



Turnaround

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Company      **Turnaround Group**  
Telephone    03 9620 7744  
Email        [enquiries@turnaround.com](mailto:enquiries@turnaround.com)  
Web          [www.turnaround.com](http://www.turnaround.com)

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Subject        **Job Boards – The real return on investment!!!**

This month we decided to speak with business owners and directors within the recruitment industry to ascertain industry opinions about the real return on investment from Job Boards. Our coverage ranged from those using 200 ads per month to those that are part of a larger conglomerate using 11,000 ads per month.

We started by asking for opinions of the 4 major job boards and had somewhat similar responses both positive and negative to include:

- Seek – number one, effective, good return on investment, high volume usage to necessary evil, overpriced, arrogant, diminished service, danger of monopoly, take full advantage of their market position.
- Mycareer – improved, OK, visible, second player to selling the wrong proposition, inflated view of own worth, a very distant second, trying to be a Seek.
- Careerone – innovative, user friendly, buyer respectful, future leader, great for Brisbane and Adelaide to just dropped them, not used them, can't see the value.
- JobsJobsJobs – new, fresh, bright, potential player to not yet used them, waiting to see.

We did follow this up for JobsJobsJobs to ask “Are you pleased that JobsJobsJobs has come into the market to mix it up?” for which the general consensus was yes, absolutely.

We then went on to ask about the Executive market with the likes of Seek Executive, Mycareers The Big Chair and the new entry into this market Sixfigures. Only 20% of the people we spoke with thought the Executive job boards have a place in the market with only one person of the opinion that advertisers should pay more to list opportunities on these sites compared to the standard sites.

Seek recently informed us that Careersmultilist members receive a 10% discount from the standard rates with Seek. 100% of our respondents were not aware of this.

We went on to ask if the RCSA should take a lead with a similar proposition to either help with costing reduction or to stop the monopoly. All were in view that something needed to be done but not all felt the RCSA had the necessary clout or inclination to take such a lead.

All of the people we speak to, measured their return on investment with the job boards from placements made verses cost.

When asked if the notorious Seek annual rate rise (that Seek claim is justified with more unique visitors coming to the site) gave an equal return on investment year on year, 80% of respondents said no. One of the respondents that did see a greater return on investment said they felt this was only because of there own development as a recruitment business into new territories and market sectors and Seek merely assisted with market coverage.

Another question we asked was, "Seek claim they have a fixed rate card with all recruiters are on the same agreements and don't negotiate, do you believe this?" to which we had an overwhelming 100% response of "NO". One of these respondents added "I shouldn't really say no as I have a vested interest given the discount we receive."

We then asked, "If Seek have nothing to hide with this, should they publish these rate cards even if that were only in the advertiser section so we all have visibility and thus more confidence in their integrity" to which 90% of respondents answered yes.

Our final question was to ask "What would you like to see happen with the job board market moving forward." We had a mix of response although most agreed a change needs to occur.

We concur but what??

A concern we have from these findings is the faith or lack thereof in the confidence of our respondents in the RCSA's ability to influence, drive change and take such initiative to actually support the recruitment industry in what would appear such a pressing issue.

It would appear there is a definite general animosity geared toward Seek's market position. The monopoly that they have is a dangerous position for us all. Quite simply if Seek decided to double their prices tomorrow, we could do nothing but open our cheque books even further and bow. Given their annual price hikes in reality it will only be a couple of years before the rates you are paying today are in effect actually doubled.

Most people currently consider Mycareer's position as the number two job board, however with their prices now inline with that of the dominant Seek yet the quite obviously blue sky between first and second peg, how much longer can they hold this position?

Unified support has come for Careerone and JobsJobsJobs even from those who haven't or don't currently use either job board. There seems a big support in wanting both to lift their games and to push Seek's position into jeopardy.

In conclusion, the recruitment industry without doubt needs the Job Boards, however the Job Boards more importantly need the recruitment industry and therefore who really has the position of power?