



Law Society
of Ontario

Barreau
de l'Ontario

Women's Resource Centre

What to do with your resume

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WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR RESUME

Now that you have updated or created your resume and know what you want, what should you do with your resume? This guide will give you strategies for what you can — and should — do with your resume to maximize your chances of finding and securing your next job.

1. Apply for positions with your resume

Of course, applying for positions is the most common use for your resume. For women jobseekers, there is often an added layer: women tend to apply to jobs only when they meet 100% of the qualifications. Whereas men often apply to jobs when they meet 60% of the qualifications. There seems to be a difference in how a job posting is interpreted. It is more productive to view a job posting as a guideline rather than a by-the-book requirement.

One way to alleviate the mystery of responding to a job posting is to simply calculate the percentage point you possess of the qualifications. For example, if there are ten qualifications listed and you have seven of them, then you have 70% of the qualifications. 70% is a good threshold to work with in deciding whether to apply to a position. This threshold will give you much to talk about in your application materials and at an interview. Going lower than 70% is going to impact how much (or how little) you have to say. There is a direct correlation between your qualifications' percentage point and how much you can say in response to a posting. It is typically only advisable to apply to a posting with 50-69% of the qualifications when you are passionate about that practice area or employer. This approach will still allow you to say much and even win over the employer with your enthusiasm!

Reach out to someone

When applying for positions, do not just send in your resume and hope for a callback. Instead, maximize your chances of securing an interview by making a personal contact within the organization either before or after you apply. You can use online networking sites like [LinkedIn](#) to identify possible contacts. You may find that you already know someone who works for the employer (or you know someone who knows someone) or can find someone through a mentor or professional association.

Resources

- [Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified](#)
- *The 2-Hour Job Search: Using Technology to Get the Right Job Faster* by Steve Dalton
- Check out the websites of organizations that you are interested in
- Check out the Classified section of the Ontario Reports for opportunities that may not otherwise be posted, such as chambers arrangements or working for a sole practitioner

- Legal job boards:
 - [OBA Legal Career Centre](#)
 - [Legaljobs.ca](#)
 - [Clear legal jobs](#)
 - [Legal Aid Ontario](#)
 - [Ontario Public Service](#)
 - [Eluta.ca](#)
 - [Law Society of Ontario](#)
 - [Careerjet](#)
 - [Government of Canada](#)
 - [Law Times](#)
 - [Paralegaljobs.ca](#)
 - [Counselwell](#)
 - [Ontario Reports](#)

2. Tapping into the hidden job market

Where most jobseekers fall short in maximizing their resume is that they simply use the resume to apply for positions they see advertised — on job boards and company/firm/government websites, in the Ontario Reports and other legal publications, and through recommendations from friends.

Do not stop with simply applying for jobs you see advertised. You can also use the resume to apply for unadvertised positions, which can represent up to 80% of the available jobs. This involves researching organizations you would like to work for, finding a contact at the organization and setting up an informational interview to learn more about the work they do. Having such a discussion can generate leads in your job search, particularly when you are asked about your own career objectives.

You have already done this work in a previous guide called, [Knowing what you want and developing a list of dream employers](#)! You will learn more about conducting outreach in the next guide, [Informational interviews](#). In the meantime, know that the purpose of scheduling this kind of a meeting is NOT to ask for a job upfront, it is to learn more about an organization, position or practice area that you are keen on. These kinds of conversations will naturally touch on your goals, so it is best not to be aggressive in asking about job opportunities. Many people who are contacted for informational interviews express the feeling of being proposed to by a stranger when asked about a job opportunity before getting to know the person. Once you get to know the person a little more, they can ask for your resume, or you can bring it up at an appropriate time. Building trust with the contact is key to this process, so do not rush things.

This approach can yield:

1. job opportunities before they are posted (i.e., the contact lets you know about a potential opening or directs you to someone else who does once they feel comfortable),

2. information about the practice area/industry that you are interested in, which can help you in making a transition and with what to say in your application materials or at an interview,
3. a greater network that you can nurture and rely upon throughout your entire career.

Applying for positions — whether advertised or unadvertised — is the top use for your resume. But it is certainly not the last item on your “to do” list.

Resources

- [How to find your first job as a lawyer: 5 tips from your peers](#)
- [“C” is for the “Courage” it takes for a New-Call to Network](#)
- [Conducting an effective hidden job market search: How to find your first job as a lawyer 101](#)
- [How General Counsels Can Activate The Hidden Job Market \(And Connect With Executive Recruiters\)](#)

3. Get your resume in the hands of a recruiter

Working with a recruiter may be one strategy you consider in your job search. You may be approached by a recruiter (sometimes called a “headhunter”), or you may wish to make contact yourself. While you may find your next job through a recruiter, it is important to understand that recruiters are not in the business of finding jobs for jobseekers — instead, they are in the business of making a match between what their client (the employer) needs, and the candidate (jobseeker) they want to place in a job opening.

Jobseekers do not pay fees to recruiters. Recruiters are paid by the organizations who hire them to fill a position. Because headhunters do not work for you (the jobseeker), do not expect them to be overly responsive when you contact them. If you are a match for a current or future opening, they may add you to their database of candidates. You will hear back from them if they have a position that fits your qualifications, or to ask you to recommend other people who might be interested in the job. Otherwise, you probably will not hear from them at all.

You should also know that if you are a new-call, it is unlikely that a recruiter will work with you (though not impossible). Many organizations simply do not retain a recruiter to fill a new-call position.

There are different types of recruiters, and it is important to understand the differences.

- **Internal Recruiters / In-House Recruiters / Corporate Recruiters.** These individuals work for the employer and are usually a part of the human resources department. They only facilitate placements of candidates within their organization. They do not place candidates for positions outside of their employer.

- **Open Recruiter.** Several recruiters can be retained by an organization to fill a position.
- **Exclusive Recruiter.** This recruiter works exclusively with an organization to fill a position, and no other recruiter is hired by the organization.

Approximately two-thirds of all recruiters are open recruiters, while the remaining one-third are exclusive recruiters. Exclusive recruiters are typically hired by an organization for a specific job campaign for a specific amount of time — typically, 90 to 120 days. Exclusive recruiters are more often used to fill high-level positions. This recruiter will assemble a short list of candidates that will be presented to the client organization.

Open recruiters are competing with other recruiters to provide candidates for each job campaign. Keep in mind that you might be one of several candidates being presented by your recruiter to the client organization. Remember that if you are trying to keep your job search quiet, you may not want your resume widely distributed by the recruiting firm — something that may happen if you work with open recruiters. Be sure to talk with your recruiter about this. You can work with more than one recruiter at a time — however, be sure to let the recruiters know you are working with other recruiters, so they do not present you for the same position. This can result in a situation where you are not considered at all for the opening because the client organization does not want to get in the middle of a fight between recruiters about who deserves the commission.

Remember: recruiters are paid by the employer, not the jobseeker. This means that the recruiter is looking for the best match between the client's needs and the jobseeker's qualifications. Recruiters will not typically place candidates looking to make a career change. Instead, the recruiter is usually working from a list of requirements: specific skills, years of experience in the position/field, certifications, competency in specific areas (i.e., labour law), fluency in a specific language, degrees, or specific training, etc. If you are not a match, you will not be recommended to the prospective employer.

When contacting a recruiter about an advertised opportunity, make sure you meet at least 80-90% of the qualifications listed for the position. Otherwise, you are wasting your time — and the recruiter's time — because “the match” is critical. If you do not meet the criteria, you will not make the cut.

How can you find recruiters?

The simplest answer is that many times, recruiters will find you. If you have an up-to-date profile on LinkedIn and a desirable list of skills, it is not unusual for you to be contacted by a recruiter who would like to place you with an organization. As mentioned above, it is less likely that as a new-call you would be contacted by a recruiter.

LinkedIn is also a great way to locate recruiters who work in your field or your geographic area. For example, you may search “legal recruiter” and you can narrow the search by clicking “People,” as well as narrowing the Locations. Reputable recruiters will have LinkedIn profiles outlining their career and accomplishments and defining the type of

clients and candidates they work with. You should also review their Recommendations and see what their clients and candidates say about them. You can also make connections with recruiters by joining and participating in LinkedIn Groups.

When you want to connect with a recruiter, a good place to start is with your colleagues. Ask if they have worked with a recruiter who was helpful and who treated them with respect and professionalism. Human resources managers and recruiting directors often can be a good source of recruiter referrals as well. Ask: “Who is the best recruiter you have worked with?”

You can also look at job postings from recruiters on the major job boards (see examples above under **Apply for positions with your resume**) as well as legal association job boards. See which recruiters have posted positions like the one you are seeking.

Google’s search engine can also help you mine legal recruiters in your preferred geographic location: “legal recruiter Ottawa.”

Resources

- [Working With Recruiters: Insider Tips for Success](#)
- [4 Truths About Working With Recruiters \(That They’ll Never Tell You\)](#)
- [A Comprehensive Guide to Working with a Legal Recruiter](#)

4. Use your resume to update your LinkedIn profile

Your LinkedIn profile should align with your resume, although the two should not be the same. The work history listed in your profile should match up with your resume — this is an easy check for prospective employers to make. However, your profile should complement — not duplicate — your resume.

The most important pieces of your LinkedIn profile are your profile Headline and your LinkedIn About (which you now have content for after working with the guide [Branding and positioning yourself to get the job](#)). These two things are the first items a prospective employer will review. While the resume uses third-person language, your LinkedIn Summary should be a first-person narrative that appeals to a prospective employer’s needs by identifying what makes you a good candidate.

Finally, make sure your LinkedIn profile is complete. Post your photo, add your industry and location, fill out all the sections (including your current job and at least two former positions and your education), identify no more than five Skills, and make at least 50 connections. LinkedIn profiles that are “complete” receive 40 times more opportunities than incomplete profiles.

Resources

- [4 Easy Ways To Improve Your LinkedIn Profile](#)
- [LinkedIn for Lawyers: 12 Steps to The Perfect Profile](#)
- [The 31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips for Job Seekers](#)

5. Get a copy of your resume to all your references

Make sure you also get a copy of your resume to anyone who you want to be a reference for you in your job search.

Prepare your references to be contacted by your prospective employer. In addition to having your current copy of your resume, you should contact each of your references and let them know when you are scheduled for an interview (and double-check their contact information to make sure it is up to date) — and be sure to call them right after the interview to let them know they may be contacted to check your references.

Here is a checklist to help you with references:

- The first step is identifying who you should consider to be your references. References should be people who know you well.
- Select 3-7 individuals to be your references. These can include current or former managers or supervisors, co-workers, team members, current or former clients or stakeholders, and people you have supervised. You can also ask professors, faculty members, and advisors.
- Do not wait until you are getting called for interviews before you start assembling your reference list. It can take time to track down and reach references, so start contacting your prospective references right away.
- Always ask for permission to list someone as a reference. Reach out to your reference. Assess whether they would be a good reference for you. You want a reference who can be as enthusiastic about you as you are about getting the job. It is fine to ask a reference to support you, but then not use them as a reference for particular jobs.
- Send a letter or email to your reference, thanking them for agreeing to serve as a reference, and provide a current copy of your resume.
- Prepare a written list of references to give to prospective employers (or to email to them) when asked. It should match the format, font style, and font size of your resume.
- You can also prepare an additional page that includes excerpts from — or reprints of — your LinkedIn Recommendations, but in hard copy format.
- Organizations should ask your permission before contacting your references; however, simply providing contact information for references can be construed as permission to contact your references, in many cases.
- If you are asked to sign a release form for references, read it carefully, as it may authorize the organization to contact unnamed references as well as the references you have listed. The release form may also authorize the organization to conduct a background check (to see if you have any criminal or civil legal issues), and/or a credit check.
- Prepare your references to be contacted. Before an interview, re-contact them to make sure you can still use them as a reference. If you use their name as a reference for a particular job, contact your reference right after the interview. Give

them the name of the organization, position you are seeking, and the contact information for the person who will be contacting them. Let them know some of the specific skills, experience, and achievements the reference checker may be interested in knowing about you.

Resources

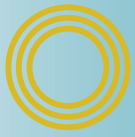
- [Get your references together for your job search](#)
- [I Don't Have Any References for a Job Application \(With Tips\)](#)
- [Best People to Choose for a Job Reference \(Plus Tips\)](#)

6. The final step

The last thing you should do with your new resume is commit to keeping it updated. If you do not already have one, start an “accomplishments” file. This can be a file folder or a folder on your computer that you use to collect items for updating your resume. This can include descriptions of projects (and quantifying accomplishments related to those projects in terms of numbers, percentages, and dollars), performance reviews, testimonials, or letters of appreciation from clients, awards/honors, training certificates, publications you have contributed to, etc.

And finally, put a note on your calendar for next year at this time to update your resume.

**It is time to brush up on your informational interview skills.
Check out the next guide, [Informational interviews!](#)**



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