

# Traditional And Online Resumes: How To Customize Your Resume For Human and Computer Scanning

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Today, many companies require applicants to enter their resumes online. Doing so, allows the company to use their Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to keep track of respondents and to forward the resumes that fit the job specifications to human resources or the hiring manager. To get your resume ready for an online submission, you must first understand Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) and how they work. Doing so, may get you the interview you want.

*First, What is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?*

An ATS is a software application a company uses to manage the recruitment process. The program sorts through resumes to determine those that are the best match to the job descriptions.

These systems scan your resume for key words as any hiring manager/recruiter would. They all look for the primary criteria listed in the posted job description or ad.

**How an ATS Works:**

Most companies use their ATS to manage applications for a specific job. Many ATS software programs are available for sale. All applicant tracking systems are slightly different and can be customized for a client. Applicant tracking systems “parse” the information in the resumes submitted and place the information in specific fields within each company’s ATS database/form. The system then analyzes the criteria (keywords) for the open position and assigns a score and a rank. If they meet the requirements, the ATS form shows up for the recruiter/hiring manager to review.

*What does this mean for you?*

What this means for job applicants is that their resume must be ATS friendly. This is absolutely critical to a successful job hunt. Qualified candidates that fail to make an ATS friendly resume will get rejected.

Here are five of the most common reasons resumes do not make it through an ATS:

1. The ATS can’t actually process your resume.
2. The ATS doesn’t recognize the headings you used.
3. Your resume needs targeted keywords.
4. Your resume should not have nonspecific keywords.
5. Your resume needs industry and company jargon and abbreviations.

**Let’s look at each area:**

The first step is to keep in mind what a recruiter/hiring manager actually sees.

When a recruiter clicks on the name of a candidate whom the applicant tracking system has ranked as a good match for a job, a recruiter sees the information the applicant tracking system pulled from the candidate’s resume into a data base.

This format can differ by company but can contain different

database fields for information on a resume, such as candidate's name, contact details, work experience, job titles, education, employer names and periods of employment. An ATS tries to identify the information on an applicant's resume, but if a resume isn't formatted according to the applicant tracking system, it won't pull this information into the proper fields. Some of it might be missed altogether, such as skills profile or an executive summary.

### **The ATS can't actually process your resume:**

1. Check to see how the company wants the resume submitted. Will it take PDFs or Word documents? Both Word and PDF documents can cause problems with an ATS so it's important to check. If no information is given, submit resumes in text format which has no known parsing problems with screening software.
2. Don't use graphics, logos, or tables in your resume. When you embed graphics, images, tables and logos you can choke the ATS software and your resume may be rejected.

### **The ATS doesn't recognize something on your resume:**

1. Don't place dates before work experience on your resume. Begin with the name of the employer, then your professional title and the date range. Don't forget to include all titles you held at your company.
2. Include your address. Many programs will reject your resume without a postal address. Locations may even be included as keywords. Since most ATS algorithms do not read headers and footers, make sure your address is not within them.
3. Choose your font wisely. Use sans-serif fonts like Verdana or Tahoma instead of serif fonts like Times New Roman or Cambria.
4. Replace the career objective/summary with a bulleted qualifications summary. This way you can work more keywords into your resume.
5. Use bullets rather than paragraphs. Bulleted lists are much

easier for readers and scanners to pull information out.

### **Your resume needs keywords/has nonspecific keywords.**

1. Use the same keywords included in the job advertisement/description.
2. Use the company's website for additional keywords. The WALL STREET JOURNAL has suggested that matching interests with a company can help. If a company is interested in nutrition and you have done work in that area, put that keyword in your resume.
3. Check with insiders. Ask what specific skills the company looks for.
4. Put job-related keywords throughout your resume not just in one list.
5. Avoid creative wording. ATS screen only for matching keywords.
6. Repeat important keywords at least twice in your resume.

### **Your resume needs industry and company jargon/abbreviations.**

1. Use the lingo. Every profession has its own words. Use them.
2. Use acronyms and spelled out titles, organizations etc. Since you don't know if the abbreviation or the full words will be scanned for, use both.

### **Some other tips:**

1. Don't worry about your resume. The ATS doesn't care how long it is. The longer it is, the more keywords you can have.
2. Use a cloud service. Use services like Wordle and TagCrowd to help you determine the right keywords. They are simple to use. Just download your resume and the job description and the program will do the rest.

### **The Next Step:**

If you've created an ATS resume and you land an interview,

remember that you now need the traditional resume to give to the recruiter/interviewers.

**To create your traditional resume, first decide on a format:**

**1) Chronological:** The body of this type of resume includes a listing of your work history, beginning with your most recent job.

**Use when:**

*The length of time on each job can be seen as a strength.*

*Your work experience is in line with your job objective.*

*Job titles or employers are impressive.*

*You want to highlight career advances.*

*THIS IS THE MOST COMMON RESUME FORMAT.*

**2) Functional:** The body of this type of resume highlights your major skill areas.

**Use when:**

*You want to change fields.*

*You have skills but not the work experience.*

*You have acquired skills through unpaid experience.*

You have many different work experiences not directly related to the position you are seeking.

(Note: Functional Resumes are not as common as they once were. Many hiring managers believe using a functional resume means you are hiding something. If you choose this format, be careful to include all pertinent information and dates.)

**3) Combination:** The body of this type of resume uses parts of both functional and chronological resumes.

**Use when:**

You have acquired several skills while progressing on one or several jobs and you want to highlight specific ones.

**4) Targeted:** A targeted resume focuses on specific abilities and duties that directly relate to a specific job.

## **Use when:**

You apply specifically for one position and must show your qualifications meet the job's specified qualifications.

The Targeted resume is a must in today's environment. With Applicant Tracking Systems in use, targeting your resume for each ad you answer is essential. With a targeted resume, you can use any resume format.

## **Resume Fonts**

The typeface you choose for your resume is very important. Your resume needs to be as clear and concise as possible. It also must be read on many types of devices from desktops to mobile phones. Sans-serif typefaces like Arial are best for small screens and the easiest on all screens. Make sure your resume is easily readable. Research shows that hiring managers and recruiters scan resumes for 6-8 seconds.

Typing in "sans-serif fonts" on your computer will give you a complete list, but here are some of the most common:

*Arial*

*Arial Narrow*

*Book Antiqua*

*Calibri*

*Cambria*

*Didot*

*Garamond*

*Trebuchet MS*

*Times New Roman*

*Verdana*

## **Resume Basics**

Remember, your resume is your marketing piece, not your autobiography. It is your chance to call attention to you and what you've done. You must be careful to be specific, concise and to the point. You want the hiring manager to want to learn

more about you. It is not a list of your current and past job descriptions. It is a list of things you have done that will get you to the position you want.

It should tell enough about you so someone will want to meet you but not enough about you so that you can be eliminated from a search.

Everyone has a preferred resume format. Make sure you are comfortable with the one you use and that it clearly shows all the required information.

### **Some job facts:**

You should be getting five or six interviews from every 100 targeted resumes you send out. (Targeted resumes are written with the job description/ad in mind.) If you are not, that might be because you sent out resumes to every ad you see, whether the job fits or not. Also, have someone review your resume to make sure it's clear about what you are looking for and it doesn't contain any typos.

For every eight first interviews, you should get a second interview. If not, ask yourself if you must polish your interviewing skills. Are you coming across as desperate or unsure?

Have you ever been a finalist for more than eight or nine positions and not landed a job? If so, review what happened. If the companies hired from within, there isn't anything you could have done. If the company decided not to hire anyone, there isn't anything you could have done. But to get this far this many times and not have closed the deal suggests something is wrong. For starters, review your references. Are you giving them enough information so they can be helpful? Consider adding new ones to the list. Sometimes, the references' personalities also make a big difference; they might not respond well to the questions asked.

### **What Goes on Your Resume and What Doesn't?**

To start off, review what does and what does not go on a resume. It may sound basic, but many resumes don't follow the rules. If you have been in the workforce and not looking for your first job, here's what your resume should and should not include:

### What to Put on Your Resume

1. Your name, address, telephone numbers and email address. Identify your phone numbers if you are putting more than one (cell, business, message etc.) If you are looking for a job out of town where you have a residence or a place to stay, leave off your address or use the address at the location. Remember to check regularly the email and voice mail you list.
2. In your description, put the company/agency name with a short explanation of the nature of the organization. Hiring managers might not be familiar with your employer or you may be working in a specific product unit of a large conglomerate.
3. If you are working for an agency, list your clients or expertise within a specific industry.
4. Under education, list the school, degree and dates. You might not want to put your graduation dates fearing ageism will come into play. However, not having any dates makes your resume "suspicious" and can make you look even older than you are.
5. If you are fluent in language (s) or have knowledge of specific or technical computer programs, list them.
6. Current board/committee memberships or volunteer work show your interest in your field or in philanthropic areas. These should go on your resume.

### What Not to Put on Your Resume

1. Don't list any personal information such as birthdays, marital status etc. While this is common practice outside the U.S., it is not legal here.
2. Keep the names of your references on a separate sheet and provide them when asked. First, you don't want to give out personal information or put it online. Second, always contact



your references before they get a call to tell them who will be calling and the nature of the job.

3. Salary information does not belong on the resume. In some US states it is now illegal for an employer to ask your salary history.

4. Do not include activities that are not relevant. For example, long lists of past boards/committees or sports that do not pertain to your job search should not be included.

5. Do not include, "References available on request." It is taken for granted an applicant has references.

Resume Objective/Summary

Among the most difficult parts of the resume seems to be the Objective or Summary. Here are some tips to help you decide which one to use and what to include:

Use an Objective if you are looking for a specific opportunity or an opportunity within a specific discipline.

#### **Examples:**

- A senior-level communications position within a global consumer company.
- Social and digital media specialist position within a healthcare agency.
- Interested in furthering my career with an agency that focuses on international direct marketing.

Summary paragraphs are better for experienced, multi-disciplined professionals.

#### **Examples:**

- Extensive management experience in integrated marketing, including work with a global consumer products company and a major services company.
- Over 10 years of public relations experience with a special emphasis directing media relations, social media, crisis and issues management and financial

communications.

Fifteen years of experience in communications. Specialties include investor relations, public policy issues and crisis communications.

**When Writing Your Objective/Summary Statement, remember:**

1. It's okay to have one.
2. If you use an objective, it must be as specific as possible.
3. Since the objective of a resume is to find employment don't say that in your statement.
4. Summary statements should be brief and to-the-point, ideally two to three sentences. Statements should contain the information you want the reader to see and include the discipline/keywords you want to highlight.
5. If you decide to use an Objective or Summary statement, it will set the tone for what you highlight in the Experience Section of your resume. Think it through and be comfortable with it. You are selling yourself to someone who doesn't know you. What do you want to highlight? What will interest them enough to invite you in for a call?

**When writing your resume:**

1. Eliminate pronouns. Resumes should not contain I, he/she. They are written as if you are the subject.
2. Keep it short; a person is scanning this resume not an ATS.
3. Eliminate buzz words but use appropriate industry terms.
4. Sell yourself. Tailor your summary to the position.
5. Don't include non sequitur or relevant information.
6. Do not list specifics.
7. Use bullets when possible to make it easier to scan.
8. Avoid jargon.
9. Don't exaggerate.
10. Don't include personal information.

**Words Not To Use on Your Resume:**

Eliminate unnecessary words and, words that don't add anything (very, rather, quite), describe anything or showcase your writing ability. Buzz words no longer are acceptable in communication resumes. If you see any of the words below in your resume, delete them. Ask yourself why are they in your resume and can you support their use? Be clear and concise; use only meaningful words.

*Extensive experience*

*Innovative*

*Motivated*

*Results-oriented*

*Dynamic*

*Team Player*

*Fast-paced*

*Problem solver*

*Entrepreneurial*

*Liaison*

*Business-savvy*

*Interface with*

*Aptitude for*

*Works well with*

*Good communications skills*

*Measureable results*

*Good work ethic*

*Bottom-line oriented*

*Specialized*

*Leadership*

*Passionate*

*Strategic*

*Experienced*

*Focused*

*Expert*

*Certified*

*Creative*

*Excellent*

## **Words To Add To Your Resume:**

*Directed*

*Handled*

*Created*

*Initiated*

*Achieved*

*Spearheaded*

*Maximized*

*Innovated*

*Increased*

*Implemented*

*Generated*

*Exceeded*

*Quantified*

*Negotiated*

*Organized*

*Pioneered*

*Presented*

*Reviewed*

*Strengthened*

*Trained*

*Collaborated*

## **Customizing Your Resume**

You want to tailor your resume to get the interview. You can't please everyone with one resume. Each hiring manager/recruiter looks for something different. It is important to customize your resume for each job. It might sound tedious and time-consuming but with a few tips you can do it.

### **When answering an ad or reviewing a job description:**

- 1.** Hunt for keywords. Watch for keywords like external relations, digital marketing and note how often they were mentioned. The more an ad or job description mentions a specific keyword, the more important it is and you should add

it more than once.

2. Look for job skills. While keywords are usually the disciplines, the job skills will further define responsibilities such as managing, supervising, writing/editing.

3. Identify the most important keywords and see if you can add an accomplishment to them.

### Last Step: Sending Your Resume

Knowing how to name your resume is extremely important. Personalize your file by adding your name – *MarieRapertoResume*

Job hunting now is a digital world. It doesn't matter if you are answering an ad online or sending an email to human resources or a recruiter. Since sending your resume with a generic name can cause it to be overlooked or lost in the system, be professional and make sure you name it properly. You want hiring managers to know it's your resume and to make it easier to track through their email system.

Remember to be consistent and use the same style for the resume name, cover letter or sample documents.

You may capitalize words, use spaces or dashes. Don't use a version number. You don't want to give the impression you keep changing your resume even though you must customize it. You can use your computer to keep track of different versions and adapt them as needed.