



## Optimize Your Resume to Be Found by Recruiters

When you aren't customizing your resume for a specific opportunity (highly recommended!), you should design your resume to meet the needs of the Web and job board search engines because recruiters DO search the Web and job boards for resumes.

They also search through employer applicant tracking systems and even their own email accounts. So, being find-able is very important.

When webmasters design a web site to be found by the search engines, they call the process (science? art? skill?) "search engine optimization," also known as "SEO."

Appropriate placement of the "right" words is critical to search engine placement. Those words are called "keywords." They are the words searchers type into search engines to find what they want.

### *Research the Keywords Employers Are Using*

When searching for candidates qualified for their job openings, recruiters and employers typically search with the same categories of terms. Understand what they are looking for, so you can include those terms in your resume.

### **1. Job Titles**

It's most effective to use the terms that employers are using, and you can find those by examining job postings for the kind of job you want next.

For example, assume a job seeker currently holds a job as a "Staff Assistant" for a large employer, and she decides that she wants a new job.

When she does some research, she discovers that the rest of the world calls her job "Administrative Assistant" (or, even, "Admin Assistant"). So, no one, except her current employer might be searching on the term "Staff Assistant" because they don't know or use the term. They are searching for administrative assistants.

She went to Craigslist.org (Indeed.com or LinkedIn) to do some research, and she discovered this:

#### **Administrative Assistant – 334 job postings**

Admin Assistant – 72 job postings

Admin Asst – 5 job postings

Admin Assist – 2 job postings

Staff Assistant - 0 job postings



So she replaced her employer's version of her job title (Staff Assistant) with what the rest of the world used most often (Administrative Assistant). And she found a place on her resume to add the Term "Admin Assistant" since that was also used a significant number of times.

*She should use this same strategy on her LinkedIn Profile, too!*

## **2. Skills or Tools**

Analyze how employers use different terms on their job postings so that you can use the most appropriate ones for you.

Continuing with our Administrative Assistant example, let's assume that our job seeker is very experienced in using all the current (and older) versions of Microsoft Office products. She could simply list "Microsoft Office" on her resume. *But that might not be enough.*

Doing some research into what employers are using in their job descriptions, our job seeker finds some interesting things. She searched through administrative assistant jobs for the following terms, and this is what she found:

Microsoft Office - 122 job postings

Microsoft Word - 217 job postings

Microsoft Excel - 158 job postings

Microsoft Outlook - 286 job postings

So, if she had listed only Microsoft Office on her resume, she would have missed out on the majority of the job postings. Notice that, since she was searching through those Administrative Assistant postings, most of them included more than one of the terms, and several of them included all 4.

When employers search through an applicant tracking system or resume database, these tools can analyze both your resume and the job posting you are applying for. They can also analyze the jobs you are targeting with your social media presence. These are currently the most useful:

- [TagCrowd.com](https://tagcrowd.com)
- [Wordle.net](https://wordle.net)

*Again, this same strategy works for her LinkedIn Profile, too!*

## **3. Locations**

This can be an important set of keywords, as well. Employers will often search on a job seeker's location because they want someone who is local, someone who won't need to move (or expect the employer to pay for a relocation). For example, assuming our job seeker wants a job in Massachusetts, some research would be very useful. A quick check of job postings for jobs in Boston, showed the following usage:



Massachusetts - 1 job posting

Mass - 588 job postings

MA - 1,000+ job postings

Use the word "Massachusetts," the abbreviation "Mass" and the postal code "MA" on your resume. They are each a different way to type the same state name. A recruiter could type any of those variations into his/her search to find someone for a job in Massachusetts.

*Again, another effective strategy for her LinkedIn Profile, too!*

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