

**Online recruitment advertising increased 50% between 2003 and 2004. The UK market is now worth over £100m – no wonder it has the attention of the large community-based internet players.**

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In March 2005 Friends Reunited Jobs was launched following the acquisition of TopDogJobs.com. Friends Reunited has 12 million members and they are not only looking for love. Friends Reunited claim to have 43% of the UK adult internet population as members; a compelling reason to branch out into other areas.

Friends Reunited's ambition is to have 100,000 jobs posted each month. Their approach leverages on their core product and linking and reuniting people in workplaces.

Why is this significant? Friends Reunited are using the internet to transform how people interact and make 'matches'. While their audience is mainly mass-market, it is not inconceivable that this will naturally migrate to the search for senior talent.

According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau's 2004 survey, online recruitment advertising spend in the UK grew to £121 million from £81 million in 2003. This is 75% of all online classified spending and includes banners, sponsorships and email advertising.

Enhance Media believes that "these figures continue to illustrate the growth of online recruitment and the fact that more and more employers are taking advantage of the compelling benefits that recruiting online has to offer".

Another big name that has ventured into the online job market is ebay. Through its UK site gumtree.com, ebay, like Friends Reunited, are utilising Gumtree's community site, designed to connect people who were either planning to move, or had just arrived in London, and needed help getting started with accommodation, employment and social opportunities.

Gumtree claims it is London's largest flat share and job site, as well as one of the city's best local 'buy and sell' forums. With local sites in the UK, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, they have an interesting platform from which to expand into other markets. With ebay's marketing power behind it, Gumtree could soon be another household brand.

Linkedin.com is another community site with almost 3 million members. Job posting is an important part of its revenue model with over 4 million job opportunities posted by members and employers/recruiters. Although very US-centric, the concept is quickly catching on in the UK.

The principle of all of these sites is that everyone has a network which is connected to other networks. The interlinking of these networks results in a massive spider-web of connections. For those actively looking for opportunities these community-based sites can provide a mechanism beyond traditional methods. And for employers and recruiters they provide a new way of 'headhunting' top talent.