

# ATS Compatible Resumes

An Applicant Tracking System, or ATS, is a type of software organizations use to assist them track, streamline, and organize the application process.

They can be used to filter through resumes (for example by scanning for keywords to select and/or prioritize qualified candidates), store applications, and streamline the hiring process (issuing invitations to interview, contracts, and other information associated with the onboarding process). ATS' come in a variety of levels of sophistication. This informational sheet is designed to provide you with best practice tips and tricks.

## How to Use KEYWORDS on your resume:

It is best practice that job seekers incorporate job specific keywords into their resume to show that they meet with qualifications and requirements outlined in the job posting. These are words or phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might input into the ATS and utilize the system to select or prioritize qualified candidates. Common examples are education/ required certifications, technical skills, knowledgeable in the use of specific software, and experience.

One way job seekers can do this is by printing out a job posting and highlighting specific keywords (technical qualifications and position requirements) that stand out. Another option is to use one of the many resume scanning tools that are available online, including JobScan (paid) and Cultivated Culture (excellent free option). The benefit in using these online tools is that the tool quickly generates a list of hard and soft skills. In our opinion, job seekers should not aim to incorporate all words suggested by the scanner, should not include certain words numerous times (as these scanners often suggest), and should **not** aim to achieve the % match score provided. Rather, the benefit is to approach this list of keywords with a strategic eye and quickly scan this list provided and identify any technical qualifications and position requirements that they think a hiring manager or recruiter would be scanning for that is missing from their resume.

When incorporating keywords into your resume, do so in a way that makes sense. Keywords can be incorporated into your professional profile, skills/ competencies/ qualifications, education, and as part of the actionable items within your professional experience bullets. Remember, your resume will eventually fall into the hands of a person so make sure it is readable.

## Your resume should NOT include:

- Text boxes
- Graphics/ Pictures
- Shapes

## How ATS' typically prioritize info:

1. Hard skills
2. Education level
3. Job titles
4. Soft skills

## Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I know if an organization is using an ATS?

1. They ask you submit your resume in Word format
2. They ask you to copy/ paste sections into text boxes
3. They indicate it in the job posting
4. When you click to apply, the ATS names appears in the URL (ex. Lever, BambooHR, Workday, SuccessFactors)

What if my previous employer provided me with a non-traditional job title. For ex., instead of having the recognized title of Business Development Manager, my title was Manager of Strategic Partnerships and Growth. Can I change my position title so it is recognized by the ATS?

Yes, as long as the change reflects the nature of the work you did. You can also make that clear in your resume, for ex:  
Human Resource Generalist, (People and Culture Champion)

If I held 3 positions within one company, do I have to post the company title each time?

Yes, remember ATS's can be used to compute years of experience. It is best to post each position you held as its own entity. Example:

Human Resources Manager  
Resume Restoration, Calgary, AB  
March 2018 - December 2020

Human Resources Analyst  
Resume Restoration, Calgary, AB  
June 2015 - February 2018

What format should I use to submit my ATS Resume?

Best practice suggests you submit your resume in .docx format