



RTechX

Understand Tech. Find Talent. Build Careers.

The Boolean & Intake Field Kit

35 ready-to-run search strings across every major IT role family, the operator rules that differ platform to platform, and the intake, screening and submission templates a working recruiter actually uses.

Companion resource to the
RTechX IT Recruitment Masterclass

Edition 1 · hello@rtechx.com

01 · START HERE

How to use this kit

A Boolean string is not a magic spell. It is a hypothesis about where a person's work is described. This kit gives you the syntax, the strings and the forms — but the skill is in the loop: search, read twenty results, change one thing, search again.

Three rules that matter more than any string

1. Never run a search you cannot explain. If you cannot say why each term is in there, you cannot fix it when it fails.
2. Read the first twenty results before you touch the string. Result counts tell you nothing; the first twenty profiles tell you everything.
3. Change one thing at a time. Two changes at once and you will never know which one worked.

The six-step string method

Use this every time. It works on LinkedIn, Naukri, Dice, your ATS and Google.

01 Start with the title, not the skill

Write every name the market uses for this job and OR them together. A Java backend role is also advertised as Software Engineer, Application Developer, Backend Engineer and Java Engineer. Miss the synonyms and you lose half the market before you begin.

02 Add the one skill the job cannot exist without

Not four skills. One. The language, the platform or the product. Everything else is a filter you add later once you can see what the pool looks like.

03 Add a second must-have only if the pool is still too broad

Run the search first. Read the result count and the first twenty profiles. Add the second concept only if the noise is real, not because the JD listed it.

04 Group every alternative in brackets

(Kubernetes OR K8s). (AWS OR "Amazon Web Services"). (SDET OR "QA Automation"). Abbreviations and full forms are different words to a search engine — they are only the same thing to you.

05 Exclude last, and exclude patterns you have actually seen

Open twenty results, find the recurring irrelevance, then exclude that. Excluding on a guess removes good people silently and you never find out.

06 Save the string, log what it returned, and write a broader twin

Every narrow search needs a broad sibling using adjacent titles or adjacent technology. The narrow one fills today's role. The broad one tells you what the market actually holds.

What a finished string looks like

The JD says: Java, Spring Boot, microservices, AWS, 5 years, Pune. Here is that requirement turned into a search:

TITLES → CORE SKILL → ARCHITECTURE → PLATFORM → LOCATION

("Java Developer" OR "Java Engineer" OR "Backend Engineer" OR "Software Engineer") AND ("Spring Boot" OR Spring) AND (microservices OR REST OR API) AND (AWS OR "Amazon Web Services") AND (Pune OR Hinjewadi)

Notice what is missing: the five years. Experience is a filter field, not a keyword, and years are the weakest evidence of seniority you can use. Notice too that every alternative sits inside brackets, and that no exclusions have been added yet.

02 · SYNTAX

The six operators

Six operators do almost all the work. Get fluent in these and you can write ninety per cent of the strings you will ever need.

Operator	What it does	Example
AND	Both concepts must be present. Narrows.	Java AND "Spring Boot"
OR	Any one of the alternatives. Broadens. Always wrap in brackets.	("Java Developer" OR "Backend Engineer")
NOT	Excludes a concept. Use last, use sparingly.	Developer NOT (intern OR trainee)
" "	Exact phrase. Also stops auto-stemming on Dice.	"Site Reliability Engineer"
()	Groups alternatives so the logic reads correctly.	(AWS OR Azure OR GCP)
-	Google's exclusion operator. Replaces NOT in X-ray strings.	-jobs -hiring -"we are looking"

Rules that break searches silently

Operators must be capitals.

On LinkedIn, Naukri and most other platforms, a lower-case and is treated as an ordinary word. Your search still runs. It just returns the wrong thing, and nothing warns you.

Order of operations follows the brackets.

Java AND Python OR Scala is ambiguous. Java AND (Python OR Scala) is not. When in doubt, add brackets — they never hurt.

Wildcards mostly do not work.

LinkedIn does not support asterisks, braces, brackets or angle brackets. Naukri Resdex does not support wildcards, regex or proximity. Write the variations out with OR instead.

A space is not always AND.

On LinkedIn and Google a space behaves as AND. On some ATS platforms it does not. Write AND explicitly and you never have to remember which is which.

Plus and minus are not LinkedIn operators.

LinkedIn states that + and - are not officially supported. Use AND and NOT. On Google X-ray it is the reverse: the minus sign is the only exclusion that works.

The exclusion trap

NOT is the operator that ruins the most searches. Every term you exclude removes people silently — you never see who you lost. Exclude "junior" and you lose the senior engineer who once mentored juniors. Exclude "support" and you lose the DevOps engineer who supports production. Add exclusions last, one at a time, and only for a pattern you have personally seen repeating in the results.

03 · PLATFORMS

Same string, different result

The single most common reason a string “stops working” is that it moved platforms. Each database implements Boolean slightly differently. Check this page before you blame the string.

Platform	Operators that work	What trips people up
LinkedIn Recruiter / Recruiter Lite	AND, OR, NOT, quotes, brackets. Also via Must have / Can have / Doesn't have dropdowns.	Boolean works in Job titles, Companies and Keywords filters, but NOT in the Project filter. The Keywords filter silently drops stop words (and, or, the, of, at, by, to, for, with, in, from, not, but, after) which can change what your string actually matches.
LinkedIn (free account)	Quotes and OR are reliable. Brackets work.	AND / NOT behaviour on the free search bar has changed more than once and free accounts hit an operator cap. Keep free-account strings short, and test the string before you trust the result count.
Naukri Resdex	AND, OR, NOT, quotes, brackets. Operators must be capitals.	No wildcards (*), no regex, no proximity operators. Keep strings compact. Maestro search is plain-English semantic search, not Boolean, so do not paste a Boolean string into it.
Dice	AND, OR, NOT, quotes, brackets.	Terms with no operator between them default to AND. Dice auto-stems words, so devel also matches developer / developed / developing. Put a term in quotes to switch stemming off. Always search the abbreviation and the full form: (QA OR "Quality Assurance").
Google X-ray	OR (capitals), quotes, brackets, minus sign, site:, intitle:, inurl:, filetype:	There is no NOT — use a minus sign with no space before the term. A space between two terms already means AND. Results are Google's index of public pages, so they lag behind the live profile.
Your ATS	Varies. Assume AND, OR, NOT, quotes, brackets.	A space does not always mean AND. Some systems ignore brackets. Test one string with a known-good candidate in the database before you rely on the system.

Verify before you rely

Platform behaviour changes without notice, and it has changed more than once in the last two years — particularly on LinkedIn's free search. Treat this page as a starting point, not gospel. The professional habit is to test a new string against a candidate you already know is in the database. If that person does not come back, the string is wrong, not the database.

04 · X-RAY

Searching a site from the outside

X-ray search uses Google's index to search a site that has its own limited search box. It is how you reach public profiles without a paid licence, and how you find people whose profiles the platform's own algorithm has buried.

Operator	What it does	Example
site:	Restrict to one domain or URL pattern	site:linkedin.com/in/
intitle:	Term must appear in the page title	intitle:"data engineer"
inurl:	Term must appear in the URL	inurl:resume
filetype:	Restrict to a file format	filetype:pdf
-	Exclude (Google's NOT)	-jobs -sample -template
OR	Alternatives, capitals only	(Bengaluru OR Bangalore)

Templates you can run today

PUBLIC LINKEDIN PROFILES

```
site:linkedin.com/in/ ("Data Engineer" OR "Big Data Engineer") (Spark OR Databricks) (Pune OR Bengaluru OR Bangalore) -intitle:"profiles" -jobs
```

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC LINKEDIN

```
site:in.linkedin.com/in/ ("DevOps Engineer" OR SRE) (Kubernetes OR K8s) Terraform -jobs -hiring
```

GITHUB DEVELOPERS

```
site:github.com ("full stack" OR "backend engineer") (Golang OR Go) (Hyderabad OR Bengaluru) -jobs -awesome -tutorial
```

STACK OVERFLOW PROFILES

```
site:stackoverflow.com/users ("java" OR "spring") ("Chennai" OR "Coimbatore")
```

RESUMES ON THE OPEN WEB

```
(intitle:resume OR inurl:resume) ("Salesforce Developer" OR "SFDC Developer") (Apex OR LWC) -jobs -sample -template -"resume writing"
```

Two honest limitations

X-ray returns Google's cached view of a public page, so it lags behind the live profile and sees only what the person made public. It supplements platform search; it does not replace it. And stay inside each platform's terms of use — reading public pages through Google is normal practice, automated scraping is not, and it puts your employer's accounts at risk.

05 · THE LIBRARY

35 strings by role family

Every string here is a starting point, not a final answer. Run it, read twenty results, then use the tuning note to adjust. The tuning note is the part that teaches you something — the string alone only teaches you to paste.

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Java backend

```
("Java Developer" OR "Java Engineer" OR "Backend Engineer" OR "Software Engineer") AND ("Spring Boot" OR Spring OR Hibernate) AND (microservices OR REST OR API) NOT (intern OR trainee)
```

Tune it — Drop the microservices group first if the pool is thin — it is the newest of the three concepts.

.NET / C#

```
(" .NET Developer" OR "C# Developer" OR "Dotnet Developer" OR "Backend Engineer") AND ("ASP.NET" OR ".NET Core" OR ".NET 6" OR ".NET 8") AND ("SQL Server" OR "Entity Framework")
```

Tune it — Search both "dotnet" and ".NET" — profiles are written both ways and the punctuation is often lost.

Python backend

```
("Python Developer" OR "Backend Engineer" OR "Software Engineer") AND (Django OR Flask OR FastAPI) AND (PostgreSQL OR MySQL OR MongoDB) NOT ("data entry" OR intern)
```

Tune it — Python is used by data, automation and QA people too. The framework group is what keeps this a backend search.

Node.js backend

```
("Node Developer" OR "NodeJS Developer" OR "Backend Engineer") AND ("Node.js" OR NodeJS OR Express) AND (MongoDB OR PostgreSQL OR Redis) AND (REST OR GraphQL OR API)
```

Tune it — Add ("TypeScript") when the client cares about typed codebases; it separates modern teams from legacy ones.

Frontend / React

```
("Frontend Developer" OR "Front End Engineer" OR "React Developer" OR "UI Developer") AND (React OR ReactJS OR "React.js") AND (JavaScript OR TypeScript) AND (Redux OR "Next.js" OR Hooks)
```

Tune it — UI Developer in India often means HTML/CSS only. Keep the React group mandatory or you will screen forty wrong resumes.

Frontend / Angular

```
("Angular Developer" OR "Frontend Developer" OR "UI Engineer") AND (Angular OR AngularJS OR "Angular 2+") AND (TypeScript OR RxJS OR NgRx) NOT (intern OR fresher)
```

Tune it — AngularJS (v1) and Angular (v2+) are different products. If the client needs modern Angular, exclude AngularJS explicitly.

Full stack

```
("Full Stack Developer" OR "Fullstack Engineer" OR "Software Engineer") AND (React OR Angular OR "Vue") AND (Java OR "Node.js" OR Python OR ".NET") AND (SQL OR MongoDB OR PostgreSQL)
```

Tune it — Full stack is the most over-claimed title in tech. Use this to build the list, then screen for real depth on one side.

Android

```
("Android Developer" OR "Android Engineer" OR "Mobile Developer") AND (Kotlin OR Java) AND (Jetpack OR "Android SDK" OR MVVM OR Compose) AND ("Play Store" OR "app release" OR Retrofit)
```

Tune it — The store-release group is the fastest proof that they shipped something rather than studied something.

iOS

```
("iOS Developer" OR "iOS Engineer" OR "Mobile Developer") AND (Swift OR SwiftUI OR "Objective C") AND (Xcode OR UIKit OR CoreData) AND ("App Store" OR TestFlight)
```

Tune it — Objective-C is written five different ways. Include ("Objective C" OR "Objective-C" OR ObjC) when sourcing legacy maintenance roles.

Cross-platform mobile

```
("Flutter Developer" OR "React Native Developer" OR "Mobile Developer") AND (Flutter OR Dart OR "React Native") AND ("Play Store" OR "App Store" OR Firebase)
```

Tune it — Ask which stores they published to and under whose developer account — it separates builders from tutorial-followers.

CLOUD, DEVOPS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

DevOps / SRE / platform

```
("DevOps Engineer" OR SRE OR "Site Reliability Engineer" OR "Platform Engineer" OR "Infrastructure Engineer") AND (Kubernetes OR K8s OR EKS OR AKS) AND (AWS OR Azure OR GCP) AND (Terraform OR Ansible OR Pulumi) NOT (intern OR support)
```

Tune it — Platform titles are splitting fast. Add "Cloud Engineer" and "Automation Engineer" to the title group as the pool thins.

AWS cloud engineer

```
("Cloud Engineer" OR "AWS Engineer" OR "Cloud Architect" OR "DevOps Engineer") AND (AWS OR "Amazon Web Services") AND (EC2 OR S3 OR Lambda OR EKS OR CloudFormation) AND (Terraform OR "Infrastructure as Code")
```

Tune it — A certification alone is not evidence. The service names are what tell you they touched the console.

Azure cloud engineer

```
("Azure Engineer" OR "Cloud Engineer" OR "Azure Administrator" OR "Cloud Architect") AND (Azure OR "Microsoft Azure") AND (AKS OR "Azure DevOps" OR "ARM template" OR Bicep OR "Azure Functions")
```

Tune it — "Azure DevOps" is a tool, not a cloud skill. Keep at least one infrastructure service in the mandatory group.

CI/CD engineer

```
("DevOps Engineer" OR "Build Engineer" OR "Release Engineer" OR "CI/CD Engineer") AND (Jenkins OR "GitHub Actions" OR GitLab OR ArgoCD OR CircleCI) AND (Docker OR Kubernetes) AND (pipeline OR deployment)
```

Tune it — Ask who owned the pipeline versus who used it. Most resumes do not distinguish, and the difference is the whole role.

Linux / systems administration

```
("Linux Administrator" OR "System Administrator" OR "Systems Engineer" OR "Infrastructure Engineer") AND (Linux OR RHEL OR Ubuntu OR CentOS) AND (shell OR bash OR Python OR Ansible) NOT ("desktop support" OR "help desk")
```

Tune it — The exclusion matters here — help-desk profiles keyword-match heavily on Linux and will flood the list.

Network engineer

("Network Engineer" OR "Network Administrator" OR "Network Architect") AND (Cisco OR Juniper OR Fortinet OR Arista) AND (BGP OR OSPF OR MPLS OR "SD-WAN") AND (CCNA OR CCNP OR "routing and switching")

Tune it — The protocol group is the real filter. Certifications alone appear on a lot of aspirational profiles.

DATA AND AI

Data engineer

("Data Engineer" OR "Big Data Engineer" OR "ETL Developer" OR "Data Platform Engineer") AND (Python OR Scala OR SQL) AND (Spark OR Databricks OR Snowflake OR Airflow) AND (ETL OR ELT OR pipeline)

Tune it — If everything returns BI profiles, the pipeline group is doing no work — move it into the mandatory AND chain.

Analytics / BI

("Data Analyst" OR "BI Developer" OR "Business Intelligence" OR "Reporting Analyst") AND (SQL) AND ("Power BI" OR Tableau OR Looker OR Qlik) AND (dashboard OR "data model" OR DAX)

Tune it — SQL should stay mandatory and unbracketed. An analyst who cannot write SQL cannot do the job.

Data science / ML

("Data Scientist" OR "Machine Learning Engineer" OR "ML Engineer" OR "Applied Scientist") AND (Python OR R) AND ("scikit-learn" OR TensorFlow OR PyTorch OR XGBoost) AND (model OR regression OR classification OR NLP)

Tune it — Look for deployment words — production, inference, monitoring. A model in a notebook is a project, not a system.

MLOps / AI platform

("MLOps Engineer" OR "ML Platform Engineer" OR "Machine Learning Engineer") AND (MLflow OR Kubeflow OR SageMaker OR "Vertex AI") AND (Docker OR Kubernetes) AND (pipeline OR deployment OR monitoring)

Tune it — A young title with a small pool. Source DevOps engineers who have shipped a model and screen for the ML side.

Database administration

("Database Administrator" OR DBA OR "Database Engineer") AND (Oracle OR "SQL Server" OR PostgreSQL OR MySQL OR MongoDB) AND (performance OR tuning OR replication OR "high availability" OR backup)

Tune it — The operations group separates a real DBA from a developer who writes queries.

QUALITY ENGINEERING

QA automation / SDET

("Automation Tester" OR "QA Automation" OR SDET OR "Test Automation Engineer") AND (Selenium OR Cypress OR Playwright OR Appium) AND (Java OR Python OR JavaScript OR TypeScript) AND (framework OR "test cases" OR CI)

Tune it — The word "framework" is the tell. Building one is a different job from writing scripts inside someone else's.

Manual / functional QA

("QA Engineer" OR "Test Engineer" OR "Quality Analyst" OR "Manual Tester") AND ("test cases" OR "test scenarios" OR "defect" OR JIRA) AND (functional OR regression OR UAT OR "smoke testing")

Tune it — Do not exclude automation words here — many strong manual testers are mid-transition and will be your best hires.

API and performance testing

("QA Engineer" OR "Performance Test Engineer" OR SDET) AND ("API testing" OR Postman OR "Rest Assured" OR SoapUI) AND (JMeter OR LoadRunner OR Gatling OR k6)

Tune it — Split this into two searches if the client needs genuine depth in one. Few people are strong at both.

CYBERSECURITY

SOC analyst

("SOC Analyst" OR "Security Analyst" OR "Cybersecurity Analyst" OR "Threat Analyst") AND (SIEM OR Splunk OR Sentinel OR QRadar OR "Chronicle") AND (incident OR detection OR triage OR "threat hunting")

Tune it — Ask for the tier they worked at and the alert volume. Tier 1 and tier 3 are different jobs with the same title.

Cloud security

("Cloud Security Engineer" OR "Security Engineer" OR "Security Architect") AND (AWS OR Azure OR GCP) AND (IAM OR CSPM OR "cloud security" OR "Security Hub" OR "Defender for Cloud") AND (compliance OR "least privilege" OR encryption)

Tune it — A hot, thin market. Source cloud engineers with security ownership as your adjacent pool.

IAM engineer

("IAM Engineer" OR "Identity and Access" OR "Access Management") AND (Okta OR SailPoint OR "Azure AD" OR "Entra ID" OR CyberArk OR Ping) AND (SSO OR SAML OR OAuth OR provisioning)

Tune it — Product names carry more signal than the title here — most IAM specialists are named after their tool.

GRC / compliance

("GRC Analyst" OR "Information Security" OR "Compliance Analyst" OR "Risk Analyst") AND ("ISO 27001" OR SOC2 OR NIST OR PCI OR HIPAA) AND (audit OR policy OR "risk assessment" OR controls)

Tune it — Framework names are the search. This pool overlaps with internal audit — read the day-to-day, not the title.

ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS

SAP functional

("SAP Consultant" OR "SAP Functional Consultant" OR "SAP Analyst") AND (S4HANA OR "S/4HANA" OR ECC) AND (FICO OR MM OR SD OR PP OR HCM) AND (implementation OR rollout OR support OR configuration)

Tune it — Always search one module at a time. A generic SAP search is a guaranteed waste of an afternoon.

Salesforce

("Salesforce Developer" OR "SFDC Developer" OR "Salesforce Consultant" OR "Salesforce Administrator") AND (Apex OR "Lightning" OR LWC OR "Visualforce") AND (integration OR API OR "Sales Cloud" OR "Service Cloud")

Tune it — Admin, developer and architect are three different markets. Pick one before you search or you will screen all three.

ServiceNow

("ServiceNow Developer" OR "ServiceNow Consultant" OR "ServiceNow Administrator") AND (ITSM OR ITOM OR CMDB OR "Flow Designer") AND ("Glide" OR JavaScript OR "script include" OR integration)

Tune it — Certification is close to mandatory in this market — unusual for IT, and worth confirming at intake.

Workday

("Workday Consultant" OR "Workday Analyst" OR "Workday HCM") AND (HCM OR "Workday Studio" OR "Core Connectors" OR "Report Writer") AND (integration OR configuration OR implementation)

Tune it — A small, well-paid, referral-driven pool. Expect low response rates and plan the outreach accordingly.

PRODUCT, DESIGN AND SUPPORT

Business analyst

("Business Analyst" OR "Technical Business Analyst" OR "Product Analyst") AND (requirements OR "user stories" OR BRD OR FRD) AND (Agile OR Scrum OR JIRA OR Confluence) AND (stakeholder OR "process mapping")

Tune it — Add the domain word — banking, insurance, healthcare. A BA search without a domain returns everybody.

Product manager

("Product Manager" OR "Product Owner" OR "Technical Product Manager") AND (roadmap OR backlog OR "user stories" OR discovery) AND (B2B OR SaaS OR platform OR API) NOT (marketing OR sales)

Tune it — The exclusion is doing real work — product marketing profiles match almost every product keyword.

Scrum master / agile

("Scrum Master" OR "Agile Coach" OR "Delivery Manager") AND (Scrum OR Kanban OR SAFe) AND (ceremonies OR sprint OR retrospective OR velocity) AND (CSM OR PSM OR "SAFe certified")

Tune it — Many scrum masters are project managers with a new title. Screen for who owns the delivery risk.

UI / UX design

("UX Designer" OR "UI Designer" OR "Product Designer" OR "Interaction Designer") AND (Figma OR Sketch OR "Adobe XD") AND (wireframe OR prototype OR "user research" OR "design system") AND (portfolio OR Behance OR Dribbble)

Tune it — The portfolio group biases towards people who publish work. Drop it when sourcing enterprise designers.

IT support / service desk

("IT Support" OR "Service Desk" OR "Desktop Support" OR "Technical Support Engineer") AND ("Active Directory" OR "Office 365" OR "Microsoft 365" OR ITIL) AND (ticket OR incident OR troubleshooting OR SLA)

Tune it — A high-volume pool. Filter on the environment (M365, Intune, macOS) rather than on years of experience.

06 · INDIA

Sourcing modifiers for the India market

The role string finds the skill. These modifiers find the person who can actually join. Bolt them onto any string in the library.

Location groups

City names in India have official and colloquial forms, and candidates use both. Search both, always, or you lose a third of the local market.

Metro	Use this group
Bengaluru	(Bengaluru OR Bangalore OR Blr)
Delhi NCR	(Gurugram OR Gurgaon OR Noida OR "Delhi NCR" OR "New Delhi" OR Faridabad)
Mumbai	(Mumbai OR Bombay OR Thane OR "Navi Mumbai")
Hyderabad	(Hyderabad OR Secunderabad OR Telangana)
Pune	(Pune OR Hinjewadi OR "Pimpri")
Chennai	(Chennai OR Madras OR "Tamil Nadu")

Availability and background modifiers

Notice period

("immediate joiner" OR "immediately available" OR "serving notice" OR "30 days notice" OR "15 days notice")

Useful on Naukri where candidates fill this field. Weak on LinkedIn, where almost nobody writes it.

Product vs services background

(product OR startup OR SaaS) NOT ("staffing" OR "consultancy" OR "manpower")

Ask at intake whether this preference is a real requirement or a habit. It is often the latter, and it shrinks your pool badly.

Exclude entry level

NOT (fresher OR intern OR trainee OR "looking for job" OR "seeking opportunity")

Add "student" only if the results justify it. Many working engineers list an ongoing part-time degree.

Shift and work mode

("night shift" OR "US shift" OR "rotational shift" OR "work from office" OR hybrid OR remote)

For US-hours roles in India, confirm shift tolerance on the first call. It causes more offer drops than money does.

Ask, do not assume

Notice period, current CTC and shift tolerance are call questions, not search filters. Profile fields go stale within weeks. Every India offer that falls apart late falls apart on one of these three, and the search box will never warn you.

07 · UNITED STATES

Sourcing modifiers for US staffing

US staffing has a vocabulary of its own. Learn it so you can read a resume correctly — and learn the line you do not cross while using it.

Read this before you use any term on this page

Never build a search that includes or excludes people by citizenship, national origin or visa status unless a specific documented law or government contract requires it. “US citizens only” or “no H-1B” in a search string or a job advert is the fastest route to a discrimination complaint against your employer.

The lawful approach is one question, asked of every candidate, in the same words: “Are you currently authorised to work in the United States, and will you now or in the future require employment sponsorship?”

You collect the answer as a fact. Immigration counsel, HR or compliance make the eligibility decision — never the recruiter, and never the search string.

Engagement model as it appears on a resume

(W2 OR "Corp to Corp" OR C2C OR 1099 OR "contract to hire" OR C2H)

These are contract terms, not people categories. Use them to understand what the candidate is looking for, then confirm the model verbally.

Consulting ecosystem

("implementation partner" OR "prime vendor" OR "staffing" OR "consulting" OR "bench")

Tells you whether the profile sits inside the US staffing supply chain. Affects rate structure and how ownership is handled.

Security clearance (cleared roles only)

("Secret clearance" OR "TS/SCI" OR "Public Trust" OR "active clearance")

Only use when the role genuinely requires a clearance. It is a job requirement, not a shortcut for anything else.

US locations and metros

("New York" OR NYC OR "New Jersey" OR NJ OR Jersey City)

Build the metro group, not the city. Commuting patterns cross state lines around NYC, DC, Chicago and the Bay Area.

Rate maths you will be asked about on day one

Term	Formula	Worked example
Pay rate	What the worker receives per hour	\$60/hr
Bill rate	What the client is invoiced per hour	\$80/hr
Markup %	$(\text{Bill} - \text{Pay}) \div \text{Pay} \times 100$	$(80 - 60) \div 60 = 33.3\%$
Gross margin %	$(\text{Bill} - \text{direct labour cost}) \div \text{Bill} \times 100$	Cost \$66 $\rightarrow (80 - 66) \div 80 = 17.5\%$

Direct labour cost is more than the pay rate — it includes employer taxes, insurance and benefits. Confusing the two in front of an account manager is the classic first-week mistake.

08 · DIAGNOSTICS

When the search is not working

Every recruiter hits these two walls daily. The fix is almost never a longer string — it is a smarter one. Work down the list in order.

Too many results

- Move the title group into the title field instead of the keyword field. This one change removes more noise than any exclusion.
- Add one more must-have concept — but only one, and only after reading the first twenty results.
- Tighten a loose OR group. (Cloud) is not a skill; (AWS OR Azure OR GCP) is.
- Quote multi-word phrases so "project manager" stops matching a project and a manager in different sentences.
- Add the location group, and use local spellings and abbreviations.
- Exclude the pattern you can actually see repeating in the results.

Too few results

- Remove the newest technology first — it is the one least likely to be written on an older profile.
- Add title synonyms. Search Software Engineer as well as Developer, and Engineer as well as Consultant.
- Add abbreviations and expansions: (K8s OR Kubernetes), (SFDC OR Salesforce), (QA OR "Quality Assurance").
- Delete your exclusions and re-run. NOT is the most common cause of an empty search.
- Drop from three must-haves to two and screen the difference manually.
- Widen the location group, or search a nearby metro and check who is open to relocation.

The ten mistakes that cost the most time

- 01 Pasting the whole job description into the search box.
- 02 Using one exact job title and assuming the market uses it too.
- 03 Forgetting brackets around an OR group, so the logic silently changes.
- 04 Stacking five must-have skills before looking at a single result.
- 05 Excluding a word without knowing why it appears.
- 06 Lower-case and / or / not, which most platforms read as ordinary words.
- 07 Assuming a string that worked on LinkedIn will behave the same on Naukri, Dice or your ATS.
- 08 Judging a search by how many results it returned instead of how relevant the first twenty are.
- 09 Never saving the string, so tomorrow you start again from nothing.
- 10 Treating the search as the job. The search builds a list; the screening call builds a shortlist.

09 · TEMPLATE

Requirement intake sheet

Print it, fill it in on the call with the hiring manager, and do not open a search box until every row has something in it. An unclear requirement is the root cause of almost every rejected submission.

Job title and requisition ID	
Why is this role open? What must the hire deliver in 6 months?	
Employment model (permanent / fixed-term / contract / C2H)	
Reporting manager, team size, stakeholders	
Must-have skills (four to six, no more)	
Preferred skills (trainable or replaceable)	
Seniority evidence expected (ownership, design, scale, mentoring)	
Domain or industry experience required	
Location, work mode, shift, time zone, travel	
Compensation range / bill rate / budget and flexibility	
Work-authorisation policy and who confirms it	
Target companies and acceptable adjacent backgrounds	
Interview stages, interviewers, assessments, feedback SLA	
Start date, notice-period tolerance, background checks	
Candidate ownership and duplicate-submission rules	
Open questions and risks to resolve before sourcing	

The ten-point gate

Before you source: approved role and budget · clear business outcome · four to six must-haves · defined seniority evidence · location and work mode · compensation or rate · work-authorisation policy · interview stages and feedback SLA · candidate-ownership rules · no unresolved discriminatory or unrealistic language. If two of these are missing, go back to the hiring manager. Sourcing against a vague brief wastes your week and the candidates' time.

10 · TEMPLATE

Skills matrix and candidate persona

The matrix decides what you screen on. The persona decides where you look. Fill both before writing a single string.

Must-have versus preferred

Four to six must-haves. If everything is mandatory, nothing is — and you will reject people the hiring manager would have hired.

#	Requirement	Must / Preferred	What evidence proves it?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

A requirement nobody can justify is not a requirement. Take it back to the hiring manager before it costs you a fortnight of sourcing.

Candidate persona

Primary job title	
Alternative titles the market uses	
Must-have skills	
Acceptable adjacent skills	
Typical current employers	
Typical industries or products	
Seniority indicators to look for	
Location, time zone, work mode	
Compensation or rate alignment	
Why would this person take the call?	

11 · TEMPLATE

Resume screening scorecard

Score every candidate for a role on the same card. Consistency is what makes a shortlist defensible — to the hiring manager, and to the candidate who asks why.

Area	What you are checking	Max	Score
Basic eligibility	Location, work mode, availability, employment model	5	
Must-have skills	Project evidence for each agreed essential skill	25	
Recency and depth	How recently and how independently the skill was used	15	
Project relevance	Similar product, scale, architecture or domain	15	
Seniority	Ownership, design, mentoring, decision-making	10	
Communication	Clear resume; can explain their own work	10	
Logistics	Compensation, notice, time zone, interview availability	10	
Risk / verification	Unresolved inconsistencies or missing evidence	10	
Total	A score supports a decision. It never makes one.	100	

A red flag is a question, not a verdict

Overlapping dates, frequent moves, a career gap, a suspiciously long skill list — each of these has an ordinary explanation at least as often as a worrying one. Ask a consistent, job-related question and record the answer. Rejecting on a pattern you never checked is how good candidates get lost and how bias enters a process unnoticed.

Writing the decision note

Write this	Not this
Four years of Java and Spring Boot; current project is API ownership on AWS with production support. Kubernetes depth unclear — to confirm on call.	Good profile.
Expectation is above the approved range; open to reviewing if total benefits are shared.	Too expensive.
Could not give an example of hands-on cluster administration; exposure appears limited to deployment support.	Fake skill.
Withdrawn after the role changed from remote to onsite.	Not interested.

12 · TEMPLATE

Recruiter screening call form

Twenty minutes, in this order: two minutes opening, four on career context, ten on technical evidence, four on logistics and consent. Fill this in while you talk, not afterwards from memory.

Candidate name / role / date	
Current position and company	
Most relevant recent project	
Evidence for must-have 1	
Evidence for must-have 2	
Evidence for must-have 3	
Scale: users, data, transactions, team size	
What they personally owned	
Reason for considering a change	
Location and work mode they can support	
Notice period / earliest start date	
Compensation or rate expectation	
Work authorisation (as per approved wording)	
Other active processes affecting timing	
Consent to submit recorded?	
Recommendation: proceed / clarify / talent pool / reject	

The eight evidence questions

- Describe the most relevant project you worked on recently.
- What problem did it solve for the business?
- Which parts were you personally responsible for?
- How exactly did you use [must-have skill] in that work?
- What was the scale — users, data volume, transactions, team size?
- What went wrong, and how did you resolve it?
- How was the work tested, deployed and monitored?
- What would your manager say was your strongest contribution?

Every one of these is answerable by someone who did the work and awkward for someone who watched it happen. That is the whole point.

13 · TEMPLATE

Candidate submission

A submission is a recommendation with evidence attached. It should tell the hiring manager why this person matches, and what still needs assessing.

Candidate name and approved contact details	
Role title and requisition ID	
Source and consent / Right to Represent	
Current location and work arrangement	
Availability or notice period	
Work authorisation per policy	
Compensation or rate alignment	
Match 1 — skill plus the project that proves it	
Match 2 — skill plus the project that proves it	
Match 3 — skill plus the project that proves it	
Known gap or risk, stated plainly	
Recruiter recommendation in two sentences	

What a good recruiter summary reads like

Recruiter summary — example

Six years in backend development, four of them on Java and Spring Boot. On the current project she owns three REST services deployed to AWS and handles production incidents on a rota. Kubernetes exposure is limited to deployment support rather than cluster administration — worth probing in the technical round. Available in 30 days and aligned to the approved range.

Three specific matches, one honest gap, and the logistics. No adjectives, no invented skills, nothing the candidate has not said herself. The gap is the part that builds your credibility — a recruiter who never flags a risk is a recruiter nobody trusts twice.

14 · PRACTICE

The seven-day sourcing sprint

Reading this kit will not make you a sourcer. Running it against one real job requirement for one week will. Pick a live JD from any job board and start.

	What you do	What you produce
Day 1	Pick one live JD. Write the intake sheet and mark the four real must-haves.	One completed intake sheet.
Day 2	Build the candidate persona and list ten alternative job titles.	A persona and a title list.
Day 3	Write one narrow and one broad string. Run both. Log the result counts.	Two strings and two counts.
Day 4	Open twenty results. Note every recurring irrelevance. Rewrite the string once.	A version 2 string with a reason for each change.
Day 5	Score five resumes on the 100-point card. Write the reason, not just the number.	Five scorecards.
Day 6	Run two mock screening calls using the call form.	Two completed call forms.
Day 7	Write one outreach message and one submission for your best candidate.	One outreach note and one submission.

Keep a search log

Two minutes per search. Within a month it becomes the most valuable document you own — and it is what makes you sound experienced in an interview.

Date	Role	Platform	String version	Results	Relevant in first 20	What you changed



You now have the strings. Next: learn to read the JD.

A search string is one skill out of a dozen. The RTechX IT Recruitment Masterclass is taught live by a working Talent Acquisition lead — not a full-time trainer — and covers the whole job, from decoding a technical requirement to getting a candidate through the door.

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- Day 5 — US staffing, live on screen
- W2, C2C, 1099, rates, work-authorisation basics

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Understand Tech. Find Talent. Build Careers.

This kit is an educational resource for recruiters in training. It is not legal, immigration, tax or employment-law advice. Platform behaviour, visa rules and employment regulations change — always verify against the official source and your employer's current policy before applying any of it to a live hire.