Get Your Resume Seen - Beat the ATS

Amy Geffen, PhD President Geffen Careers

www.geffencareers.com geffena108@gmail.com

Agenda

- What is ATS? (Applicant Tracking system)
- How does a company use the ATS?
- Formatting your resume
- How to use Keywords
- Tailoring your resume
- What to do
- What not to do
- Beyond the resume
- Networking
- Key takeaways

What is the ATS?

- ATS or Applicant Tracking System is a software application that helps companies manage the hiring process.
- It allows them to compare your resume to the job description and knock outmost candidates who do not meet 85-90% of the job requirements.

How does a Company use the ATS?

- **Task management**

An ATS can help with tasks like creating job descriptions, posting jobs, scanning resumes, scheduling interviews, and generating offer letters.

- **Candidate experience**

An ATS can help applicants search for jobs, apply online, and check the status of their application.

- **Streamlined hiring process**

An ATS can help reduce errors, duplicated efforts, and the chances of candidates getting lost in the shuffle.

- **Statistics**

An ATS can provide statistics on various aspects of the hiring process, which can help you evaluate your processes and set goals to improve them.

- **Communication -**An ATS can support speedy internal and external communication.
- **Feedback -** An ATS can provide channels for candidates to give feedback.
- **Notifications -** An ATS can automatically send notifications and updates based on custom workflows

Formatting your resume

- Keep it simple
- Avoid complex formatting – no columns, no graphics, no text boxes, no color
- Use simple standard fonts: sans serif font Arial or Calibri or Times Roman
- Do not use headings
- Save it as a Word document or a PDF (depending on the instructions they give). If they don't specify, a .docx or .doc file is your safest bet.
- Clarify your previous job titles. If you were an account manager at one company, that could be the same thing as a project manager at another company. So, make sure you spell out what the job involved and what tasks you did.
- Don't put important details (like contact info) in the header or footer.
- Avoid graphics, charts and other artsy stuff.

Make sure ATS can read your resume

- One way you can do this is to go into Microsoft Word and copy and paste the content from your resumé into a plain text document.
- Or you can convert your current resumé document into a plain text document by clicking Save As and then changing the format to .txt instead of .docx.
- If the new version is missing any important details from the original or the characters look different or disorganized, then your original formatting is probably not compatible with an ATS, and you'll need to format it differently.

Keywords

- Read the job description carefully
- Use **keywords from the job description** in your cover letter, accomplishments, your expertise, your experience
- The ATS matches the keywords in the job description to your resume…so make sure to include the exact words from the job description in your resume
- E.g. Microsoft Office vs. PowerPoint, Excel, Word
- E.g. healthcare vs. health care

Don’t use Acronyms without long version

- Instead of saying:
- “In my previous role, I led a successful ERP implementation, resulting in a 20% increase in ROI.”
- You could say:
- “In my previous role, I led a successful Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation, resulting in a 20% increase in Return on Investment (ROI).”
- Adding the acronym or abbreviation in parenthesis after the long version will help the ATS understand your resume better, as well as human readers who may not be familiar with the abbreviation.

Follow Instructions

- Follow instructions.
- Whatever instructions are given throughout the application process, follow them! If they're asking for your documents to be in a specific format, use that format.
- If they tell you they want a cover letter, give them a cover letter. (Side note: Don't ever put *see that information in my cover letter* in your resumé. If the info is called for, spell it out again.)
- The more closely you follow instructions, the more likely you are to get through the ATS to the next stage in the hiring process.

Job Title

Be specific Use the exact job title in the job description

If you are applying to several jobs your resume should use the exact job title for each different job

Tailoring Your Resume

- AI compares your resume to the job description. If you are missing any of the keywords, skills, education or experience you will not beat the ATS.

Power of Resume Sections

- Job Title
- Summary
- Accomplishments
- Skills or Competencies
- Experience
- Education
- Licenses and Certifications
- Professional Development

Avoid ATS Pitfalls

- **Excessive graphics:** Limit images and graphics as they can be difficult for the ATS to read.
- **Irrelevant keywords:** Don't just stuff your resume with unrelated keywords; use targeted terms from the job description.
- **Jargon and clichés:** Avoid industry-specific jargon and overused phrases like "self-starter" or "highly motivated".
- **Spelling and grammar errors:** Carefully proofread your resume to catch any typos or grammatical mistakes.
- **Unprofessional email address:** Use a professional email address on your resume.
- **Not following instructions:** Pay close attention to any specific requirements stated in the job posting.
- **Custom headings:** Use standard resume section headings like "Summary," "Experience," and "Skills" instead of personalized ones.
- **Overly stylized resume:** Prioritize readability over visual appeal when designing your resume.

Do This Instead

Tailor your resume:
- Carefully review each job posting and customize your resume to highlight relevant skills and experiences.

Use keywords strategically:
- Incorporate keywords from the job description throughout your resume, including the job title and key responsibilities.

Clear section headings:
- Use standard headings to make it easy for the ATS to identify relevant information.

Bullet points:
- Format your experience with concise bullet points that clearly describe your accomplishments.

Plain text format:
- Save your resume as a .doc or .pdf in a simple text format.

Include a link to your LinkedIn profile and/or portfolio

Impactful accomplishment statements

- **BEFORE:** Successfully managed partnerships
- AFTER: **Managed events with over 25 industry associations and achieved 60% increase in strategic partnerships.**

==========

- **BEFORE:** Developed and published metrics to increase call center productivity
- AFTER: **Developed metrics posted daily and within the first month productivity increased 33% and call length dropped 15%.**

==========

- **BEFORE:** Led team of ten staff people to design a conference
- **AFTER: Led team of ten to design and implement the first India Oil & Gas conference resulting in 150 attendees.**

Tools to Optimize Your Resume

- JOBSCAN or Skillsyncer
- https://resumeworded.com/results-v2 On areas where you need to reword things, it'll give you ideas and on the paid version it will use AI to rewrite things for you.
- I then used that resume on https://www.vmock.com/dashboard/resume and it gave me a similar score..
- ChatGPT
- TealHQ.com

Warning about using AI

- **Asking AI-Tools Questions:** General questions and requests for ideas are typically safe to input to an AI-based tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude) as long as they do not include anything confidential.
- **Never enter or upload confidential** or "personally identifiable information" (PII) onto a generative AI-tool or online service (e.g. Jobscan).
- **Personally identifiable information (PII)** is defined as information:
  - (i) that directly identifies an individual (such as name, address, social security number or other identifying numbers or codes, telephone number, email address, etc.); OR
  - (ii) that can be used to indirectly identify individuals through a combination of other data elements (such as gender, race, birth date, geographic indicator, and other descriptors).
- **AI-Tools Can Keep & Share Data:** Remember that anything shared with AI-tools like ChatGPT may be retained and potentially be disclosed to others in the future, risking exposure of sensitive information and data.

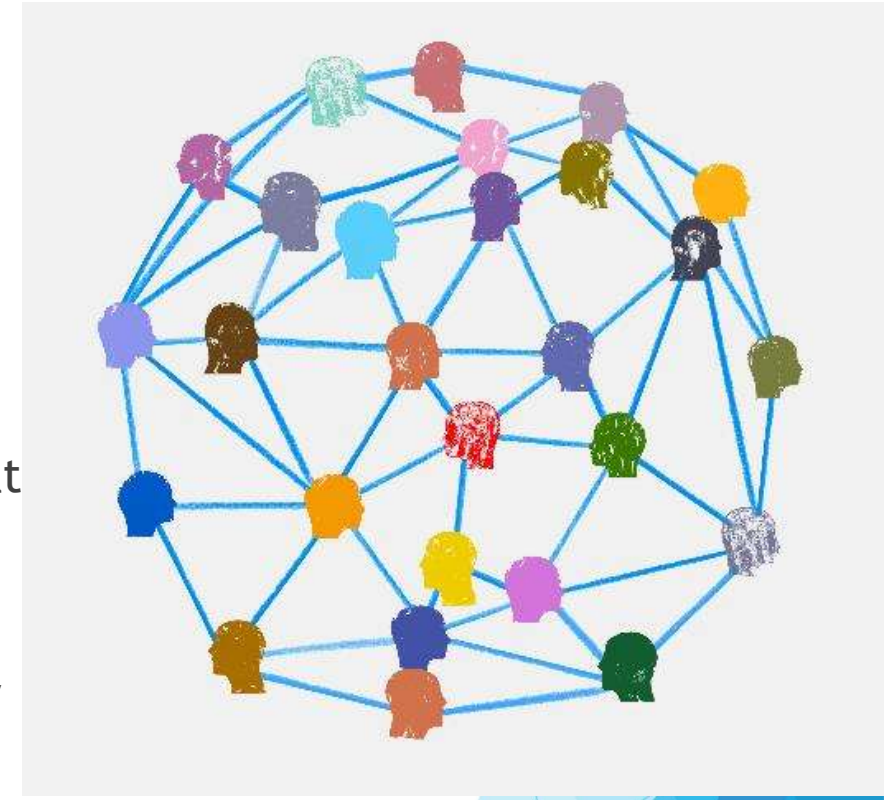
Things beyond your resume

After you apply online, network your way into the company.

- Find out the name and email address of the hiring manager through your network or company website
- Write directly to the hiring manager.
- Say you have applied for x position and use your usual cover letter. Mention your skills and accomplishments.
- Attach your resume and send the email.

LinkedIn and Networking

- Network your way into the company
- Look on LinkedIn for the company profile. Look at People…see if you know anyone in the company
- Contact your network
- Connect to alumni from your college or university
- Then write to that person in the company, preferably the hiring manager, and say you have applied to the position and attach your resume.



Tips to Remember

1. **Focus on keywords**. Read the job description thoroughly and circle keywords. Present keywords and phrases throughout your resume — but be honest!

2. **Always include the company's name** and the exact position title on your resume.

3. **Include a few role-specific keywords** in the education and hard skills portion of your resume. Copy and paste keywords, not sentences from the job description. Include action verbs and specific skills from the job posting.

4.**Do an internet search for relevant industry keywords** to include. Compare the job posting to similar job announcements to pull keywords.

5.**Don’t stuff your resume with keywords.** Remember, at some point a real human being is going to read your resume.

More Tips to Remember

6.Never lie about your abilities. If you cannot back it up, don't write it down.
7. Stay away from PDFs. Often ATS misses pdfs, so use a Word document instead.

8. Ditch your headshot. Unless the posting specifically asks for a headshot, it is not necessary. Instead make sure your LinkedIn and social sites include a professional photograph.

9. Avoid overused jargon or buzzwords. Never use clichés or overused phrases such as "self-starter" or "attention to detail."
Use a show, don't tell approach on your resume and cover letter. Instead of "I am a self-starter," write "I initiated a company-wide volunteer program that resulted in 1500 prepared lunches for school age children in impoverished areas."

10. Avoid fancy graphic designs. Be basic. Use bullets to get your points across. Be succinct. Make sure that the information on your resume is easy to find and easy to read. In positions where design matters, you'll be asked to present a portfolio where you can showcase your style.

Tips for your Resume

Make sure your resume is easy to navigate, readable, professional, and includes information pertinent to human eyes … not just ATS. Here are some tips:

1. Highlight relevant experience. Make it easy for recruiters to pick out relevant experience over longevity of experience.

2. Use bullet points and short sentences. Hiring managers and recruiters spend an average of six seconds reading your resume.

3. Include a link to your LinkedIn profile. While you're at it, update your LinkedIn profile especially concerning dates!

4. Include a link to your portfolio, personal website, or social media sites.. Not every position will require a portfolio, but if yours does, you better include a link.

Key Takeaways

- Use one of the three standard **resume formats** — chronological, combination or functional.
- **Format your resume correctly** and avoid using charts, tables or graphics.
- **Use a professional resume template** to ensure your resume is organized flawlessly.
- **Save your resume in an ATS-friendly file format**. Some ATS can't read PDF files, so unless otherwise instructed, opt for a .doc, .docx or .txt file.
- **Network your way into the company** – write directly to a hiring manager.

REMEMBER

- Fewer than 10% of job seekers get a job through answering ads online.
- Up to 70% of jobs are NOT publicly advertised.
- So, don’t spend all your time putting your resume through an ATS.
- Spend most of your job search time on NETWORKING.
- More than 80% of job seekers get a job through their network.

Q & A

Thank You
Contact Amy Geffen
geffena108@gmail.com
347 853 4616
www.geffencareers.com