

Hotjob.be: The Project

Portal Services

The services available at the Hotjob.be portal are divided into two main groups based on the type of external user: access for individuals and access for employers.

The following table summarizes the different products for each type of user.

Hotjob Products	
Product	Description
Services for Individuals	
<i>Jobs</i> : help-wanted listings	Search by criteria and tree. Users can save their search as well as opt to receive results by email. Registration is mandatory for using this service.
<i>Jobspot</i> : employers recruiting	Job offers can also be viewed by employer or based on the user's profile. Applications can be sent directly to the potential employer. Registration is mandatory for using this service.
<i>CV en ligne</i> : on-line CV postings	The Hotjob site has a standard on-line CV posting setup. Users can contact client service (the back office) for help. CVs remain active at the site for three months, and can be regularly updated and reposted. CV hit statistics can also be viewed.
<i>Inscription en ligne</i> : on-line registration with FOREM	Gives new users access to the various services.
<i>Mode d'emploi</i> : how-to and employment information	This is primarily an information service. It tries to answer frequently asked questions such as how to choose a career, the best way to look for a job, what about labour laws etc. Site registration is not required for access to this service.
<i>Se former</i> : training opportunities	This area has a wealth of information about training opportunities in Belgium and abroad. Users can find out about existing skills centres and internship formulas. The service also includes a set of links to training-related sites in Belgium and elsewhere.
<i>Espace jeunes</i> : sources for young people	The youth area is intended to address the specific needs of young people. It explains options upon leaving school, how to handle first job interviews, how to write a first CV, etc.
Services for Employers	
<i>Jobs</i> : help-wanted listings	The more or less customized listing created by the employer is posted at the site within 48 hours. Hit statistics for the listing concerned can also be viewed. Employer registration with Hotjob is mandatory for using this service.
<i>Jobspot</i> : customized job offers	Employers have the option of customizing their job offers to make them more attractive and visible at the site by including, for example, images. A fee is charged for this service.
<i>Focus</i> : hiring pool management	This service enables employers to create up to three candidate pools for profiles they regularly hire. There is also a fee for this service.
<i>CV en ligne</i> : on-line CV listings	This service enables employers to consult the database of job-seekers. Employers can do a search based on various criteria. Although the service is free, site registration is mandatory for using it.

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<i>Espace entreprises</i> : sources of practical information	This area has a bundle of useful information. The main topics are occupations (dictionary of trades and professions for writing job offers), employment contracts, social security, useful tips for new business launchers.
<i>Formation</i> : employee training	This service provides training information for employers. It also describes the various subsidies available to employers for employee training, and includes a set of links to sites related to both employer and employee training.
Services for All	
<i>My Hotjob</i>	This new service enables users to access customized information at a single location. After logging in, users can check the CVs or job offers that match their criteria. Among other benefits, they also receive articles and information based on the preferences they indicate.
<i>Kiosks</i>	Kiosks is an area open to everyone. It has a discussion forum and FAQ for both employers and individuals.
<i>Scoop</i>	Scoop is the portal's weekly e-zine, featuring topical articles about employment and training. It also includes links to other related or interested sites as well as suggestions for further reading.

Project Management

A Heterogeneous Team

The members of the team recruited to participate in the Hotjob project had a wide variety of professional backgrounds.

The project manager had a Bachelor degree in Archeology and Doctorate in Philosophy and Letters. He had spent some time on technological issues related to underwater topography and developing multimedia teaching material for universities, and ended up specializing in man/machine relations.

The team recruited for the core project consisted partly of university researchers and technicians or else young graduates, all with a variety of potential for approaching employment issues in a different way, particularly from an anthropological angle.

The initial idea was really to favour versatility in individual profiles in order to create an arena of information corresponding to user needs. For example, there were linguists, educators, sociologists, psychologists, technical experts, and even specialists in ergonomics. This highly heterogeneous team was formed, not in pursuit of technology for technology's sake, but more fundamentally to meet a need by means of a portal.

The Project's Position Internally

Deliberations on the added value of new technologies and the effort to design a one-stop centre began early in 1997. Management and project design choices focused on creating a new entity entirely dedicated to this task: new personnel management procedures, new recruitment methods, new managerial style. The concept study ended up landing a large three-year budget. In October 1997, the CIS (Client Information System) team already consisted of some 15 people with a broad range of profiles.

Until Hotjob was launched in 1999, the organization chose to develop its applications in an extremely autonomous manner behind closed doors. Contact with FOREM's internal agents was scarce and difficult.

This choice is first and foremost explained by the imperatives associated with the relatively tight planning for the project. The red tape of the public administration was terrifying, and the possibility of in-house development of the

portal had quickly been discarded. The core of the application would therefore be developed in a vacuum by a specially recruited team, and subsequently imposed on all FOREM agents.

The organization was nonetheless aware of the dangers of this type of approach and the serious risk of seeing the solution rejected soon after its launch.

Although the project had clearly been a FOREM initiative, the team did everything in its power to dissociate itself with FOREM, starting with its choice of name for the portal: hotjob.be instead of forem.be. The results of the survey on FOREM's image were certainly factored into this decision. The strategy was give the project as much of an edge as possible by shying away from association with the slightly negative image projected by the public institution before the portal really had a chance to prove itself.

Service Selection Strategy

The selection of services offered to outside users was based on various factors and/or techniques. First comes the set of services largely dependent on endogenous factors related to FOREM's activities and two basic missions, namely:

- To help individuals with finding jobs and training, and helping employers recruit and train personnel;
- The services typically targeted were job offers, on-line CVs, training assistance, etc.

The second method used to identify the needs of potential system users consisted of a three-phase market study done from a marketing angle:

- Focus groups;
- Guide and script development based on the survey results;
- For each identified target group (SMB, major corporation, young job-seeker, chronically unemployed etc.), the view of the segment was refined by using a qualitative analysis of each group so as to adapt to each public based on its profile.

Client identification, required for access to the on-line products, provided Hotjob team members with a good deal of information about user and consumer habits. This data made it entirely possible to do a behavioural study to gain a real understanding of who the clients were and what they wanted, so as to provide them with the information they sought in the desired form. The new product, *My Hotjob*, was the outcome of this type of approach.

Development Strategies

The organization favoured a marketing approach to the problem of on-line positioning in order to regularly offer clients new services. New products appear at the site about every six months. The idea is to foster interaction with users, get them interested and motivate them to come back by constantly titillating their curiosity. This approach was selected over the development of a static final solution imposed once and for all.

The Hotjob.be portal was launched in November 1999 and has since then been subject to continuous changes and improvements. At present there is no end date in sight for the project.

Promotion and Training

External

At first, the advertising and marketing intended to promote the project among external users was not very heavy. Once or twice a year, a major promotional campaign was organized for specialty magazines, the radio or fairs. This marketing weakness was a deliberate choice from the start. All campaigns demand time, energy and money. The strategy of the DIS (CIS at the time) was to focus almost exclusively on developing the portal services, thereby retaining the possibility of ultimately rethinking the marketing if the project was a sure hit. Today launch of the new *My Hotjob* product is making a bigger splash. It should also be noted that FOREM's strength also lies in its network of 3,000 agents scattered throughout Wallonia. This means of disseminating information on a wide scale is an undeniable advantage. Conversely, if misused, this asset could just as easily be turned against the

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project.

Unfortunately, this is what initially happened when Hotjob was launched in 1999. FOREM agents, in steady contact with job-seekers and employers, continued going about their jobs without promoting the new portal externally. A number of factors may account for this. For one, portal development was screened from most FOREM agents -- unfolding behind closed doors, as mentioned earlier. This made it very difficult for the agents to become involved later on and take over the task of promoting a tool with which they were not very familiar. Even though they could still learn, the sense of exclusion and non-involvement is certainly not to be overlooked. The reluctance of the business counsellors to talk about the products available at Hotjob also undoubtedly stems from some services no longer being free. This gave the agents' jobs a much more commercial orientation -- a novelty they had a hard time adjusting to.

Internal

As we have just briefly explained, acceptance of the portal internally was slow and difficult. The Hotjob team had spent three years working independently and very rarely involving FOREM's internal departments which eventually would be required to use the new tool. When Hotjob was launched, the internal agents took a great deal of time to become familiar with and master the new portal. They did not promote it externally.

To solve this problem, as well as train FOREM agents and get them more involved, the Hotjob team created a webcoaching network, which undoubtedly represents an original initiative.

Webcoaching, a continuous nearby and remote training system, was introduced at FOREM so that agents could become familiar with the services available on-line for external clients, i.e. individuals and employers. The webcoaches, all volunteers, constituted an internal network at FOREM. Their job was to help disseminate information and the new work methods associated with the new information and communication technologies, both within the institution and with the public. The webcoaches and their 200 relays enabled the 3,000 FOREM agents to become familiar with, understand and participate in management of the on-line products developed by the CIS.(6)

(6) Description from an internal evaluation report on the webcoaching system.