

# Boolean Search Cheat Sheet For Recruiters

Discover the **Boolean search operators** you need to know to source the best candidates!



# Identify potential best-fit candidates

With tightening labor markets, changing employee expectations, and growing skills gaps, finding the right talent is more difficult than ever.

This makes it even more crucial that you identify potential best-fit candidates to help your organization achieve its goals and succeed. So how do you sift through the noise and find the talent your organization needs?

Boolean search is a tried and tested method that helps you enhance your sourcing process and refine your recruitment strategy.

In this cheat sheet, you'll find all the basic and advanced Boolean operators you need to get started right away on finding candidates who not only meet but exceed job expectations.

Let's get started!

**77% of global employers**  
are **struggling** to  
**find the talent**  
**they need.**

[Source](#)



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Search topic	Criteria
General	"software engineer" OR "software developer" OR "developer" OR " (prof
Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For LinkedIn:</b> ("software engineer" OR "software developer") OR bio OR about.me OR "about me" site:linkedin.com</li> <li>• <b>For GitHub:</b> ("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND bio OR about.me OR "about me" site:github.com</li> </ul>



# Boolean search explained

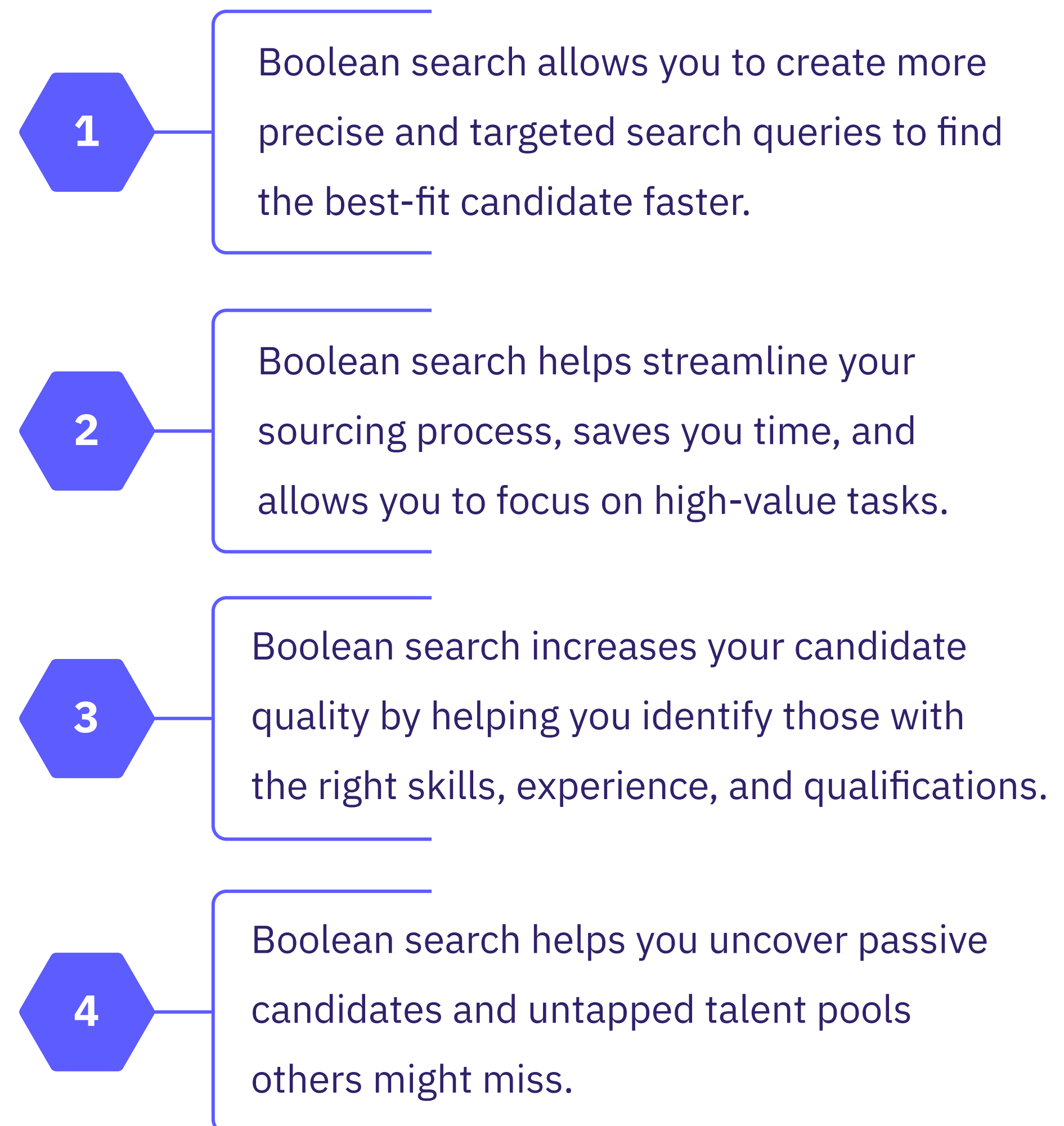
Boolean search uses symbols or words (like AND, OR, or NOT) to combine keywords and phrases to refine and filter your search results. As a recruiter, you'll be able to use Boolean on the majority of candidate sourcing platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, Monster, or your ATS.

## How it works

Boolean search helps refine sourcing by:

- **Including multiple keywords:** use the **AND** operator to ensure all keywords appear in the search results.
- **Expanding the search:** use the **OR** operator to search for any of the listed keywords or terms.
- **Excluding specific terms:** use the **NOT** operator to filter out results with certain keywords.

## How Boolean helps your search for talent



# 5 basic Boolean operators

Let's take a look at the five most basic Boolean search operators that will help you find more talent in less time:

- AND
- OR
- NOT
- Parentheses ()
- Quotation marks ""

Note: AND, OR, and NOT need to be typed in capital letters.



# 1. AND

## What it is

The **AND** operator combines keywords or search terms to generate results containing all the specified words.

## Tips to get it right

- Type **AND** between your keywords or search terms. Make sure the **AND** is in capital letters.
- Start with 2 to 3 highly relevant keywords. Adding too many will significantly reduce the number of results you'll get.
- Use space instead of **AND** in some search engines like Google to speed up your search string creation.

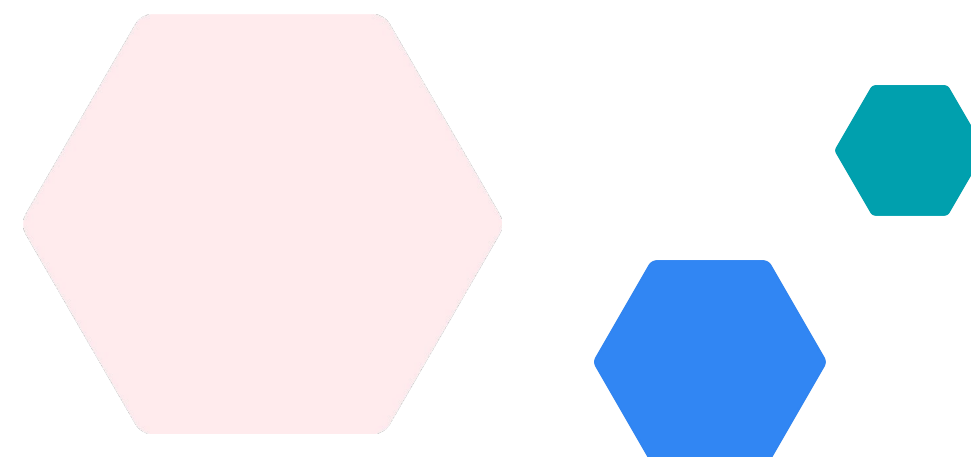
## Example

You can use this query to search for candidates who mention “planner” and “AutoCAD” in their profiles:

 Planner AND AutoCAD

If your ideal candidate should also have experience in SolidWorks, add that to your string like this:

 Planner AND AutoCAD AND SolidWorks



## 2. OR

### What it is

The **OR** operator widens your search by including multiple keywords or phrases. It tells the search engine to look for results containing any of the mentioned keywords, rather than all of them.

### Tips to get it right

- Avoid having too many keywords. Making your search too broad can give you less relevant results.
- In some search engines, like Google, you can use the pipe symbol (|) instead of **OR**.

### Example

You can use this query to search for a candidate who has experience in different machine types or industries:

🔍 Planner OR industrial OR machinery

🔍 Planner | industrial | machinery



## 3. NOT

### What it is

The **NOT** operator allows you to exclude specific keywords or phrases from your search result. You will be able to narrow down your search to focus on profiles relevant to your needs.

### Tips to get it right

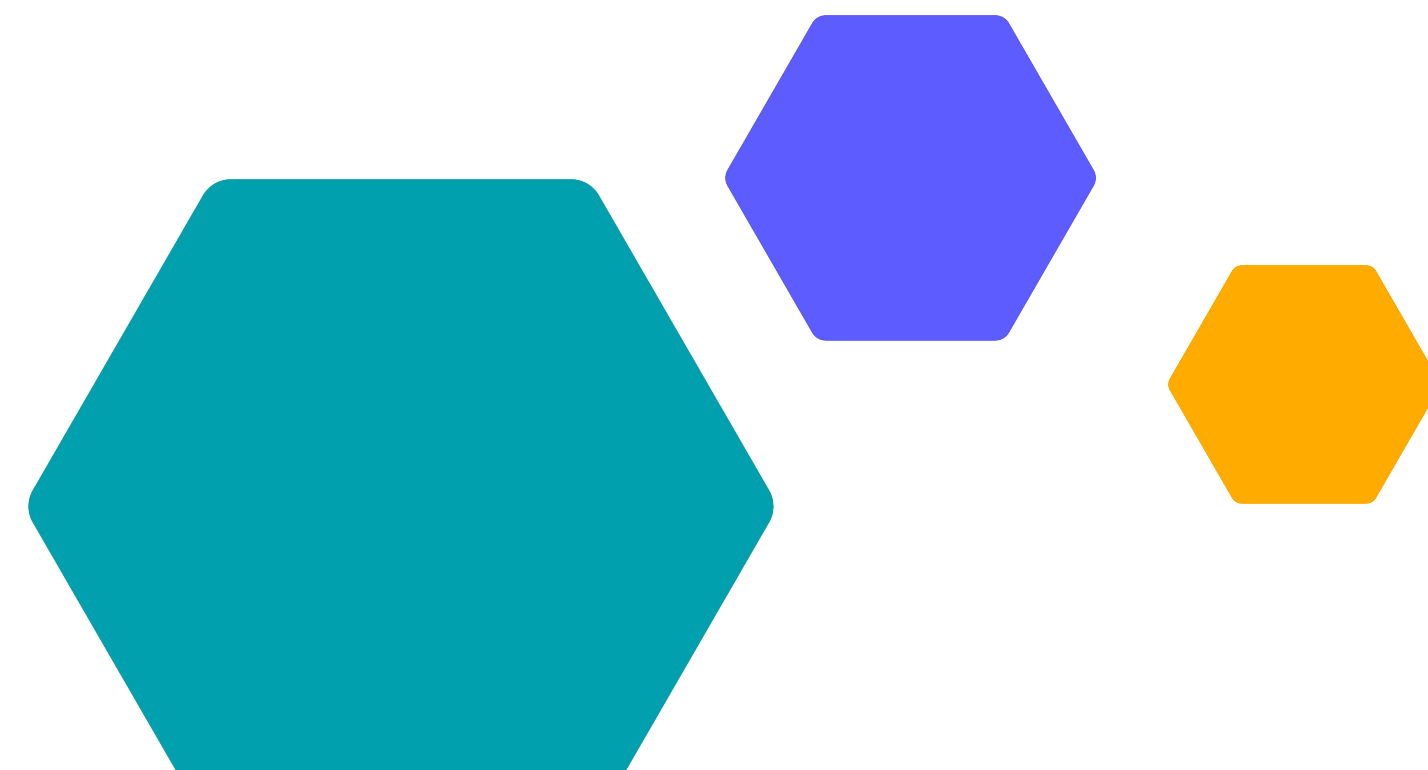
- Use **NOT** with vague or overly broad terms to avoid excluding potentially qualified candidates.
- Use **NOT** to avoid getting too many irrelevant search results.
- In some search engines, you can use the minus symbol (-) to get the same results.

### Example

You can use this query to find mechanical engineers with experience in AutoCAD, but you want to exclude those who have worked with SolidWorks:

🔍 AutoCAD NOT SolidWorks

🔍 AutoCAD-SolidWorks





## 4. Parentheses ()

### What it is

The parentheses **()** operator helps group keywords, phrases, or other Boolean operators together. It narrows down search to candidates who match all or some of your desired qualifications.

### Tips to get it right

- Use parentheses when bundling synonyms with the **OR** operator.
- This operator makes your search more precise and ensures the correct order of your keywords.

### Example

You can use this query to find a planner in Cincinnati, your candidates might also live in Covington or Newport (two small cities in Kentucky):



```
Planner AND (Cincinnati OR Covington  
OR Newport)
```



## 5. Quotation marks “”

### What it is

The quotation marks “” operator allows you to search for an exact phrase or string of words by enclosing them in quotation marks. The search engine will only return results matching the exact phrase you entered, in the exact order you entered it.

### Tips to get it right

- Quotation marks are especially useful when you’re looking for specific job titles, certifications, skills, or unique phrases.
- Be cautious when using this operator as it can exclude potential candidates who don’t use the exact same phrasing as you.

### Example

You can use this query to find a software developer with a master’s degree and have experience with partner management:



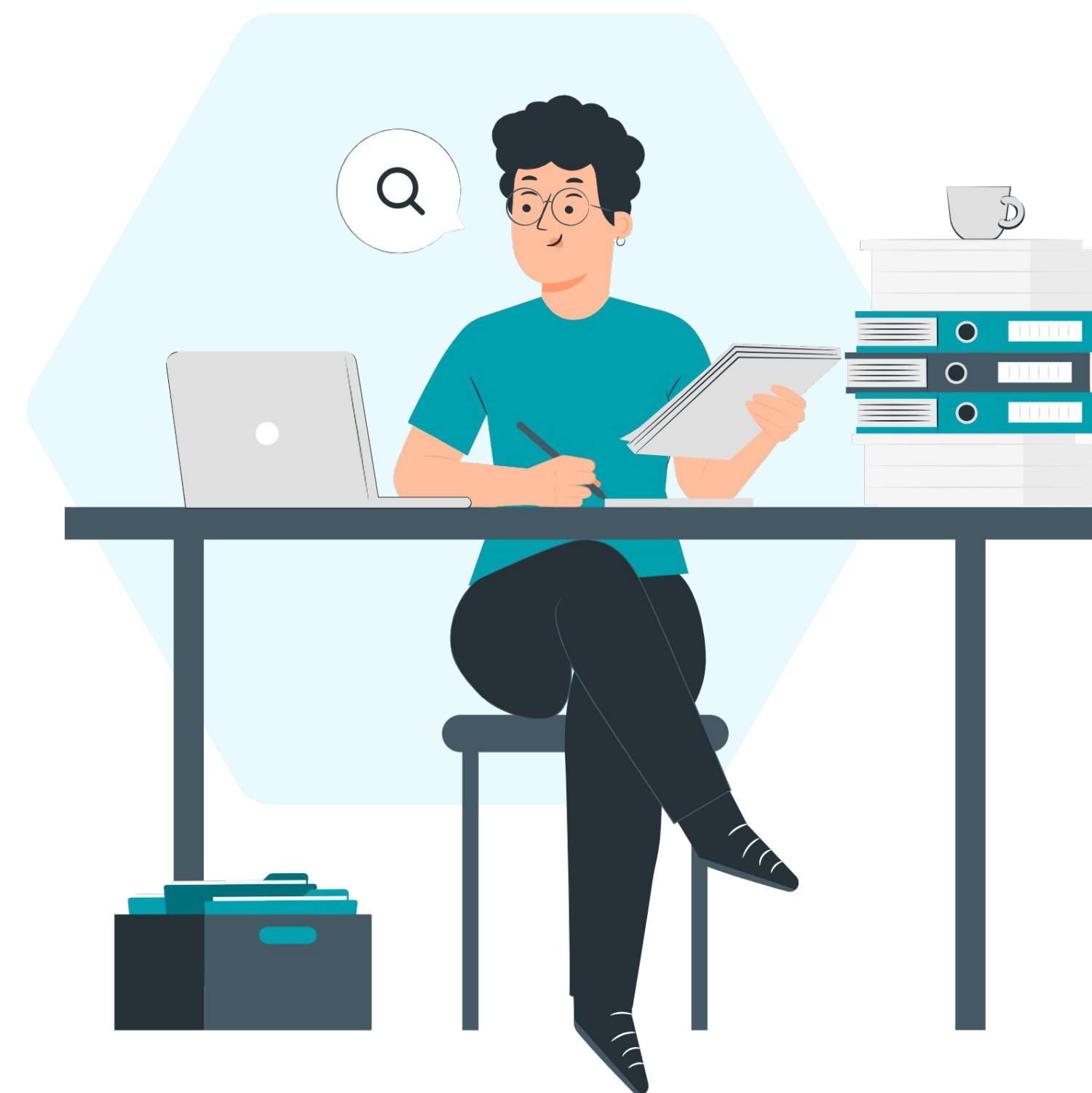
```
“Software engineer”, “master’s degree”, “partner manager”
```



# 7 advanced Boolean operators

Let's explore advanced Boolean search operators that you can use to take your search to the next level.

- site:
- filetype:
- Asterisk \*
- inurl:
- AROUND(n)
- NEAR
- intitle:



# 1. site:

## What it is

The **site:** operator allows you to search for specific skills or experience within a target website or domain.

## Tips to get it right

- Specify your search on LinkedIn further by adding **/in/** to your search string. This will show you profiles that match your search string, but exclude other content such as posts and articles.
- Using the free version of LinkedIn? The **site:operator** lets you use 32 search terms instead of just 6.

## Example

You can use the following search queries in Google to find a mechanical engineer with expertise in AutoCAD and project management on LinkedIn:



```
site:linkedin.com "Mechanical  
engineer" AND AutoCAD AND "project  
management"
```

Add **/in/** to your string to only get LinkedIn profiles in your results:



```
Site:linkedin.com/in/ "Mechanical  
engineer" AND AutoCAD AND "project  
management"
```



## 2. filetype:

### What it is

The **filetype:** operator allows you to narrow down your search results based on a specific file type (PDF, Word document, or PowerPoint). You can use this to search for potential candidates who have uploaded their resumes, portfolios, or other relevant documents.

### Tips to get it right

- Always combine this operator with keywords to make your search more specific.
- Don't use a space between the colon and the file extension. 'filetype:pdf' is correct, but 'filetype: pdf' is not.

### Example

You can use the following search query to find a mechanical engineer who has experience in AutoCAD and project management, and has uploaded their resume in PDF format:



```
filetype:pdf(resume OR CV OR  
"curriculum vitae") AND "mechanical  
engineer" AND AutoCAD AND "project  
management"
```

## 3. Asterisk \*

### What it is

The asterisk \* operator allows you to represent any number of characters. This operator helps you minimize the risk of missing relevant candidates due to minor differences in how they describe their experience or skills.

### Tips to get it right

- Use this operator to search for different variations of a word or term. For example, if you search for *software\** in the browser, the asterisk could represent the word “engineer” or “developer”.
- Be cautious when using the asterisk, as it can generate a huge number of results.

### Example

You can use the following search query to find a mechanical engineer:



```
mechanic* engineer*: the search string will find results containing “mechanical engineer”, mechanical engineering”, “mechanic engineer”
```



## 4. inurl:

### What it is

The **inurl:** operator allows you to find web pages with specific terms in the URL. You will be able to uncover hidden talent pools or find candidates on platforms other than LinkedIn (like a job board or personal blog).

### Tips to get it right

- The **inurl:** operator is not case sensitive. 'inurl:example' and 'inurl:Example' will give you the same results.
- Use the **inurl:** operator for each keyword you want to search for. If you're looking for multiple keywords, you will need to use multiple **inurl:** operator in a single query.

### Example

You can use the following query to find a Python developer with experience in Flask who has a blog:

 Inurl:blog "Python developer" Flask



# 5. AROUND(n) (Google only)

## What it is

The **AROUND(n)** operator helps you source candidates with specific skills or qualifications closely related to each other.

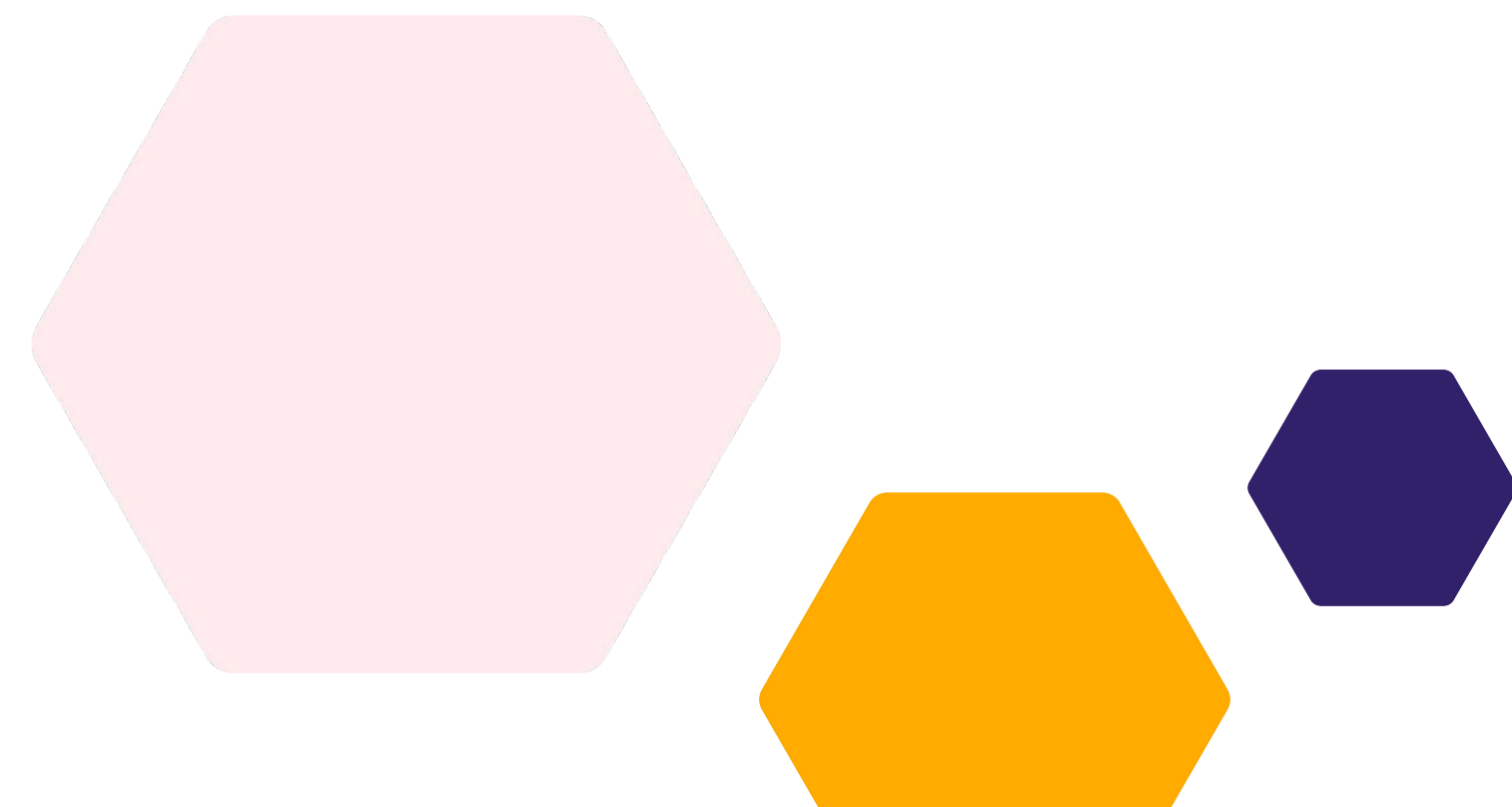
## Tips to get it right

- Use AROUND(7) to find results where your search terms are no more than 7 words apart.
- Make sure to place your keywords in the order you want them to appear.
- This operator is a feature specific to Google search. Many platforms, including Bing, LinkedIn, job boards, and ATS systems, don't support the **AROUND(n)** operator.

## Example

You can use this query a candidate with experience in both project management and agile methodology, and you want these terms to appear within five words of each other:

 Project management (AROUND5) agile





## 6. NEAR (Microsoft platforms only)

### What it is

The **NEAR** operator allows you to search for two or more qualifications mentioned close to each other. You will get results of candidates who excel in both areas.

### Tips to get it right

- Make sure to place your keywords in the order you want them to appear.
- This operator is a feature specific to Microsoft search engines (such as Bing, SharePoint, or legal research platforms). Many platforms, including Google, LinkedIn, job boards, and ATS systems, don't support the **NEAR** operator.

### Example

You can use this query to find candidates who have mentioned their experience in marketing and content creation in proximity:

 Marketing NEAR content



# 7. Intitle: (Google only)

## What it is


The **intitle:** operator restricts search results with a specific term in the title. It helps you find candidates who have explicitly mentioned their job title and desired location in the title section of their profiles.

## Tips to get it right

- Use the **intitle:** operator for each keyword you want to search for. If you're looking for multiple keywords, you will need to use multiple **intitle:** operators in one query.
- Avoid using very common words with **intitle:** unless they are crucial to your search. This operator works best with specific and unique terms or phrases.

## Example

You can use this query to find candidates that have software engineer in the title and include the location:

 intitle: "software engineer" San Francisco



# Boolean search examples

In this section, you'll find Boolean string examples for three common roles that you might come across:

- Software engineer
- Data scientist
- Account executive



# Software engineer: sample Boolean strings

Search topic	Criteria
General	<code>"software engineer" OR "software developer" OR "developer" OR "programmer"</code>
Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For LinkedIn:</b> <code>("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND (profile OR bio OR about.me OR "about me") site:linkedin.com</code></li> <li>• <b>For GitHub:</b> <code>("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND (profile OR bio OR about.me OR "about me") site:github.com</code></li> <li>• <b>For Stack Overflow:</b> <code>("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND (profile OR bio OR about.me OR "about me") site:stackoverflow.com</code></li> </ul>
Experience	<code>intitle:("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND (experience OR background OR "work history" OR portfolio) - position -"seniority level"</code>
Skills	<code>("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND (skills OR "programming languages" OR "tools and technologies") AND (Java OR Python OR "C++" OR JavaScript OR SQL)</code>
Resume	<code>intitle:("software* engineer" OR "software* developer" OR "developer* resume" OR "engineer* CV") AND (resume OR CV OR vitae) AND (filetype:pdf OR filetype:doc OR filetype:docx)</code>
Location	<code>("software engineer" OR "software developer") AND ("San Francisco" OR "Silicon Valley" OR California OR CA)</code>



# Data scientist: sample Boolean strings

Search topic	Criteria
General	<code>"data scientist" OR "data science specialist" OR "data analyst"</code>
Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For LinkedIn:</b> <code>("data scientist" OR "data analyst") AND (profile OR bio OR "about me") site:linkedin.com</code></li> <li>• <b>For GitHub:</b> <code>("data scientist" OR "data analyst") AND (profile OR bio OR "about me") site:github.com</code></li> </ul>
Experience	<code>intitle:("data scientist" OR "data science specialist" OR "data analyst") AND (experience OR background OR "work history" OR portfolio) -position -"seniority level"</code>
Skills	<code>("data scientist" OR "data analyst") AND (skills OR "programming languages" OR "data tools") AND (Python OR R OR SQL OR "machine learning" OR "deep learning" OR Hadoop OR Spark)</code>
Resume	<code>intitle:("data scientist" OR "data analyst" OR "scientist resume" OR "analyst CV") AND (resume OR CV OR vitae) AND (filetype:pdf OR filetype:doc OR filetype:docx)</code>
Location	<code>("data scientist" OR "data analyst") AND ("San Francisco" OR "Silicon Valley" OR California OR CA)</code>

# Account executive: sample Boolean strings

Search topic	Criteria
<b>General</b>	"account executive" OR "sales executive" OR "sales representative" OR "account rep"
<b>Profile</b>	("account executive" OR "sales executive" OR "sales rep") AND (profile OR bio OR about.me OR "about me") site:linkedin.com
<b>Experience</b>	intitle:("account * executive" OR "sales * executive" OR "sales * representative") AND (experience OR background OR "work history" OR "sales record" OR achievements) -intern -"entry level"
<b>Skills</b>	("account executive" OR "sales executive" OR "sales rep") AND ("CRM" OR Salesforce OR "lead generation" OR "B2B sales" OR "B2C sales" OR "cold calling" OR negotiation OR "client relations")
<b>Resume</b>	intitle:("account executive" OR "sales rep" OR "executive resume" OR "sales CV") AND (resume OR CV OR vitae) AND (filetype:pdf OR filetype:doc OR filetype:docx)
<b>Location</b>	("account executive" OR "sales rep") AND ("New York" OR "NYC" OR "New York City" OR NY)

# Bonus: Understanding the LinkedIn Algorithm

Understanding how the LinkedIn algorithm works helps you interpret and refine your search results to find the best candidates. Here are several factors that affect your search results:



## Relevance

Relevance is determined by the keywords, skills, and other attributes matching your search criteria. The more closely a profile aligns with your search, the higher it ranks.



## Profile completeness

A complete profile is more likely to appear higher in search results. This includes the headline, summary, experience, skills, endorsements, and recommendations.



## Connections

First-degree connections typically rank higher than second-degree or third-degree connections. You can't search for people who are further than three degrees from you, so expand your network as a recruiter!



## Activity

Users who engage with their network, share content, and participate in groups are more likely to rank higher in search results. LinkedIn considers these users to be more relevant and valuable to the platform.



## Skills & endorsements

The number of skills listed on a candidate's profile and their relevance, as well as the number of endorsements received for those skills, can influence search rankings.



## Location

The algorithm may prioritize candidates who are located in the same geographic region as the searcher.



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