

"Most notable, the number of jobs advertised over time has increased dramatically, partially tracking with a parallel increase in the number of members in the OD Network, and presumably, with the growth of the field of OD."

The Job Exchange Moves Forward (again...)

By Matt Minahan, Marti Kaplan and Georgeann Higgins

AS YOU READ this in the summer of 2003, the OD Network has partnered with NTL Institute and shifted our beloved, hi-touch Job Exchange to a more efficient, hi-tech Job Center. That gives us the opportunity to look back at the 16 years of Job Exchange history to look at patterns, trends, and a few anecdotes, too!

FROM THE BEGINNING, THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

The Job Exchange started in the fall of 1986 with a question. The Career Development Committee for the annual conference held in New York City had developed a way of sharing job information, and it was so popular that Karen Davis suggested that Marti Kaplan make a proposal to the Board of Trustees to invent the service and discover if OD Network members would support it. The question was: "Would members appreciate such a service?"

The Job Exchange has evolved through a number of technical setups. The first was a telephone tape recorder with a 10-minute message capacity into which Marti dictated the active jobs each week. Listeners called in, listened to the message, and wrote as fast as they could. One of the earliest 'upgrades' was requested by a listener; "Please say the contact information more slowly, Marti, and save my hand!" As the number of jobs grew,

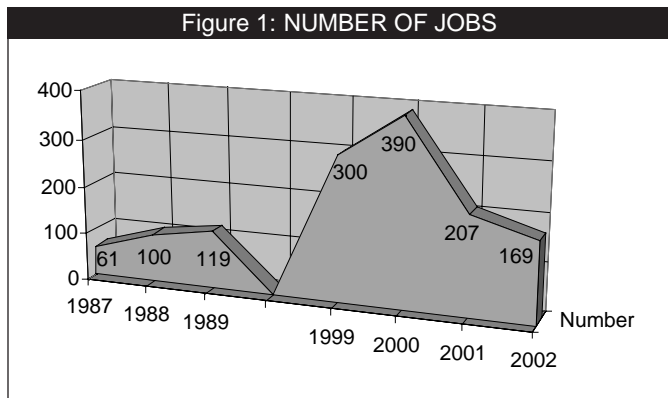
the tape was expanded to 30 minutes. When the number of jobs could no longer fit that 30-minute tape, and the third telephone tape recorder had burned out from overuse, the Job Exchange shifted to voicemail.

Voicemail enabled Marti, for the first time, to count the number of people calling in – the numbers kept rising, and when they hit about 300, they plateaued. After six months with no increase a second phone line was added, to see if the plateau was artificial, and, it was; the phone had been busy when people were trying to get through. When there were 600-700 calls a week, a third phone line was added, but the number of listeners didn't increase, so it was eliminated.

Marti instituted a 'hard copy' service, printing out the information, getting it copied and collated, and sending it out, for a small fee, often as many as 60-75 copies every other week.

The Job Exchange went big time in 1998, moving onto the OD Network website, due largely to the huge contribution of the OD Network's webmaster, Warren Hoffman. During the development process, Marti started sending the jobs out in an email. Over a hundred requests came in the first month and by the end of the year, over 1500 people a week were receiving the Job Exchange via email.

Once the searchable database went live on the website, we got thousands of hits a week from members and from non-members who buy a subscription. (Initially, the purpose of the Job Exchange was to provide a service to the field. But, associations



are member-driven organizations, and so when we moved the Job Exchange onto the website, the decision was reached to offer the service to members only, and allow non-members to purchase a quarterly subscription.

We continued to maintain the voicemail system until 2001, when it was averaging only 30-40 incoming calls a month. Marti still gets 2-3 phone calls a year from people wanting to know what the phone number is, and they sound very sad that that part of the system is no longer available.

THE JOBS: WHERE THEY'VE BEEN, HOW MUCH THEY'VE PAID, AND MORE

We've taken data from the first three years of the Job Exchange, 1987-1989, and from the last four years, 1999-2002, to draw some comparisons, and potentially, some conclusions.

Number of Jobs: Most notably, the number of jobs advertised over time has increased dramatically, partially tracking with a parallel increase in the number of members in the OD Network and with the growth of the field of OD (see Figure 1). The total number of jobs advertised has fallen off over the past two years, which is partially attributable to 9/11/01, but in actuality, had begun as early as March of that year, reflecting the bursting of the tech bubble and the overall softening of the economy (see Figure 2).

Comparing the first 3 months of 2003 to previous years, the number of jobs is up a bit over both 2001 and 2002, which offers some hope that, either the economy is starting to expand again,

Figure 2: JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS BY QUARTER

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
1999	66	78	75	82
2000	90	80	94	95
2001	87	34	36	43
2002	39	43	42	37
2003	45			

or the field is. It would be great if both were!

Salaries: Over the past four years, salary trends track closely with the overall economy. The highest salary ever offered on the Job Exchange (\$250,000) was in 1999, and has dropped noticeably since. Interestingly, that was also the year in which the lowest salary was offered.

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Low	36	52	45	44
High	250	237	175	160
Mean	92	108	112	133
Median	83	82	70	77

Between 1999 and 2002, the mean salary of jobs advertised in the Job Exchange increased by a whopping 45 percent. The increase in the mean, or average, is all the more dramatic, because during the same period, the highest salaries have been declining at approximately the same rate as the mean has been increasing, so it is clear that the increase in the mean is not due to high outliers.

But the news is not all good. The median salary, or the point at which half of the jobs were higher and half lower, has been trending downward since 1999 (see Figure 3). There was a corresponding increase in the number of training and development jobs advertised in the Job Exchange during this same period, so it is possible that those jobs are responsible for the downward median trend.

Job Titles: There don't appear to be any significant patterns looking at the shifts among job titles across the years 1999-2002; the overall numbers appear to reflect the overall volume of jobs listed, and the shifts across years don't add up to a discernable pattern (see Figure 4).

More interesting, however, is the mix of job titles, and what it may tell us about our field. Traditional HR titles (HR, Training, Executive/Management Development, Learning, and Employee Development) account for 363 jobs in our sample, compared to the clearest OD titles (Consultant/OD Anything, and Organization(al) Performance Consultant) which total 413. In terms of per-

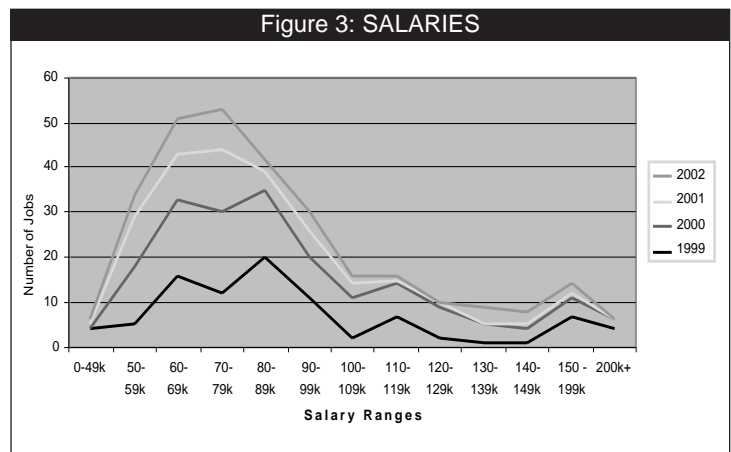
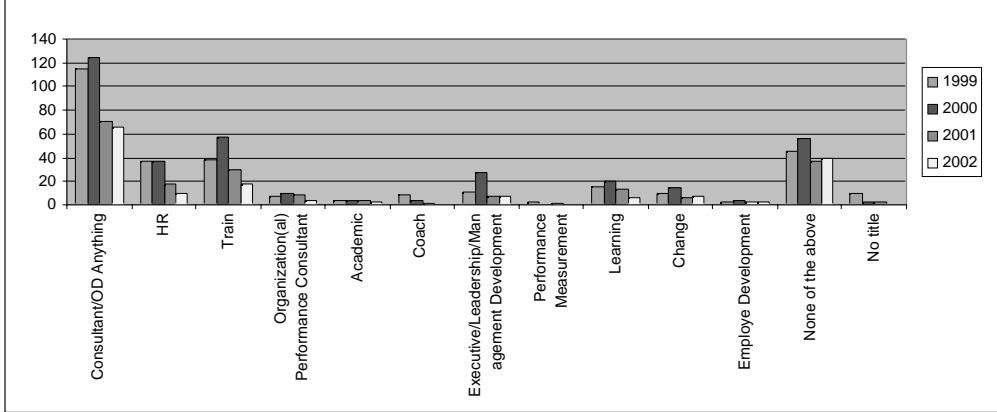


Figure 4: JOB TITLE VOCABULARY



words. The first is a noticeable shift toward more mainline, business-oriented skills. When the full list of 62 key words is viewed, there are noticeable increases in 2002 in terms such as *culture, evaluate, organization development, organization effectiveness, sustain, supervise, mediate, trust, and knowledge management*. While plenty of employers still want people who can work with employees at all levels of the organization, who

centages, HR related jobs account for 47 percent of the total, and OD related jobs account for 53 percent. The HR-titled jobs contained between 25-50 percent of OD work; very few were really OD jobs under cover of a non-OD title.

Jobs by Position: Similar to the job title analysis, analyzing the jobs by level within the company (*intern/part-time, staff, manager/director/leader, executive/VP*) did not offer any significant patterns across the years 1999-2002; the overall numbers appear to reflect the overall volume of jobs listed, and the shifts across years don't add up to a discernable pattern. If anything, the only trend across the four years is the fairly consistent proportion of the categories to the total number of jobs, meaning each category grew and shrunk proportionately to the number of jobs posted that year (see Figure 5).

Job Content: A keyword analysis of the text of 1999-2002 job announcements yields an interesting pattern. All forms of the work *develop* were mentioned more than twice as often as *consult* and *train* and three times more frequently than *design, change, and strategy*. Interestingly, all of the top 15 key words show noticeable increases in usage in 2002 over previous years, despite the fact that there were more announcements in all three previous years (see Figure 6).

TOWARD THE BUSINESS, AND HR

There are two shifts underway as evidenced in these key

Figure 5: JOBS BY POSITION

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Intern/PT	4	3	4	2
Staff	147	190	101	87
Management	126	150	77	61
Executive Management	20	14	16	11
Totals	297	357	198	161

empathize/listen/vision etc., the emphasis appears to be moving toward more concrete, MBA-like skills.

Starting in the mid-90's, there was an increase in 'OD-plus' jobs: OD and HR, OD and Compensation, OD and Internal Communications, where the job was 25-50 percent OD. Confirming that shift is an overall increase in the proportion of jobs with a strong HR orientation. Terms such as *HR, succession planning, training, and competency* are increasingly being used in job announcements. In 2001 and 2002, even though the number of

Figure 6: TOP 20 KEYWORDS

	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
develop	903	1287	686	718	3594
consult	431	526	314	255	1526
train	350	517	298	273	1438
design	312	467	265	239	1283
change	274	337	193	188	992
strateg	242	325	198	187	952
leadership	215	327	189	189	920
plan	202	275	163	168	808
implement	193	263	154	164	774
process	213	279	135	123	750
HR	161	170	144	149	624
facilitate	147	204	109	120	580
communicate	142	207	87	114	550
organizational development	135	180	75	128	518
assess	107	159	82	114	462
improv	100	150	90	68	408
systems	131	143	68	71	413
analyze	96	102	76	71	345
coach	95	120	63	59	337
intervene	68	95	52	68	283

MARTI'S STORY

I ran the service for six months as a volunteer, after which it was clear that our members were interested in the service, much more so than could be managed as a volunteer! So, the OD Network Board at the time agreed to develop a contract with me to provide a turnkey operation. I owned all the equipment and managed the phone lines; ODN paid a monthly stipend, costs and a portion of the income.

There were four system upgrades over the years, with the system becoming more sophisticated over time, but it was still just my voice. I used to joke that I had coast-to-coast voice recognition. I'd get warm fuzzies from people; if I had a cold, for example, I'd get the occasional phone call or get-well card. Occasionally I'd go out of town on vacation or to do some consulting work, and when I got back, people would call to welcome me back, and say they had wondered where I was.

About a year after I started the service, I checked my voicemail for the third time that day to find that the message box was full. But there were only four messages. I noted down the first three, and when I keyed up the fourth, wonderful music filled my ears. I put the message on speaker phone, and it played for 25 minutes. Every few months, for about a year and a half, I'd get this wonderful, anonymous gift. I've always attributed it to a Job Exchange listener, but never really knew.

People were inordinately helpful when I made mistakes. One time I read the first half of one job and finished with the second half of another. Within 15 minutes, I got a phone call, saying that it was a little confusing. And any time my contact information was wrong, I'd get a call from one or more people letting me know. Quality felt like a shared responsibility, and I really appreciated the help!

One morning the doorbell rang at 8:15 am. I ran downstairs in my bathrobe, and when I opened the door, a grumpy looking man said, "I've come to fix your phone line." Nonplussed, I said, "there's nothing wrong with my phone line." "Oh, yes," he said, "There is. We've had 18 phone calls already this morning telling us the line is out of service." He clomped down cellar, and after about 10 minutes clomped up again, and walked out the door. I was surprised – he hadn't even asked me to sign a form! An hour later, he stuck his head in the door, and hollered, "It's fixed." Half-laughing, I asked what had taken so long. He said, "Squirrels ate through the phone line outside, and I had to replace it."

announcements dropped (from 198 to 159), the number of announcements with a strong HR orientation (defined as jobs that mention "HR" or "human resource(s)" at least 4 times) did not drop proportionately (from 22 to 20). This indicates that the elasticity in the market is with OD, not HR.

Occasionally, jobs would come in that didn't seem to fit, but the search firm/employer wanted to use the Job Exchange. When sales-oriented OD jobs were posted in the first decade, they got almost no response. That has changed now, apparently due to the economy and the large number of graduate students coming into the OD job market, tightening up the market even further. Probably the most interesting job of this sort was for a new CEO of the Tennessee Valley Authority. When we called the search firm, they said, "TVA insisted we advertise with you, and no one else. They want that mindset!"

Jobs by State: The clear winner for advertising jobs in our field is California, with 41 percent more jobs than New York, and 4 for every 3 from New York. However, in comparing regions, it's almost a tie. The West (CA, TX, WA) advertises 302 jobs compared with 326 jobs from the Northeast (NY, NJ, PA, MA, and CT) (see Figure 7).

There has been a clear trend of jobs moving west in recent years. Between 1987 and 1989, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania combined advertised 3.5 jobs for every one job advertised in California, Texas, and Washington. By 1999-2002, the ratio was almost one to one (see Figure 8).

New England, and Massachusetts in particular, was initially a strong center for OD jobs. However, when Digital Equipment Company closed its major Boston area offices, there were no jobs listed from Massachusetts for two years.

In the first five years, there were almost no jobs posted in the mid-west. A few showed up in the early 90's, and by the mid-90's, there was a relative balance of jobs posted from across the nation. In the past few years, Canadian jobs are being advertised.

Who Advertises: In the early years of the Job Exchange, almost 50 percent of the jobs were advertised by executive search firms. More recently, the percentage has dropped to less than 25 percent, a decline which was well underway in 1999, even during the strength of economy and the major growth in the

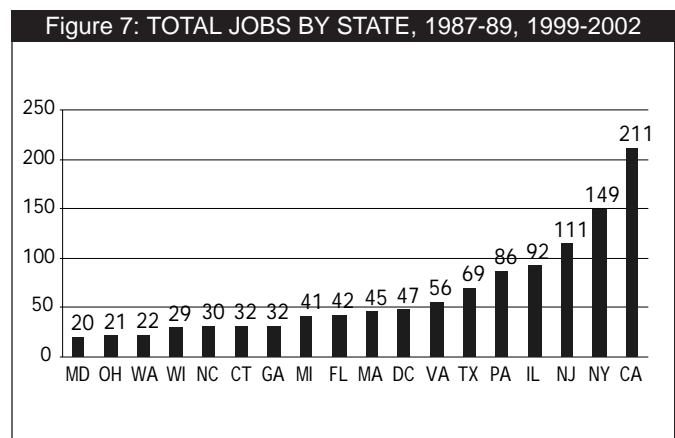
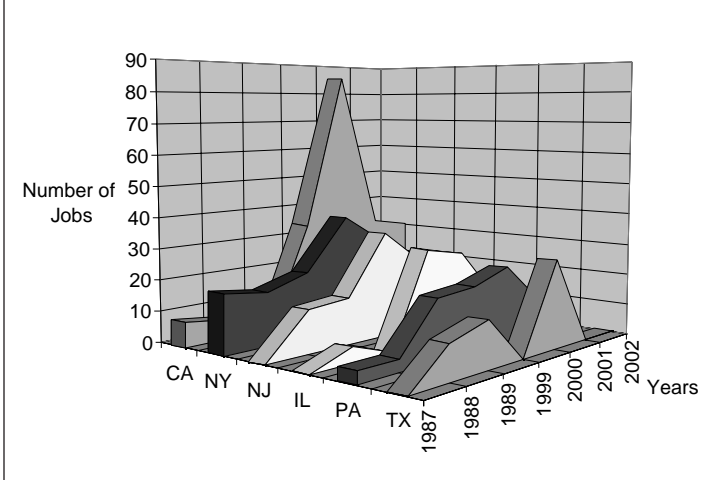


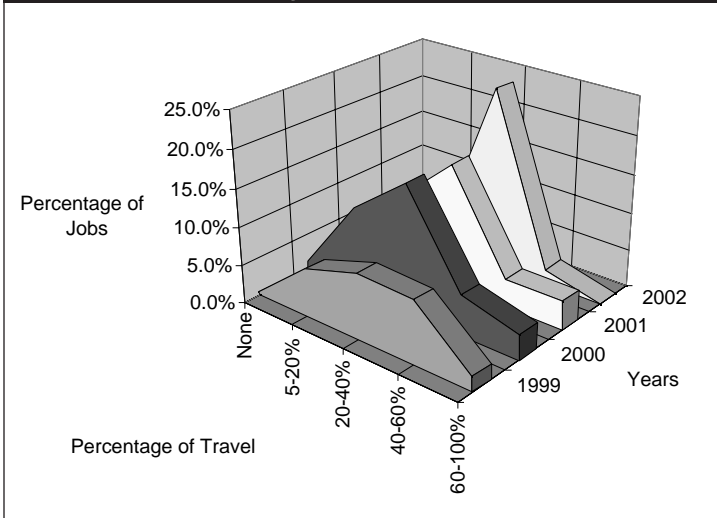
Figure 8: JOBS BY MAJOR STATE



field. Abbott Smith was one of the early search firms to list with the Job Exchange. In fact, David Brinkerhoff, President of Abbott Smith Associates provided the idea that became the first version of the Job Exchange, and has been willing to give feedback on new ideas, and to test out upgrades as they came along. Other search firms that have worked with the Job Exchange for over a decade include HRD Consultants, Vogel Associates, Salvesson Stetson Group, and O'Hare Associates, Inc.

How Employers Invite Contact: Most jobs today invite applications via snail mail, fax, and email. Our first fax listing was in 1989, but more recently in 1999, fax and snail mail were virtually tied. It was in 2000 that email became the preferred contact mode with 76 percent (2000), 87 percent (2001), and 77 percent (2002) of all jobs listed. Web sites are becoming increasingly popular as well, with 16 percent of jobs in 2002 indicating a website, either to provide more information about the company, or, more often, to apply for the position. Interestingly, there seems to be a recent increase in the number of jobs supplying just one mode of contact. In 2001 and 2002, there were more than 20 jobs

Figure 9: TRAVEL



that listed only a fax number, web page, or email address, with no other contact options.

Travel Demands: There has been an obvious, and significant, increase in travel demands over the past few years, with almost one quarter of all jobs demanding between 20 and 40 percent travel time, while the number of jobs demanding 40-100 percent travel increased during 2000 and 2001, and then decreased during 2002. The pattern seems to be counter-cyclical with the economy overall, and with the rise in alternatives, such as video and teleconferencing (see Figure 9).

The Future: The next stage of life for the OD Network's Job Exchange looks much better for members, and, reflecting the times we live in, is less personal. Its new name is The Job Center; it is being offered in collaboration with NTL Institute, and is much more sophisticated. Resumes can be posted, and respondents can modify them over time or for specific jobs. Job seekers can manage their account, and take advantage of tickler files reminding them to send thank you notes and follow up letters. Employers and search firms can track their openings to see the level of response. They can search the resume database. In short, it has all the bells and whistles of today's technology.

What it won't have is the personal voice – and loving touch – of its founder and operator for the past 16 years. In a world of call centers, phone trees and web pages, that's saddening. And while the new system might be more efficient, you can be certain that the server won't receive any get well cards or long passages of phone mail music from its members! ■

AUTHORS

MATT MINAHAN, Ed.D. is president of MM & Associates, a small consulting firm specializing in strategic planning and organization design. He teaches group development and coordinates the ODNNet email discussion lists, which, in addition to his work with client groups, consulting teams, and his family, gives him lots of opportunities to practice. He can be reached at matt@minahangroup.com.

MARTI KAPLAN cofounded the Job Exchange in 1986, and has evolved and managed it since then. Having worked primarily with small organizations throughout her career, she now lives in upper New York state, and writes.

GEORGEANN HIGGINS is a research associate at the National Academies in Washington, D.C., and a 2004 MBA candidate at Johns Hopkins University, concentrating in management and facilitation skills. She has an MA in philosophy and an MS in library/information science. Georgeann can be reached at ghiggin2@jhu.edu.