

What Technology Recruiters Look For

The secret is out! After surveying dozens of Kforce recruiters in our Tampa based National Recruiting Center (NRC), we narrowed down the top tips technology professionals can use to get noticed. From entry level to seasoned professionals, we asked our technology recruiters questions on how they search for candidates and what they look for on resumes, online profiles and job applications.

When it comes to your resume or application, recruiters want to quickly find the most current information on your background and experience. Especially in the technology field, an online resume is a must.

An average of 46 percent of our recruiters surveyed say they use social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to source candidates and view profiles of potential candidates. By updating your experience and contact information on these sites you can provide a recruiter with a fast and easy way to find your most up-to-date information. "With a quick glance on social media sites like LinkedIn, we can usually see what the candidate has been doing for the last year," says Andrew Moberg, NRC Manager of Online Sourcing.

Moberg suggests using combinations of verbs and nouns to describe what you do and what types of software you are using on social media sites and job applications. For example, don't just mention you have experience with QA, instead specify that you have experience in testing web based applications or reporting platforms.

Applying keywords and verbs help recruiters better identify and search for your skills. Moberg says the bottom line for candidates is to have enough information on your resume, online profile or job application to show a recruiter who you are, and most importantly what you are capable of accomplishing.

Entry Level Candidates

Entry level candidates are commonly defined as those professionals with four years of working experience or less. Our recruiters surveyed say the best candidates in this category should have a bachelor's degree and ideally technical certifications relevant to their specific field, such as A+, MSCE, CCNA/CCNP, or Oracle Professional. However, if you don't have a degree, Moberg says you should be prepared to explain what experience you have to compensate, whether it's an internship or skills learned from a previous position.

If you are looking for your first job in the technology field, just over 90 percent of recruiters said the majority of jobs available at the entry level can include work in desktop support, help desk, or administration. These positions may provide the necessary experience you will need throughout your technology career and may also help you land your next job opportunity.

"Our clients will always need desktop and administrative people," says Moberg. "If you are getting into a large enterprise organization this is a great way to get your foot in the door."

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Mid-Level Candidates

Once you are ready to take the next step in your career, recruiters will expect you to have between five and seven years experience. An overwhelming 83 percent of our recruiters surveyed also say experience with enterprise level clients is important at the mid-career level, no matter what size company you want to work for in the future.

“Enterprise level companies want proof that you are able to work with a larger infrastructure and complex organization,” says Moberg. Candidates with enterprise level experience are also a hot commodity for smaller companies who want to grow their business.

While it is important to have experience with a large organization or infrastructure, recruiters typically look for that experience without gaps of unemployment. Before the recession, recruiters would likely overlook candidates who went without a job for months at a time. In 2011 though, recruiters now say they are more forgiving.

“We take unemployment gaps into consideration, but people still need to be able to show a constant career course,” says Moberg. “At this point you are likely an expert at something, so you have to be able to take 60 seconds to brag about yourself and tell the recruiter why they should consider you, over others in the running for the same job.”

If you have been without a job for three months or more, Moberg says it’s important to get back into the game. Be flexible on your commute or willing to take a salary cut, but also let your recruiter know your career goals for getting back on the path to success.

Senior Level Candidates

With seven or more years of experience, most recruiters would classify you as a senior level candidate. Recruiters surveyed not only expect senior level candidates to be an expert in their certifications, but these candidates should also have extensive experience in the software development life-cycle.

“They should have been a part of the design, analysis, development, and testing at this point,” says Moberg. “They should be able to talk to the business owners and the tech guys who speak in code.”

Additionally, senior level candidates should be comfortable with social media platforms more than any other career level. Fifty-five percent of Kforce recruiters said they actively look for information on experience, past employment, and referrals on social media sites. At this level, recruiters use LinkedIn as a way to qualify which candidates are the best fit for a job, but Moberg says candidates can also use social media to their own advantage.

“For example, they can go on the Java webpage on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter and get the latest news on different technologies and keep their skills up-to-date,” adds Moberg. While a senior level candidate may not have experience with a particular version of software, this can show a recruiter or employer that the candidate is knowledgeable on the latest updates, even if they have been out of work for an extended period of time.

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Moving Forward

No matter what stage you are at in your technology career, 67 percent of Kforce recruiters agree that keeping in touch with your recruiter is essential. Whether you check in once a week or just drop a line to inform them that you completed your latest certification, staying in touch is the key to maintaining a good relationship with your recruiter.

Additionally, when your recruiter reaches out to you with new job opportunities that you could be a good fit for, inform them of your availability. Know exact details when your current contract end date is, and whether the contract has the potential to be extended so that you can plan for alternatives. If you are willing to start work right away, make sure you truly are available. Remember to take family vacations or paid-time off into mind before telling your recruiter your optimal start date.

In the end, our technology recruiters agree that all clients want the same thing from potential candidates at every level -- someone who can walk in the door and have the skills necessary to perform the job on the first day. By updating your online resume, using keywords to describe your experience, and staying in touch with your recruiter you can easily become more informed on what opportunities you may qualify for. With the secrets behind what Kforce technology recruiters look for, we hope you will be able to stand out in the crowd and help your recruiter zero in on the right job for you.

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