

Job Hunts Blossom On Slack

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FULL TEXT

Companies have embraced Slack to speed up office communication. Now, workers are using the messaging tool to fast-track job hunts.

Slack enables workplace teams to trade information instantly but it also hosts independent channels for people who don't work together. In the past two years, Slack-based networking groups have grown, providing a way for members to swap career advice and tips.

Many job seekers say they are turning to these invite-only networking forums to land new roles -- often much faster than they would have through traditional job-application methods.

"It was nuts," says Clark Barron of how quickly he found a new marketing job in May after joining the Cybersecurity Marketing Society, a Slack group started in March 2020.

He submitted a request to join the Slack channel after professional contacts introduced him to it. Before he was let in, one of the group's members touted his experience to others and flagged that he was looking for a job.

Within a week of joining the Slack channel, Mr. Barron, who lives in Huntsville, Ala., estimates he took about 20 calls for interviews and introductory conversations.

One was with an employee at the cybersecurity company Nisos, who connected him with more people working there. Within a couple of days of his first conversation with the company, he says he received a job offer. He is scheduled to start this week.

Slack Technologies, which is owned by Salesforce.com Inc., says it doesn't know how many networking groups exist on its platform, but a search found networking channels for professionals in technology, human resources, sales, recruiting and other fields. They range from MKTG WMN for women in marketing to the Customer Education Org for specialists in product instructions, and many say their memberships have grown over the pandemic.

One Slack group, Blacks in Technology, estimates it has amassed close to 8,000 members since it started about seven years ago -- including roughly 3,000 in the past two years, according to group founder Greg Greenlee.

Job matches often come about from employees sharing opportunities at their companies. For groups devoted to professionals from underrepresented backgrounds, peer endorsements of companies and their cultures are powerful, some members say.

"If you had a person vouching for a company, that's going to speak a lot louder than a recruiter coming in and just posting a job and saying, 'We're looking for diverse talent,'" Mr. Greenlee says.

Workplace and industry forums also exist on Reddit, Fishbowl and Discord, but their users tend to post anonymously. Many Slack forums include members' real names and workplaces. (Members also can privately message one another.)

Stephanie Ciccone-Nascimento, a career coach who also trains recruiters, belongs to seven Slack communities. Such groups are especially helpful for people shifting into new fields, she says.

Maria Velasquez, who co-founded and helps administer the Cybersecurity Marketing Society, landed a new job via the group this year. She met her future boss, Chris Kolling of Feroot Security, last fall when he asked the Slack group for advice on data translation and she told him about a tool she had used.

Later that year, when he posted a job opening to the group. Mrs. Velasquez responded quickly -- and got hired. She started at the Toronto security-software provider in February.

"I'm no longer just a resume on the pile," she says. "The community knows me on a personal level."

Credit: By Lindsay Ellis

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