company and prospective talent replaces this traditional mechanism.

In the near term, to simplify the application process and improve the candidate experience, companies could offer jobs based on social profiles. Research indicates 38% of organisations believe LinkedIn will replace the resume over the next few years.[8]

Submitting a job application

7%

27%

66%
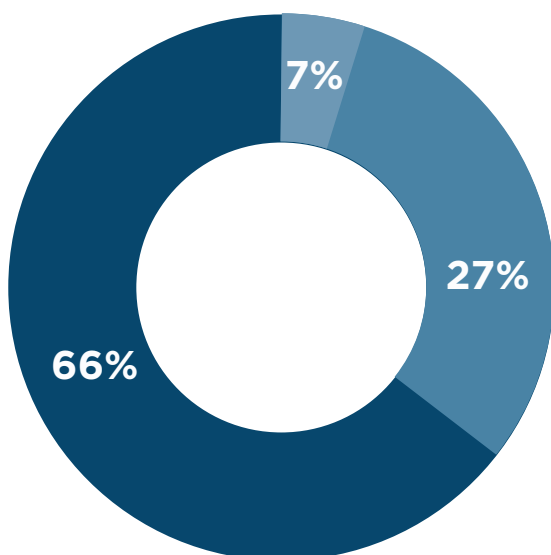
- Can submit without resume
- Cannot submit application
- Resume required to submit

Technology Experience

Apple vs Android

Career sites are mobile device-agnostic, right? That was the assumption we had when we commenced this research, so the results were unexpected. A completed application could not be submitted for over one-quarter of career sites from an iOS device (iPhone or iPad) because a resume was required. The only "attach" option available was from phone storage which takes candidates to photos. This is not an issue for Android devices as they contain storage functionality.

Global statistics show that Android is increasing its market share, especially in emerging markets, as consumers move away from top-end premium devices to mid-end basic products.[4] In developed economies, however, data usage is fairly evenly split between iOS and Android mobile devices.[5] Regardless of the exact split, blocking iPhone users from applying just because they're using an iOS device is unwise in a tight talent market.
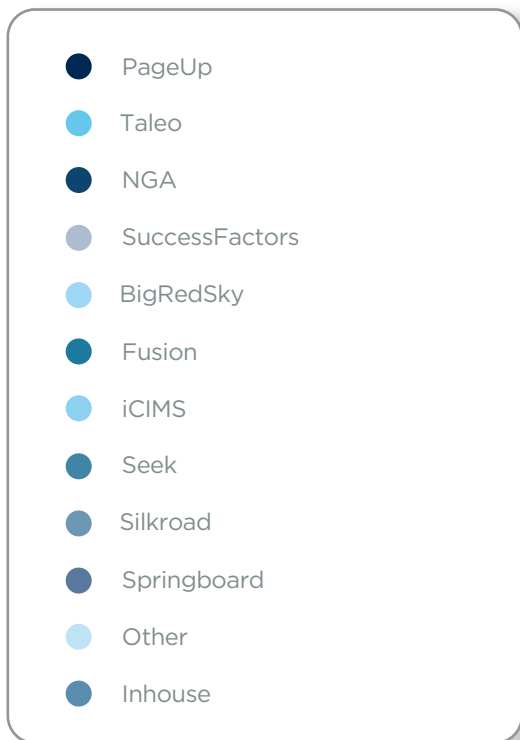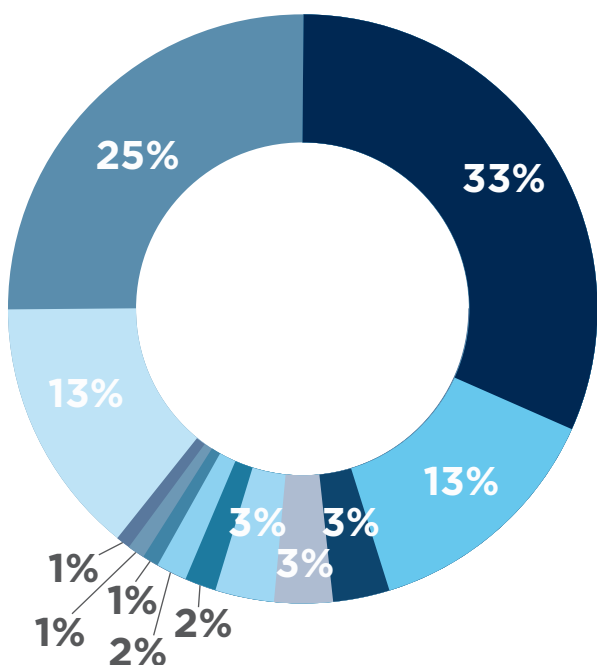
29% of sites inadvertently halved their candidate pool by not being compatible with iOS devices

Choice of vendor matters

In addition to the phone storage system, resumes can be stored in the cloud using applications such as Google Drive or Dropbox. Over one third of sites gave candidates the option of attaching their resume from cloud storage. This enabled the application process to be completed and made these sites device-agnostic. This functionality is provided by the talent acquisition system vendor. Those vendors which do not provide the functionality to "attach a resume from cloud storage" are potentially halving their customers' candidate pool.

Of all the vendor-hosted career sites surveyed, only those powered by PageUp enabled 100% of candidates to successfully and easily apply via mobile devices. Although other vendors had the functionality the overall experience was poor.
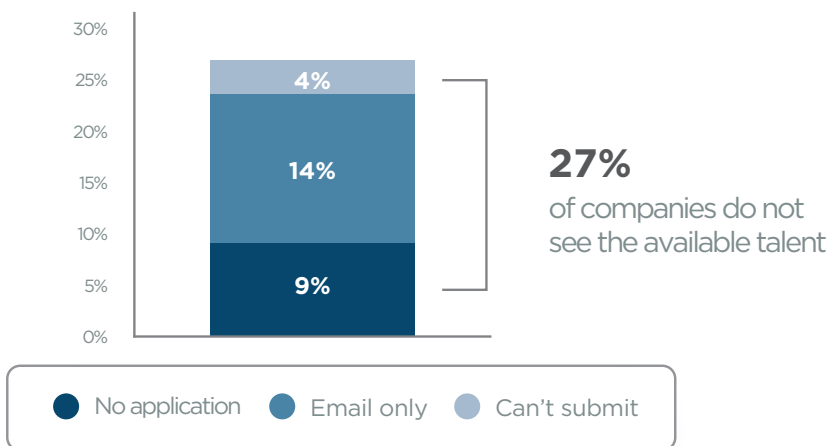
Career site hosted by...

25%
33%
13%
13%
3% 3%
3%
1%
1% 1%
2%
2%

- PageUp
- Taleo
- NGA
- SuccessFactors
- BigRedSky
- Fusion
- iCIMS
- Seek
- Silkroad
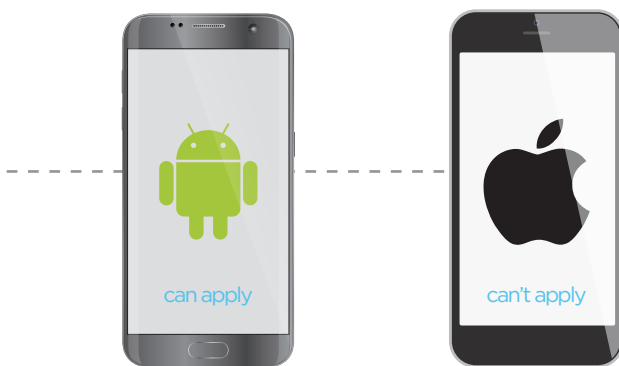- Springboard
- Other
- Inhouse

Summary of mobile experience

Key talent applying via mobile phone

56% of companies miss out on seeing key talent due to the following reasons: online applications are not catered for, or a resume is required but cannot be attached. 44% of companies see all talent, due either to being able to access resumes from cloud storage, or not requiring a resume to be submitted.

No online application

27%
no online application process

❌

30%
25%   **4%**
20%
15%   **14%**
10%
5%   **9%**
0%

● No application   ● Email only   ● Can't submit

27%
of companies do not see the available talent

Resume required but cannot be uploaded

29%
attach from phone storage

can apply

can't apply

29%
of companies halved the available talent pool

Resume required and can be uploaded

37%
attach resume from cloud storage

Device agnostic companies see all available talent

37%
of companies saw all available talent

No resume required

7%
no resume required

Device agnostic companies see all available talent

7%
of companies saw all available talent

So What and What Now?

Mobile-optimised career sites - tips to consider:

Mobile-optimisation is not whether or not it's possible to apply, but whether or not it's a simple, engaging, frustration-free experience. The best way to determine if your career site has content suitable for mobile devices is to search and apply for a position from your mobile phone.

- ☐ The ability to browse through job postings, filter and save jobs of interest on your mobile device.

- ☐ The ability to subscribe to alerts, refer a friend and share jobs via social media.

- ☐ A streamlined process which only includes steps essential to the recruitment process.

- ☐ No dead-ends or back tracking when searching or applying for jobs.

- ☐ Short, clear text with obvious calls to action.

- ☐ An application process that takes less than one minute.

- ☐ A seamless experience from the company to career vendor site.

- ☐ Application forms that can be prefilled from social profiles or resumes and requires minimal editing.

- ☐ If a resume or cover letter is required it can be attached from cloud storage.

- ☐ The same experience on an Android or iOS (iPhone or iPad) device.

- ☐ Auto-acknowledgement of submitted application.

- ☐ An end-to-end mobile search and application experience.

If the answer to any of the above is 'no', now is the time to rethink your strategy and build out your long term vision for mobile. Once you have set your plan-of-attack in motion, it's important to track its success.

The acceleration of smartphone penetration coupled with the uptake of social recruiting is shaping talent acquisition strategies. Having a clear strategy for leveraging mobile and social media will help overcome challenges faced by talent acquisition leaders such as creating strong employer branding, sourcing talent in a tight market and development of a strong talent pool. Continuing to place a low priority on a mobile-friendly recruitment experience will diminish your competitive advantage as talent is lost to the competition.

Methodology

Findings in this paper are based on PageUp's analysis of the career site experience of the largest 100 Australian companies by market capitalisation, a subset of the ASX200. The research was conducted in August 2014. Career sites were viewed on smartphones. Experience was measured from when a Candidate clicks on job opportunities, ending at the point where candidate clicks submit. iPhone mobile-optimisation experience was tested using Safari. Android mobile-optimisation experience was tested using Google Chrome.

What does mobile-optimisation look like?

To be mobile-optimised the career site must include responsive design, clean design, rendering, cross-linking and redirection. This should occur throughout the entire experience.

• *Responsive design* refers to the viewing experience and has three main elements – orientation, sizing and panning and scrolling. In an optimal experience these aspects happen automatically – pages rotate horizontally and vertically without affecting the content, content resizes appropriately, there is minimal panning and job seekers can easily scroll through content.

• *Clean design* is important to user experience. Correct, big buttons and simple, clear calls to action to users are important to a clean mobile-optimised experience.

• *Rendering* is the process by which computer graphics generate an image. In the context of mobile-optimisation, rendering is crucial as it implies a website is built specifically in a mobile page format. Sites should stay clear of Flash which is not supported by Apple devices (iPhone and iPads) and have lightweight pictures and videos so they can be downloaded quickly.

• *Redirection and cross-linking* means only pages or links relevant to the recruitment experience are presented. A candidate should not come across any dead-ends as this negates the whole experience. Correct cross-linking and redirection provides the candidate with a seamless recruitment experience whilst minimising the number of clicks.
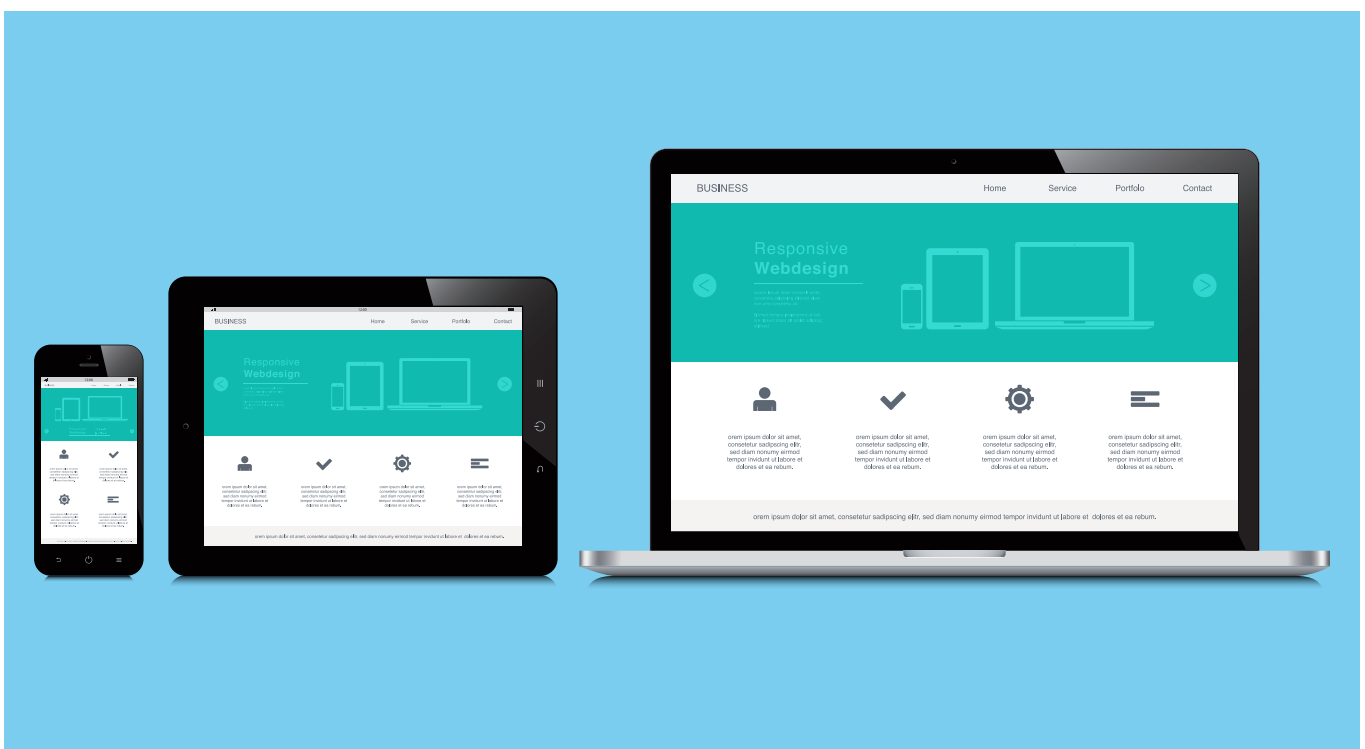
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PageUp™

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Our award-winning, SaaS solution unifies Recruiting and Onboarding, Learning and Development, Performance Management, Compensation, Career Planning and Succession Management, with Advanced Workforce Analytics running across all modules; assisting employers to overcome talent management challenges that are inherent in operating across both developed and emerging markets.

We were originally founded in 1997 in Australia, and have since expanded globally to support both local and multinational organisations, including several Fortune 500 employers. Our solution is being accessed in over 190 countries by clients across diverse and multiple industries including banking, mining, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, education, governmental and non-profit organisations. We serve our global client base through offices in New York, London, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila, Melbourne and Sydney.

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