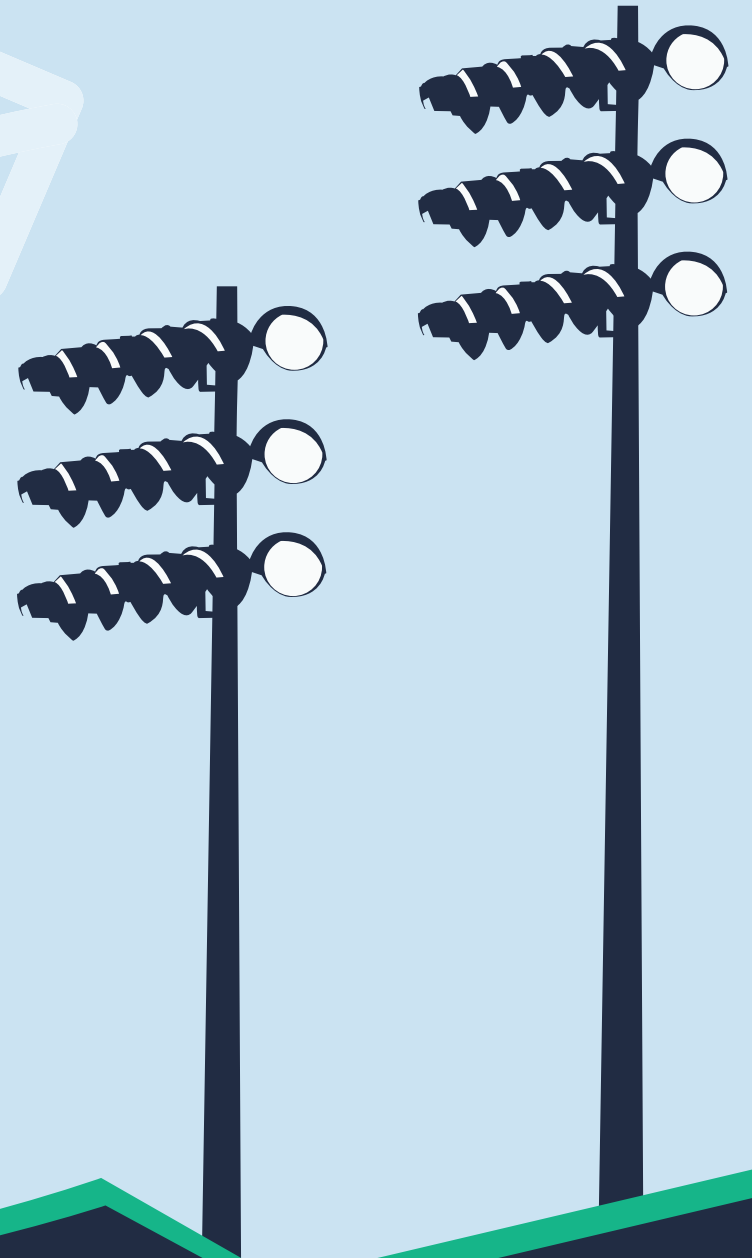


WORKINSPORTS'

STATE OF SPORTS HIRING REPORT.

2021

Work In
SPORTS
Powered by **iHire**

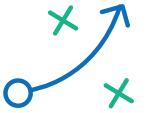




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2021

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WELCOME TO THE INAUGURAL EDITION OF WORKINSPORTS' STATE OF SPORTS HIRING REPORT.

The past 18 months have thrown the sports world the biggest curveball it's ever seen. The COVID-19 shutdowns in March 2020 impacted 1.3 million sports jobs, according to an [Emsi study](#), as employees were furloughed, laid off, or forced to reduce their hours. That figure isn't just accounting for athletes – coaches, trainers, statisticians, agents, concession stand attendants, radio and TV announcers, recreation workers, and many more roles found themselves on the sidelines in the wake of COVID.

Although stadiums, arenas, and gyms are reopening, much uncertainty remains on the horizon – especially for employers (and as we discovered the hard way in 2020, everything can change at the drop of a dime).

If you're a recruiting, staffing, or hiring professional in the sports business industry, you're likely struggling with filling or refilling positions. You may be finding that your laid-off or furloughed employees have since opted for new jobs and, in some cases, completely new career paths. Or, you're discovering that staff members are hesitant to come back to in-person roles and are searching for work elsewhere.

Whether or not we're really on the verge of a "Great Resignation," as many employment experts are predicting, a talent shortage is putting employers across industries (not just sports) in a pinch to hire. Despite today's 5.4% unemployment rate, 73.6% of employers surveyed in [iHire's 2021 State of Online Recruiting Report](#) said they're struggling with a lack of qualified applicants. Moreover, 77.0% anticipate the talent shortage to continue throughout the next 12 months.

Amidst mounting recruiting challenges and a labor market that could shift overnight, how can you, as a sports hiring professional, best attract qualified talent?

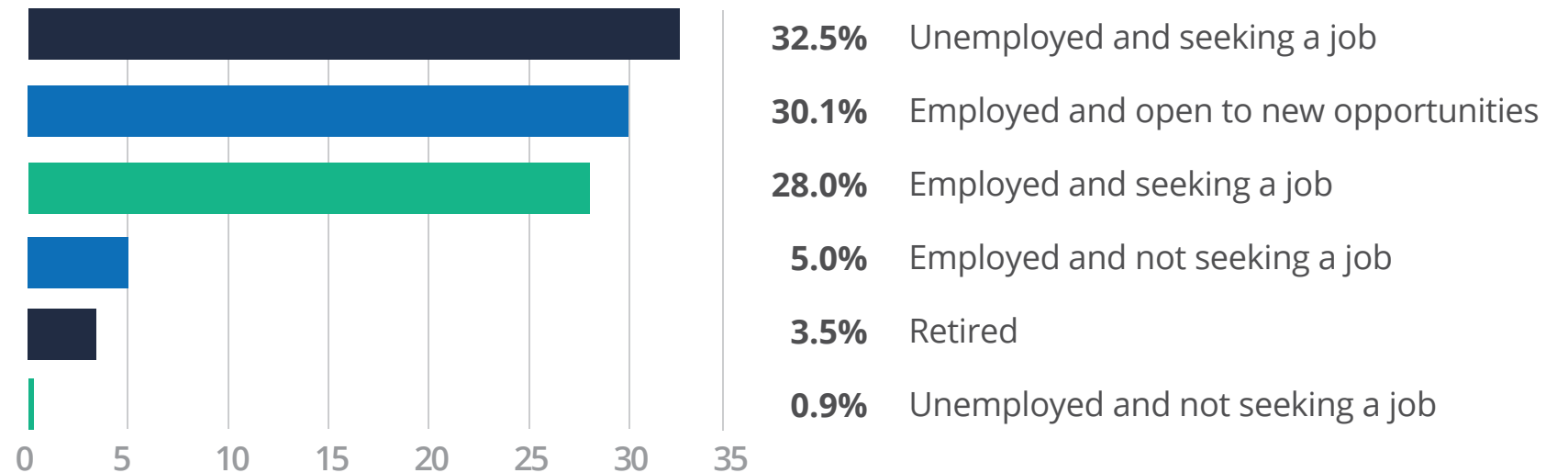
Herein, you'll find insights from WorkInSports' survey of 340 job seekers in the sports industry, from which you'll learn actionable tips for connecting with the right candidates in the coming months.



EMPLOYMENT STATUS SCORE

When WorkInSports conducted this survey in June and July of 2021, 32.5% of respondents were unemployed and looking for a job. However, 58.1% were employed and either actively or passively seeking a new job, suggesting a majority of sports professionals may be considering leaving their current roles and validating a potential "Great Resignation."

WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS?



OF THOSE UNEMPLOYED AND SEARCHING FOR A JOB:

28.5%

are looking for a new job because they are unsatisfied with their current or most recent employer.

18.0%

are searching because they were laid off due to COVID-19.

23.4%

are changing careers or exploring a new industry.

6.6%

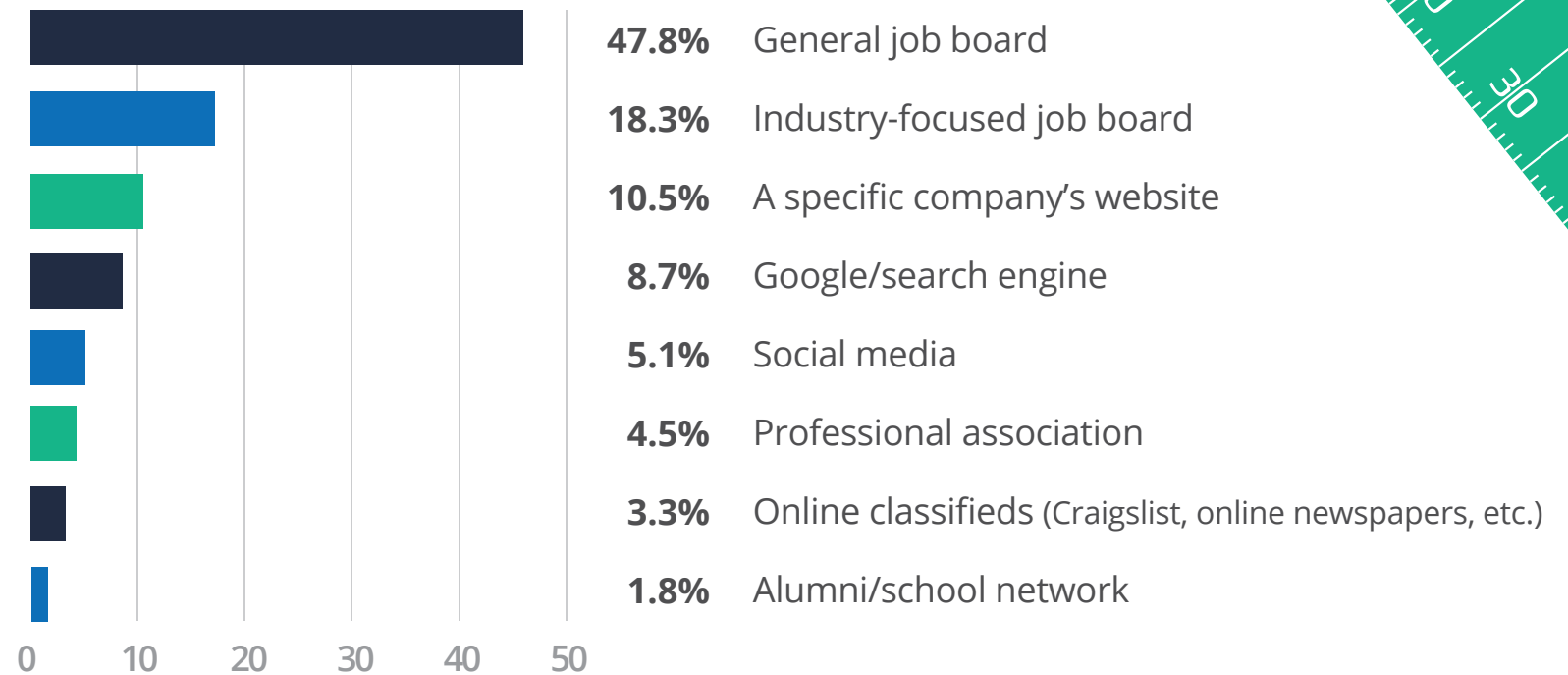
desire a more flexible work schedule.



JOB SEARCH HOME TURFS

To find the right sports candidates, you have to look in the right places. We asked survey participants where (online) they would look *first* if they needed to find a new job immediately. We found that 66.1% visit a job board first and foremost (47.8% preferred general job boards and 18.3% preferred industry-focused job boards). Other responses spread across the board, with company websites ranking third as a go-to spot (10.5%) and Google/search engines coming in fourth (8.7%).

IMAGINE THAT YOU NEED A NEW JOB IMMEDIATELY. WHERE (ONLINE) WOULD YOU LOOK FIRST?

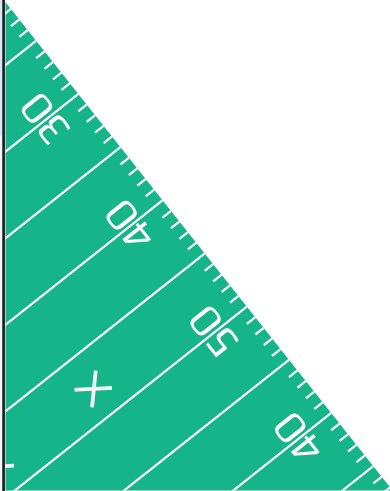
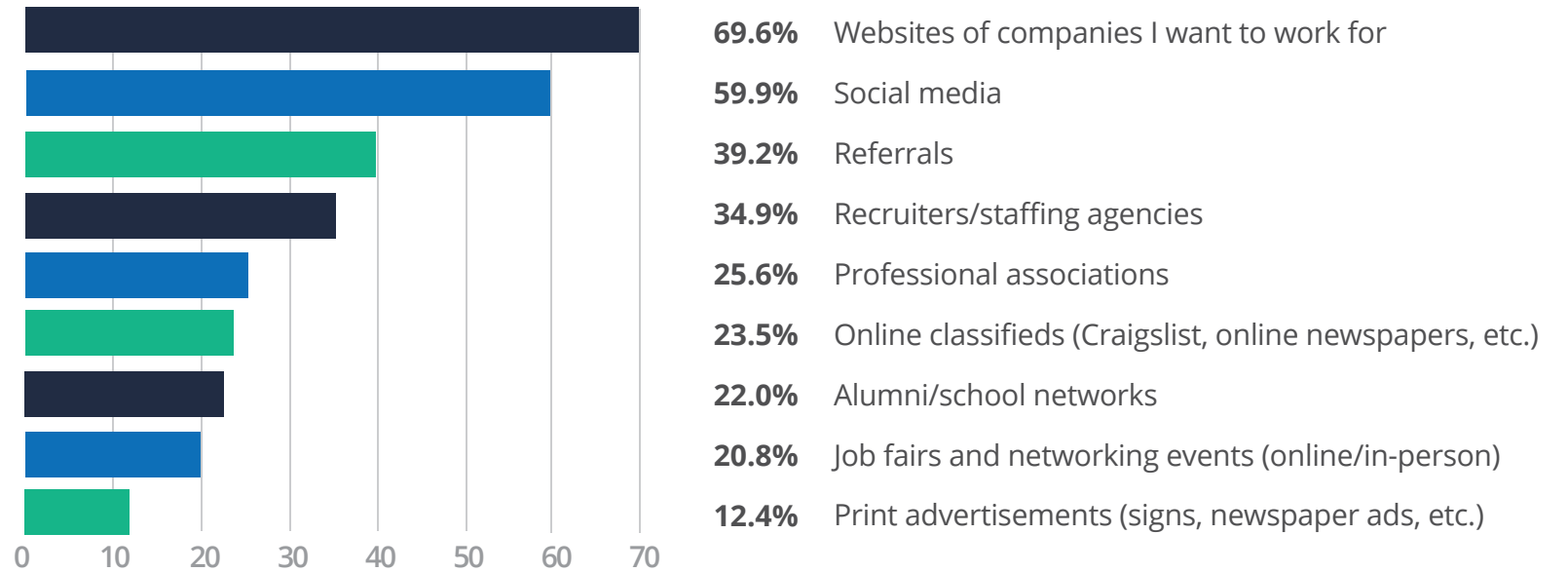




JOB SEARCH HOME TURFS

Aside from job boards, respondents cited a wide range of resources used in their job search. A majority (69.6%) visit websites of companies they want to work for, while 59.9% leaned on social media.

ASIDE FROM JOB BOARDS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES DO YOU USE TO SEARCH FOR WORK? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)





ONLINE JOB SEARCH CHALLENGES



Now that we know 66.1% of sports industry job seekers first visit job boards when they need to find work, what are their most significant challenges when using such platforms?

The top response, **“applying for jobs and not hearing back from employers,”** cited by 54.0% of survey participants, indicates that hiring managers and recruiters are falling short in communicating with applicants. Even if that’s due to a lack of time and resources, **“ghosting”** is a source of much candidate frustration.

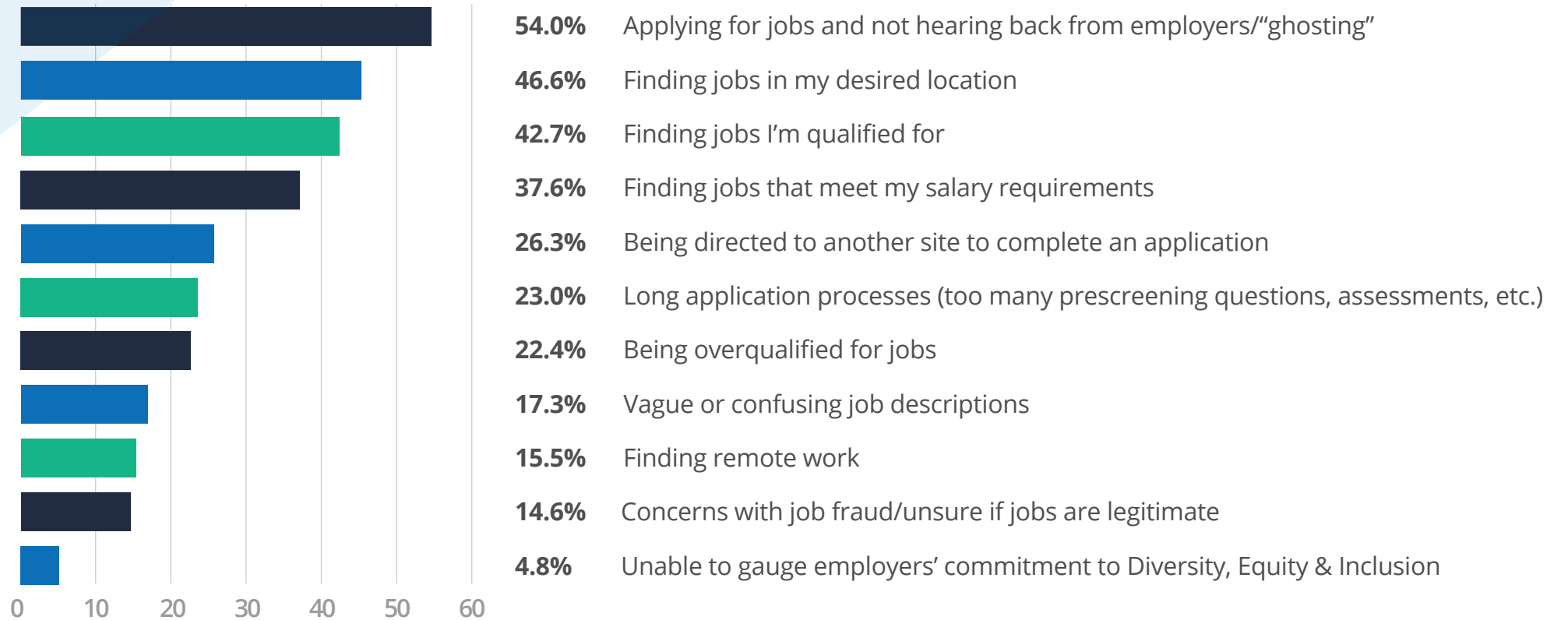
Moreover, 46.6% of job seekers **struggle to find work in their desired location** – understandable, as sports jobs tend to be more prolific within large, metro areas. 42.7% of respondents have trouble **finding jobs they are qualified for**, suggesting an industry-wide gap in preparing and upskilling entry-level candidates for careers in sports.

Approximately a quarter of job seekers grapple with **clunky and time-consuming online applications** – 26.3% dislike when a job board redirects them to another site to complete their application, and 23.0% are challenged with lengthy application processes.



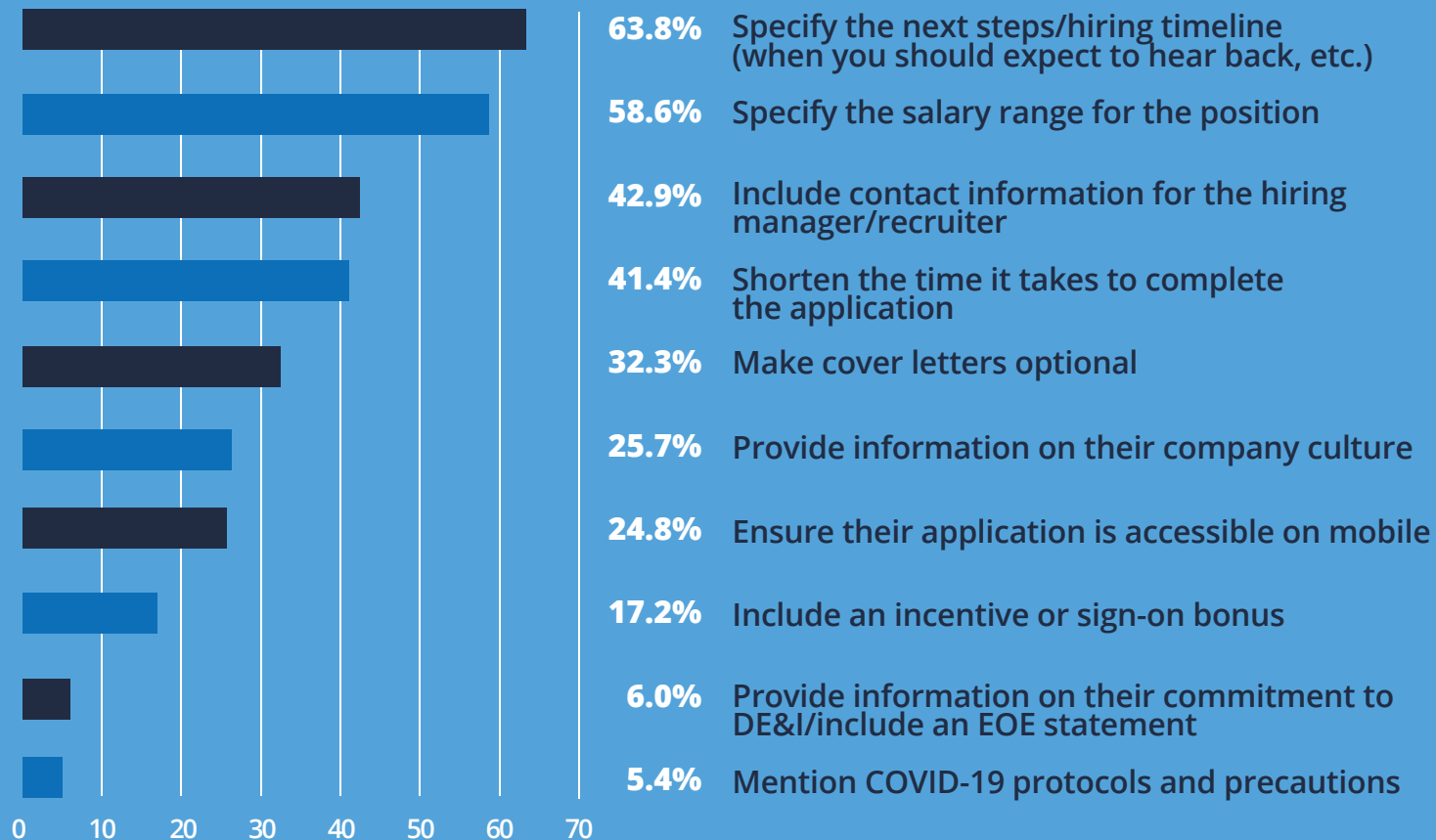
WHEN SEARCHING FOR WORK ON AN ONLINE JOB BOARD OR TALENT COMMUNITY, WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

ONLINE JOB SEARCH CHALLENGES



STEPPING UP YOUR JOB POSTING GAME

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COULD EMPLOYERS/RECRUITERS DO BETTER TO GET YOU TO APPLY FOR THEIR ONLINE JOB POSTINGS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



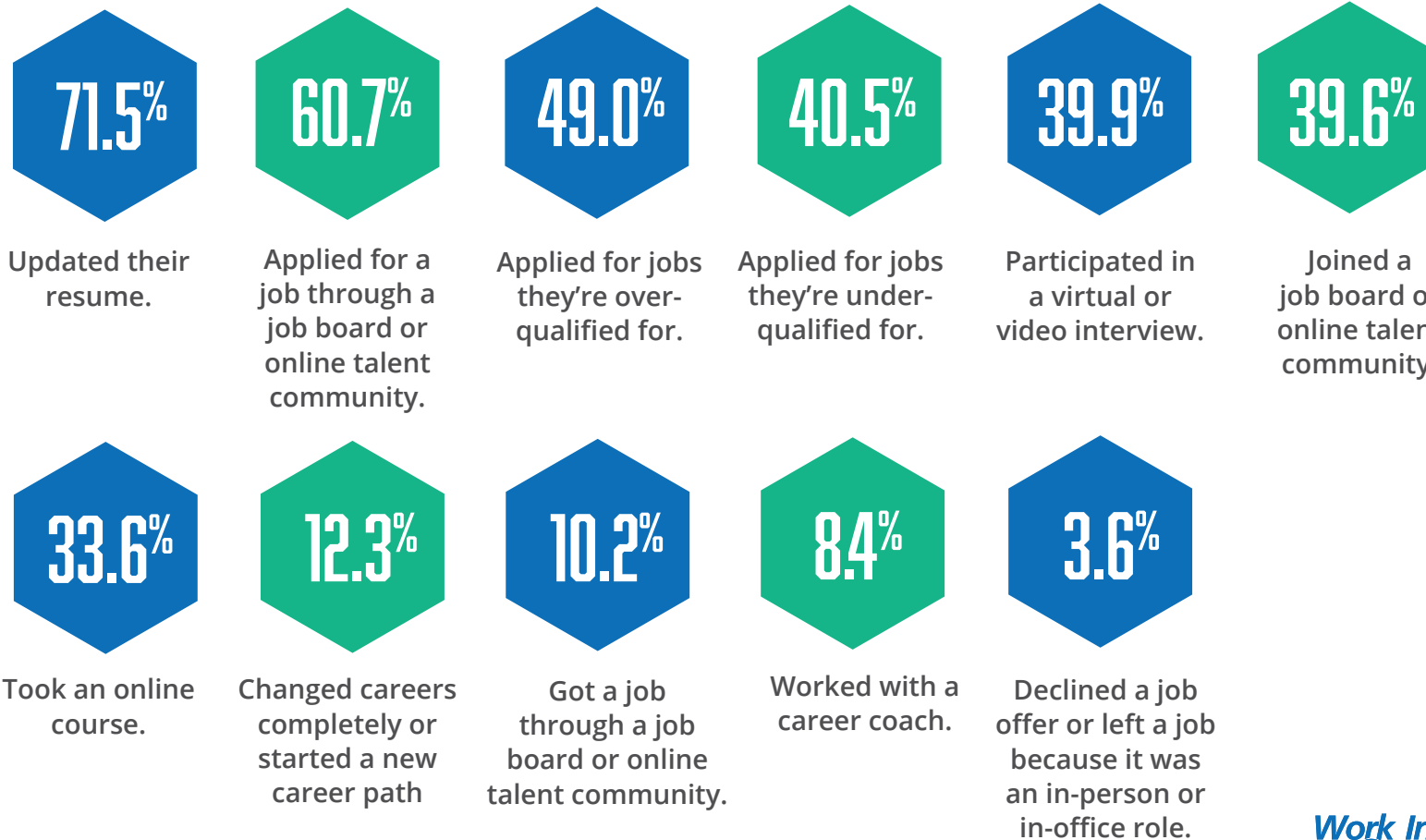
How can you ensure your job postings don't strike out when trying to attract the right candidates? In line with respondents' complaints about unresponsive recruiters, 63.8% of job seekers want employers to specify the next steps in the hiring process or describe their hiring timeline (such as when to expect to hear back) in their job postings. Similarly, 42.9% wish job ads included the contact information of the hiring manager or recruiter.

Noting the position's salary range was critical to 58.6% of respondents, while few candidates were concerned about mentions of incentives or sign-on bonuses (17.2%), DEI&I commitments (6.0%), and COVID-19 protocols and precautions (5.4%).



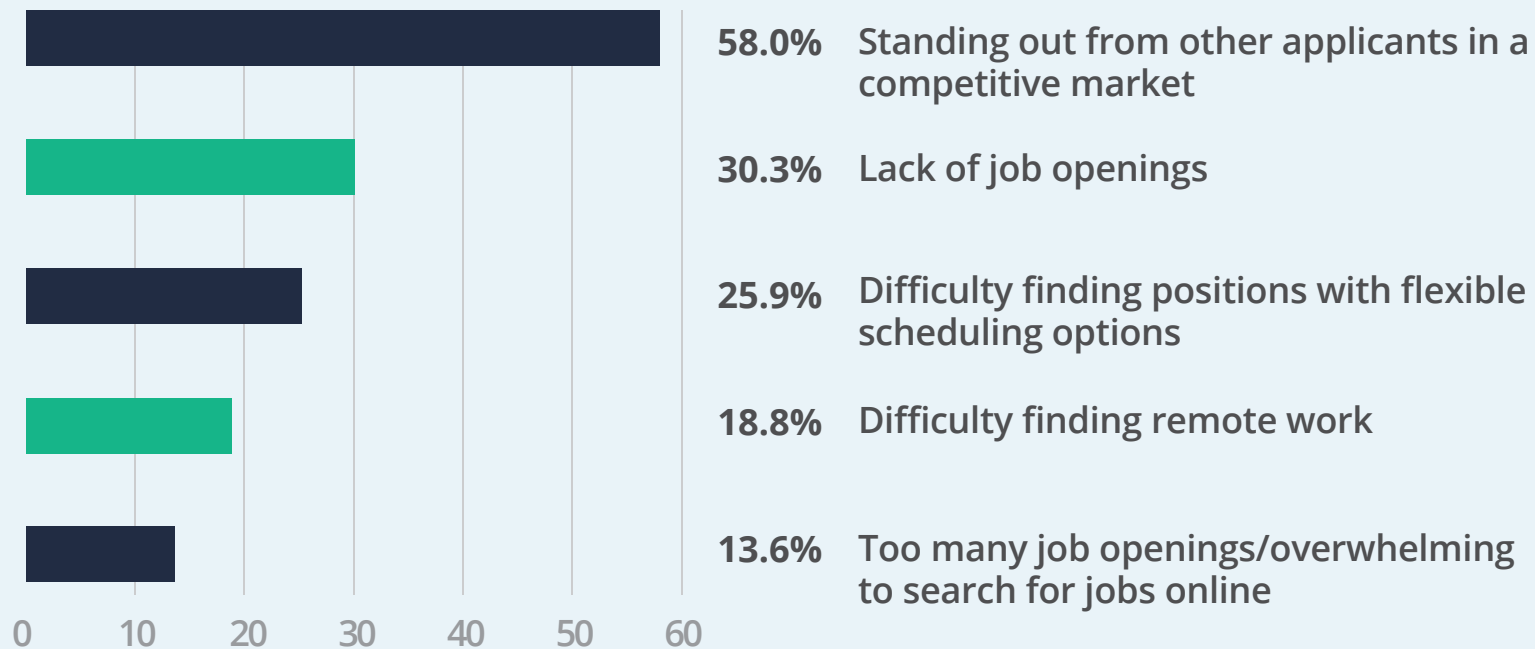
INSTANT REPLAY: JOB SEEKER RETROSPECTIVE

Throughout a turbulent year for the sports industry (and the world at large), how did candidates spend their time searching for jobs or furthering their careers? Here's what survey respondents said.

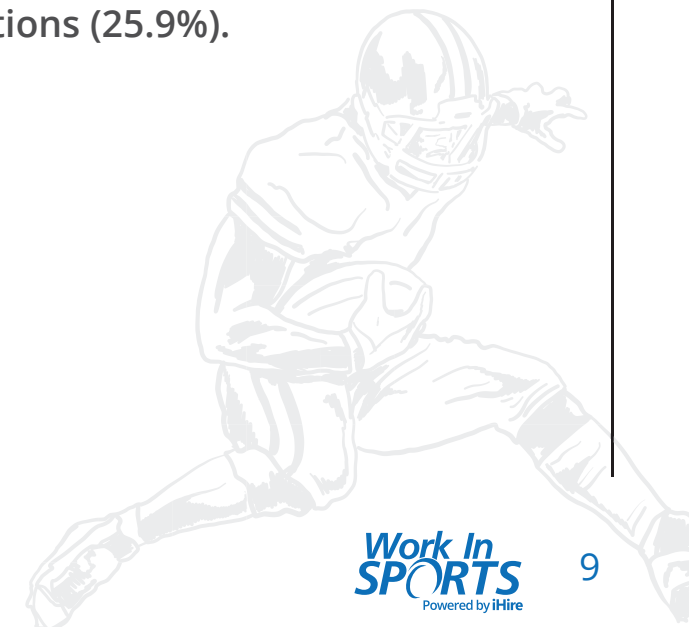


WHAT'S NEXT? RISING JOB SEARCH TRENDS

IN THE COMING YEAR, WHICH TRENDS DO YOU EXPECT TO IMPACT YOUR ONLINE JOB SEARCH EFFORTS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)



Lastly, we asked respondents to identify the trends they expect to impact their online job search in the coming year. By far, the top trend was “standing out from other applicants in a competitive market” (58.0%), followed by “a lack of job openings” (30.3%), and “difficulty finding positions with flexible scheduling options” (25.9%).





CONCLUSION

Sports hiring may continue venturing into unfamiliar turf in the coming months, but no organization can run without talented, passionate employees. Whether you need to hire (or rehire) one or 100 people, prepare to attract the right candidates by building strong employer brand, communicating with applicants and diversifying your recruiting resources, and ensuring potential talent doesn't fall out of the game because your job requirements are too stringent. Lastly, avoid team turnover by focusing on employee retention – keep your current staff satisfied with their jobs, even if that means revisiting and revamping your benefits and perks.

**FILL YOUR ROSTER WITH CAREER-MINDED SPORTS
TALENT FROM WORKINSPORTS**

[GET STARTED](#)



5 TAKEAWAYS: BUILDING YOUR TEAM WITH SPORTS-MINDED JOB SEEKERS



CHAMPION COMMUNICATION WITH APPLICANTS.

Job seekers' No. 1 challenge when searching for work online was a lack of response from employers after applying for jobs. Convincing high-quality talent to join your team requires feedback on your part – keep candidates in the loop during each stage of the recruitment process and let them know when they fall out of the running for a role. As job seekers suggested in this survey, you may also want to include your contact information and specify the next steps in your hiring timeline right in your job ad to set expectations for eager applicants.

LEAN ON JOB BOARDS BUT DIVER- SIFY YOUR SOURCING TOOLS.

You're bound to find candidates on job boards (66.1% of sports industry candidates visit job boards first when they need to find work ASAP), but try other resources to increase the changes you'll find the right hire. Aside from job boards, job seekers search for work on company websites (used by 69.6%), social media (59.9%), professional associations (25.6%), and alumni/school networks (22.0%), among others. When you go to promote a job posting, think about *where* that ideal applicant will be searching and ensure your ad is shared on that platform or platforms.



BUILD AND LEVERAGE YOUR BRAND.

Attracting modern talent requires a strong employer brand. That means using your recruitment marketing channels to tout your organization as a great place to work. For starters, **amplify your employer brand on your website** – 69.6% of job seekers look for jobs right on the website of companies they want to work for. Create and maintain a dedicated “Careers” page on your site that showcases your company culture through employee testimonials, videos, and photos. Describe your mission and values and list your current openings to entice potential hires.

THINK OF JOB REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF “MUST-HAVES” AND “NICE-TO-HAVES.”

To win the talent acquisition long game amidst a shortage of qualified applicants, **consider looking at job requirements through a different lens.** After all, 40.5% of job seekers surveyed applied for a job they’re underqualified for in the past year. Before beginning your search for the right candidate, identify which qualifications are “must-haves” (dealbreakers, like certain credentials), and which are “nice-to-haves” (skills that can be taught or experience that can be gained on the job), and note them in your job posting. This will ensure you don’t let potentially great talent slip through the cracks or deter a future rock star.

MAKE RETENTION PART OF YOUR RECRUITING GAME PLAN.

Of candidates surveyed, 58.1% were employed and either actively or passively seeking a new job – suggesting a majority are considering leaving their current roles. Don’t just think about how you can attract the right talent; **consider how you can keep talent aboard and prevent costly turnover.** This could involve revisiting your benefits, enhancing your total compensation packages, enabling more flexible scheduling, offering bonuses, and recognizing employees more frequently.



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

340 job seekers in the sports industry responded to WorkInSports' survey in June and July of 2021. The survey was conducted as part of parent brand [iHire's 2021 State of Online Recruiting Report](#). Respondents came from iHire and WorkInSports' job seeker database. All decimal points are rounded to the nearest tenth. For many questions, multiple answers could be selected so percentages add up to a sum greater than 100%. In some instances, survey questions were skipped by an individual respondent.

ABOUT WORKINSPORTS

Since 2000, WorkInSports has been widely recognized as the #1 source for jobs in the sports industry. With over 8,000 sports employers nationwide actively posting their latest openings, WorkInSports has helped thousands of job seekers follow their passion and discover their dream career in sports – while providing them with resume-matching technology, a sport management degree directory, and valuable career advice articles and podcasts. Visit www.WorkInSports.com for more information.

