What role can jobs search engines play in mitigating COVID-induced unemployment?

To find out, Maddyness spoke to Andrew Hunter, cofounder of Adzuna. He covers working with British stalwarts like the ONS and NHS, and how Adzuna can use data to maximise chances of success in these difficult times.

The Bank of England expects that unemployment triggered by a COVID-19 recession will peak at 7.75% – the highest rate since 2013 – in the middle of 2021. Businesses, governments and recruitment sites all have a role to play in getting people back into work.

Adzuna's Andrew Hunter lives this first hand, being as he is at the helm of a website that aggregates job listings from several thousand sources in the UK alone. I spoke to Andrew about what makes Adzuna stand out as an aggregator – and its plan to get 100,000 people into work post-pandemic.

[Maddyness] What differentiates Adzuna

from other jobs search engines – both on the hiring and applying side?

[Andrew]

1. Abundance – We index over 95% of job ads in Britain in the Adzuna search engine. The completeness and freshness of our index is hugely important to us.
2. Insightful data – With this abundance of ads at our finger-tips we are able to mine our search-index to produce unique insight into what's going on in the job market. In jobs, we truly believe that this data is stronger than anything else out there on the job market. Adzuna's statistics help job seekers at a granular level, but also feed into the Office for National Statistics, the Department for Work & Pensions, Number 10 and the Bank of England.
3. Innovation – Many of our product features are unique. For example, <u>ValueMyCV</u> allows users to find out how much they should be earning, based on the skills, experience and other details in their CV. The tool also helps users enhance their value in the job market by making simple suggestions to highlight your value to employers, and helps you map your career path by suggesting next steps on the career ladder for you.

How do you use stats/data to maximise the user's experience and chances of success?

Statistics can be found on Adzuna for every job title and sector imaginable. Our depth of location data is something we're particularly proud of, for example a bartender in Clapham in South London can easily see if they could get a pay rise by looking for work in neighbouring Wandsworth. That's hugely powerful.

We are strong believers in arming jobseekers with as much information as possible, to help them make better career decisions. The more data a candidate has at their fingertips, the higher the chance they'll find the right role and be successful landing a job. With that in mind, we bake data insights into our user experience wherever we can.

How did your operations change during COVID? You mention you've recently worked with the NHS and the ONS. Could you expand on that?

Adzuna partnered with the NHS back in March of this year to promote hundreds COVID-19 critical roles across the UK. The roles ranged from nurses and practitioners to radiographers, housekeepers and paramedics. The partnership tapped into our audience of over 3 million job-seeking Brits and resulted in many NHS roles being filled in record time. We continue to support the NHS, pro bono, up and down the country.

Later in the spring, we expanded our partnership with the ONS to provide up to the minute hiring data, including powering the ONS's weekly Faster Indicator reports. In times of crisis, fast and reliable data is critical to decision making and we're proud Adzuna was selected as the 'go-to' source of up to the minute job market data for this.

How do you plan to achieve and measure your goal of getting 100,000 people into work post COVID-19?

It certainly won't be easy, but we're well on our way. Over the last six months the team have doubled down efforts to stimulate hiring and help people into work. From the individual jobseeker looking for job hunting tips during the pandemic, to launching new hiring, data and content partnerships like those we've already kicked off with the NHS, the Office for National Statistics and the Financial Times.

We believe that the job market recovery from this recession has the opportunity to be different to previous financial crises. Businesses like Adzuna have the technology to analyse data, help people make smarter decisions and tools to connect job seekers to jobs like never before. The hiring landscape in Britain is changing so rapidly that this data and the need to embrace technology is more crucial than ever before.

Our mission is to be part of this national comeback

story and to serve our industry as best we can to help people up and down the country find jobs, fast.

The beauty of being an online platform is that we measure (in a very granular way) how many people who have used our platform and then gone on to make applications and ultimately land a job. Since the beginning of the pandemic, when we set this lofty goal, we've helped tens of thousands of people find work. There's still a way to go to get to 100,000, but we truly believe that if we continue on this path and achieve a few more breakthroughs, with hard work, we can get to 100K.

When it comes to dealing with current unemployment levels, should the onus be on the government, businesses, recruitment sites or a combination? What's your take on how we solve this together?

It needs to be a combination of all three. We're on a mission to Get Britain Hiring, but this will only come off the back of confidence from the business community. The biggest possible thing we can do as a society to help stimulate hiring levels is get rid of the virus. With COVID-19 eradicated, confidence will start to rise again among employers, businesses and consumers, and more people can start getting back to work.

The government also needs to provide good quality help to the newly unemployed. Part of this will be mobilising the public and private sector. This requires huge government funding.

Technology and recruitment sites will also have a part to play in helping Britain deal with the looming unemployment crisis. In particular, digital tools offer the ability to see and adapt to job market data in real time, to connect jobseekers and employers, and to connect people with training. If ever there were a time for job websites to prove their worth, it's right now!

When you say the hiring landscape is changing rapidly – what are you referring to? Do you have any views on the green jobs market?

Hiring in Britain is down 30%. Some sectors (such as Hospitality) are down 60%. So the number of jobs has reduced dramatically, but the number of jobseekers has doubled (and looks set to double again by January), meaning we're seeing a huge supply and demand imbalance in the hiring landscape right now.

The UK labour market is fiercely competitive for jobseekers and looks set to remain that way for the next six-12 months. Jobseekers must look to sectors who are bucking the trend when it comes to hiring.

Logistics, Healthcare and Manufacturing to name a few. I'd also add green energy jobs to the list, but right now, the number of 'green' job vacancies pales in comparison to other buoyant sectors.

And finally, a more personal question!

We've started asking everyone we interview about their daily routine and the rules they live by. Is it up at 4am for yoga, or something a little more traditional?

I feel fortunate to live in the Kent countryside. Every morning I'm up at 6.30am and you'll find me walking my black labrador Ben on the footpaths and bridleways around Tunbridge Wells. A walk first thing (rain or shine!) clears my head, wakes me up and energises me for the day!

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