

Resumes are a brief written account of your personal, professional and educational experience intended for an employer's human resources professional, recruiter and/or hiring-manager to help them discern if you are a qualified candidate for the open position. Resumes are not going away. At least not yet. What has gone away, are people to read your resumé who have been replaced by the applicant tracking system (ATS)—the black box—that manages an employer's job openings, and screens resumes. An employer's ATS can kill your chances of landing an interview within seconds of submitting your resumé. Albeit flawed, improvements in ATS software have been made, and over time will become increasingly more job applicant friendly.

The objective has always been to craft a resumé that is rich in personality and accomplishments. One that communicates your value, distinguishes you, and looks pleasing to the human eye. For today's job search, your resumé is all that plus it includes keywords and is formatted appropriately for ATS. This is the art and science of writing a resumes for today's job search.

UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE

TO CREATE THE ART

Science of Content —Keywords

Keywords are what employer's use to populate the ATS. Keywords are found throughout job descriptions. Keywords are nouns and noun-based phrases, and describe:

- Technical skills— tasks/job requirements.
- Soft skills—interpersonal behavior the job and employer are seeking.
- Education
 - Name of College
 - City
 - State
 - Degree
 - Major
 - GPA
 - Extracurricula activity
 - Honors
 - Awards
- The city and state where you live.

Science of Finding Keywords

Employers use an average of 7-10 search criteria to screen candidate applications and resumes for specific skills that match the job opening, department needs and organization's culture. Keywords are found throughout the job posting, and there are a number of resources to use to identify keywords and phrases.

- Read jobs postings related to the field you are interested in provides important keyword information. Even if you don't plan to apply for these jobs, scanning the posts will increase your awareness of the most commonly used industry-standard terms and keywords that you can—if appropriate— build into your resumé.
- Look at company websites, LinkedIn page and other online media channels.
- Business directories, industry publications , professional organizations.

Art of Content

Your competencies—talent, skills, qualifications, accomplishments—is the content of your resumé.

- Review your resumé. If you stated a skill one way but there is a keyword that means the same thing, then change your resumé to align with the job description keyword.
- Include meaningful and relevant keywords avoiding words that are less valuable.
- Manage your expectations. You will never achieve a 100% match. Don't try.
- Don't stuff you resumé with keywords. You might make it through the ATS screen but the first person who reads your resumé will see immediately what you've done. Tacky!

Art of Placement

The location and frequency of keywords matters.

- Keywords need to appear in every section of your resumé.
- The most relevant keywords need to be used frequently.

Art of Formatting

There are ATS formatting rules. The following are essential.

- No specific font is required. No specific type size. Bold and caps are okay.
- Bullet points and keyboard symbols are fine. No other symbols are readable.
- Do not use underline (U) or italic, and no accent marks. Links can be used.
- Do not use charts, tables, graphs. No graphics/logos. No columns.

** A shout out to Louise Kursmark and Wendy Enelow for their research and webinar on ATS that informed this tip sheet.*