

Electronic Resume Tips

How does it work?

Your resume is scanned into the computer from which the OCR (optical character recognition) software creates a file. Next, the artificial intelligence “reads” the file and extracts information about you (i.e., skills, education), which is stored and used to match your qualifications against openings.

Why is it important for you to know this?

When you prepare a resume for the computer to read, you want it to be scannable. This means you should consider both format and content. You may have two versions of your resume, one for “human eyes” and one for the “optical reader.” If you are unsure whether the employer scans resumes you can inquire, or send two resumes with small removable post-it notes indicating which resume is scannable and which resume is hard copy. Creating an electronic résumé is simple. Save your existing résumé as “plain text” or “text only” If you “save as” in Microsoft Word, it is the option with the “.txt” file extension.

How do you create it?

- Use white, 8-1/2 x 11 paper, printed on one side.
- Use a font such as Helvetica, Times New Roman, or Arial.
- The font size should be 10-14 points.
- Avoid italic and boldface text, script, underlined passages.
- Use asterisks instead of bullets
- Avoid parentheses, brackets, and tabs.
- Avoid graphics and shading.
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines; they confuse the computer.
- Avoid the two-column format with headings down the left side.
- Text should be aligned to the left.
- Place your name at the top of the page on its own line, and use standard address format below the name.
- Only have one phone number.
- Do not staple or fold, a paper clip is preferable.

What to include:

You want to make sure your resume is as scanner-friendly as possible. To accomplish that goal, focus on using “key words” that define your skills, experience, and education. Key words refer to words or phrases that define the requisites of a particular job. They tend to be descriptive nouns or noun phrases as opposed to the action verbs used in traditional resumes. Increase your list of key words by including specifics such as names of software you use, jargon and acronyms (spelled out for human readers) specific to your industry, and professional affiliations. The more key words you have, the better chance your resume will be selected.

Key words for an accountant might include: BS Accounting, accounts payable, accounts receivable, IRS Amendments, and CPA.

Key words for a software engineer might include: BSCS, BSEE, programming experience, platforms used, software and languages (e.g., C++, SQL, GUI), data structures, relational database, and networks.

To find out what the key words are for your particular industry, check job descriptions, read industry publications, and/or ask during an informational interview.

Electronic Example

J.S. Smith
12345 First Ave. West #3
Seattle, WA 98103
Phone: 206-555-1234
Email: jsmith@aol.com

Everything aligned to
the left!

Education:

- *M.S. Mechanical Engineering, UC Los Angeles, (Expected - June 2010)
- *B.S. Mechanical Engineering, Seattle Pacific University, December 2008

Occupational “key
word”

Skills:

- *Professional Engineer in Training (EIT) License #BE02278793
- *Measurement and controls, design of machine parts, acoustics, design of electronic packaging, design of machine elements, experimental methods, advance dynamics of structures, finite element analysis, design of composite

Specific
Technical Skills

Computer Skills:

- *IBM Applications: Proficient in Word, Excel, AutoCAD 13, and Autosketch. Familiar with Matrix, Matlab, and Silver Screen.
- *Languages: Knowledgeable in FORTRAN 77, Pascal, and BASIC
- *Macintosh Applications: Accomplished in Design CAD 2D/3D, PageMaker, Word, and Excel.

Experience:

Special Technologies, Inc., Intern – Manufacturing Engineer, Sunny, CA. January-July 2007
Design fixtures to accelerate assembly process of biomedical equipment using AutoCAD 13. Used MRP system to track assembly projects and to control inventory. Set up Document Control area for ISO 9000 audit. Inspected all outgoing assemblies to ensure quality.

Easy to read
format

Related Activities:

Calculus Tutor, Ridgmont High School, Sunny, CA. Volunteer

Senior Project – Designed and constructed a food processing machine following FDA guidelines. Integrated stainless steel, plastic, a pneumatic system, and servo-motors. The motors were programmed by a special machine code learned specifically for the project.

Professional Affiliations:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).
- Pi Tau Sigma – National M.E. Honor Society.
- Voted Initiate of the Year (2007-2008).
- Secretary for the San Jose State Chapter (Fall 2007)

Common “key word”
search terms