UNDERSTANDING AND USING BOOLEAN LOGIC

It is tempting to think that Internet search technology has evolved to a point where a machine has become the recruiter, but we all know that is far from true. While products like Resume Search have made it much easier for you to quickly search through millions of resumes to identify your target candidates, you still require the use of keywords. Where there are keywords, there is Boolean Logic. It should not be feared. In fact, when used properly, Boolean Logic can effectively find ideal candidates when searching for candidates in Classic Search.
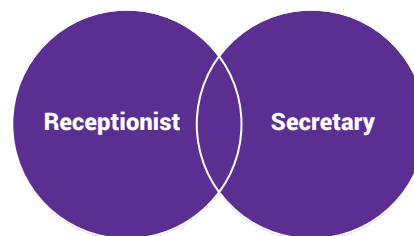
WHAT IS BOOLEAN LOGIC?

It is important to understand that whenever you are searching the Internet, you are simply searching through the words contained in files. The results you receive will be files that contain the words you request, but those words might not have the same meaning you intended. Boolean Logic is nothing more than the language we use to speak to our computers. It is a series of commands and operators that we use to combine keywords into meaningful phrases for our search engines. Let's take a look at the three basic commands AND, OR, AND NOT and the three basic operators; quotes, parentheses, and wild card.

COMMAND: OR

Let's begin with the **OR** command. Simply stated, **OR** requires that one of the keywords you enter be in the resume. Once the system finds one of the words, the resume will be returned as a result.

In this example, you are looking for candidates to fill a clerical role. You know that your desired candidates could have various job titles. **OR** allows us to expand our search to include multiple keywords, of which at least one will be in the resume.
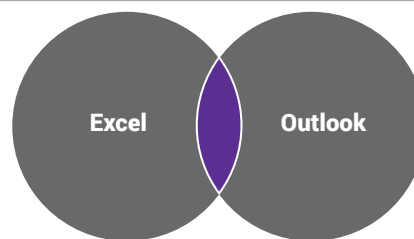
Your sample Boolean string would be **receptionist OR secretary**. In this case, any of the results you receive will contain either the word receptionist OR the word secretary. It may also contain both words, but that is just a bonus.

COMMAND: AND

While OR helps us to expand the search, it will quickly become necessary to further refine your results. That is best done with the **AND** command. Simply stated, **AND** links words or phrases together to ensure that both are included in the results.

In this example, you would like your candidates to have experience using both Microsoft Excel and Outlook.

Your sample Boolean string would be **Excel AND Outlook**. In this case, any of the results you receive will contain both words **Excel AND Outlook**.
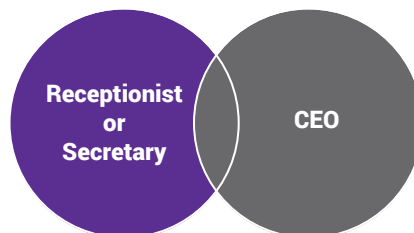
COMMAND: NEAR

When used between keywords, **NEAR** allows you to search for terms situated within a specified distance of each other in any order. The closer they are, the higher the document appears in the results list. The search string **software NEAR programmer** returns those resumes that have software and programmer within 10 words of each other.

COMMAND: AND NOT

There may be times that you wish to exclude terms from your results. The Boolean command associated with this functionality is **AND NOT**.

If you were looking for a more junior candidate, you might want to eliminate those resumes that have experience working for the CEO of a company. In this scenario, your Boolean search string would be **AND NOT CEO**.

AND NOT is also commonly used to exclude resumes of candidates who currently work for your organization. To do this, the command **AND NOT** Monster can be added to your string.

OPERATOR: "QUOTES"

While commands are very helpful, they alone are not enough to effectively target your ideal candidates. Luckily, there are three Boolean operators that can assist in this area.

The first are quotes. Quotes offer you the ability to search for multiple keywords as an exact phrase. Simply place quotes around the words you would like the search engine to find on the resume. For instance, you can search for the job titles "Administrative Assistant" OR "Executive Assistant." You can also use quotes to search for candidates from companies with names containing more than one word.

Your sample Boolean string would be **"administrative assistant" OR "executive assistant'**

OPERATOR: WILD CARD*

The wild card allows you to search for all words in a resume that begin with the letters before the wildcard.

For example, if you were looking for management candidates, you could use this wildcard to eliminate multiple keyword entry. Simply typing in **manag*** will return resumes containing the words manage, manager, managing, managed, management, etc. Your sample Boolean string would be **manag***

There will be times when the wildcard will return resumes that you would otherwise not receive. Therefore, it is best to use the wild card whenever possible.

OPERATOR: (PARENTHESES)

Parentheses are the final operator. This feature groups keywords together to create a sub-search within a complex string. If you want to build a Boolean string containing multiple commands, parentheses are a must. Furthermore, anytime you use the OR command, it is a best practice to use parentheses.

THE FINAL SEARCH STRING

If we combine all of the pieces together, our current string would read: **(secretary OR receptionist OR "administrative assistant" OR "executive assistant") AND excel AND outlook AND NOT (ceo OR monster)**

By grouping the job titles and the exclusions using parenthesis, we have given the search engine definitions and simplified a long Boolean string. It is a best practice to always capitalize Boolean commands and enter keywords in lower case. Following these guidelines will ensure you are able to quickly edit your Boolean strings and minimize search engine confusion.