

DON'T LET YOUR RESUME HIT A

DIGITAL DEAD END

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MOST RESUMES are first submitted and viewed electronically today; is yours optimized for that process? Save your artistic flair for the printed copy you present to the hiring manager, because first, you must ensure your resume gets through a system known as an ATS.

Many mid to large employers utilize applicant tracking systems (ATS). In fact, 90% of jobs on AgCareers.com are redirected to apply through an ATS. These systems utilize technology to manage the influx of applications and electronically screen candidates to match the job for which they are hiring. The ATS assigns points to the different components of your resume based on an algorithm created by the hiring company. Resumes with the highest scores will get passed through to the hiring manager. The ATS “parses” resumes, which strips formatting out and pulls important words to sort into categories such as education, skills, work experience, and contact information. So how do you increase the chances your resume will score high?

THE “KEY” TO A HIGH SCORE

KEYWORDS. Customize your resume for each job. Just like when you search the Internet and type in your relevant terms, employers’ systems are designed to do the same: search your resume for keywords that match the job they are trying to fill. Success will be based on your resume having relevant keywords.

So how do you choose the right keywords? Examine the posting and

description for unique keywords and phrases specific to that job. Try copying and pasting the job description into an online word cloud creation service (like Wordle.net). The larger the word appears in the cloud, the more times it appears in the job description. These words are certainly significant to the employer and are more important for you to build into your resume. You can also look at professional networking sites or professional summaries from other employees. Pull out phrases and keywords these other professionals are using that are applicable to you.

Include both the spelled-out version and acronyms for your education and professional organizations, as you can’t be sure which usage the ATS will look for. Examine the organization’s website for more information about their culture and values as this information can also be valuable to your resume.

But note that there can be too much of a good thing, so don’t overstuff your resume. It’s about using the right keywords and their uniqueness to the roles you’re applying for, not the number of times the word appears on your resume. Many systems put a value on related keywords and/or apply greater value to some keywords versus others as they relate to the specific job. So utilizing resources such as individuals who understand the company or role to help you identify those keywords is vital.

Above all, be honest: make sure you are only using keywords and phrases that represent the real you!

10 ELECTRONIC RESUME MUST-DO’S

- Use a sans serif font like Arial in size 11 point or larger.

WORK EXPERIENCE



- Preferably save as a Word document (don’t use the header function).

- Use bullets as they are easier to read for ATS and for humans.



- Delete any graphics, logos or tables.

- Name clearly defined sections, such as “Work Experience” and “Education” that ATS can easily recognize.

- Do not begin a section with a date. Rather, for example, style as so:

**Greene Farms, Farmhand,
2010-12**

- Avoid lines to separate sections.
- Include your full contact information (full address and zip code, as they may filter by geographic area).
- Remember proper grammar, spelling and punctuation!
- Save your resume as a unique file name, not just “resume”:

AllysonParkerResume.doc