Beat the Robots!
Get Your Résumé Into Human Hands

Northern Virginia Virtual 50+ Employment Expo

Friday, February 17, 2023

Mark Rasch

How to Beat the Robots

- What is an “Applicant Tracking Systems/Software?”
  - Why to employers use them
  - What kind of employers use them
- Optimizing Your Résumé to get it into the hands of a human
- Writing the right resume not only for the job but for the computer

Necessary but not Sufficient

- Getting past the ATS is the FIRST STEP
- Still need an effective resume for humans to read
- Still need an effective cover letter
- NO SUBSTITUTE FOR NETWORKING

- BEST way to get past the ATS is to have someone hand your resume to a decision-maker!

Problem

Applicants for a basic engineering job: 25,000

ATS found qualified:

0

Source: Prof. Peter Cappelli

Wharton School of Management

Univ. of Pennsylvania

Problem

75%

of résumés are rejected upon submission

due to formatting flaws/ATS errors

Source: Preptel, quoted by

Meredith Levinson

5 Insider Secrets for Beating

Applicant Tracking Systems

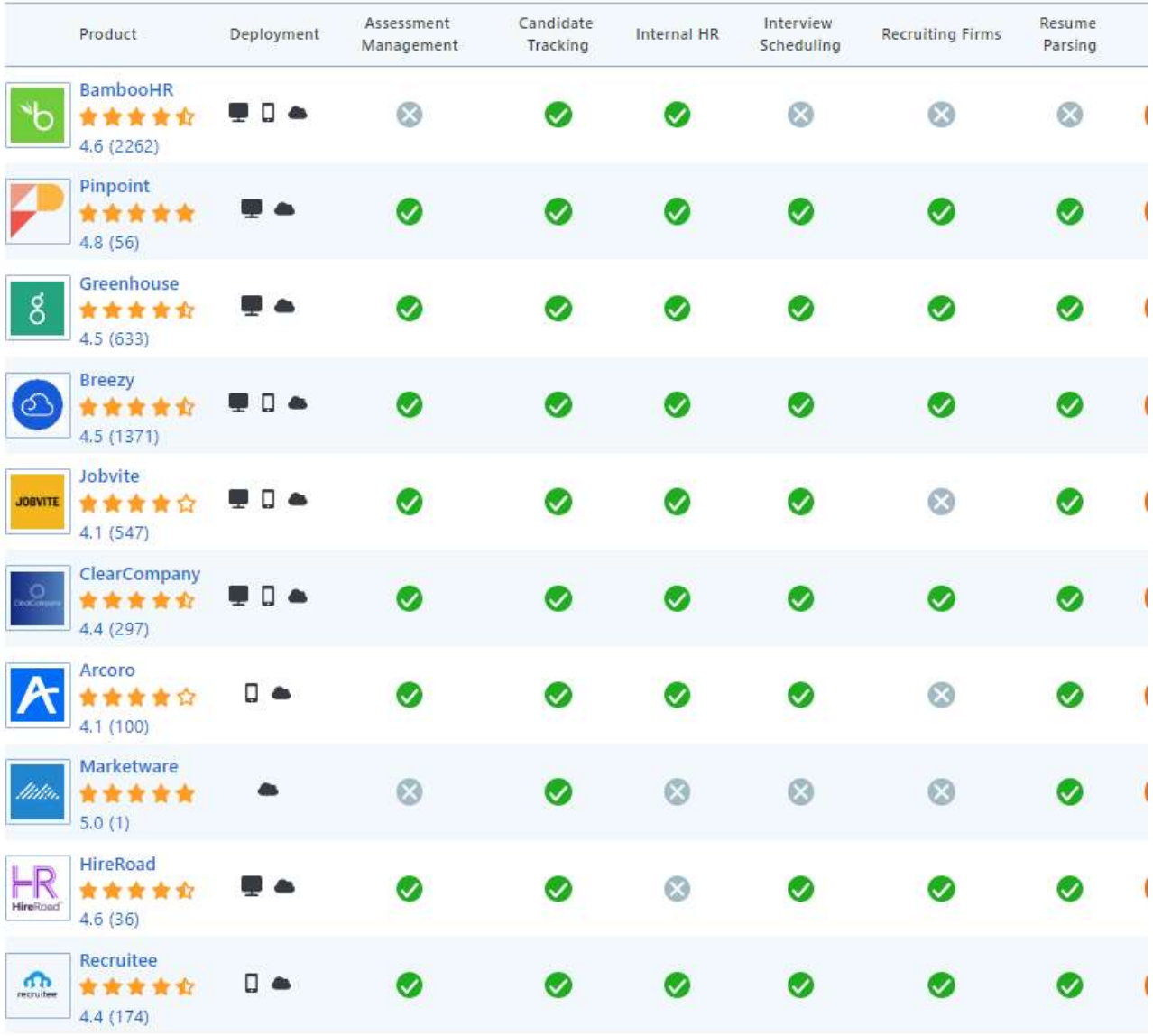
www.cio.com

What is an ATS?

- An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is a software program used to monitor and coordinate an organization's job applications and help manage its recruitment needs.
- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of Fortune 500 companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to speed up, streamline, and automate their hiring process.
- These programs scan, parse and score your resume before any hiring manager has an opportunity to see it.
- ATS system acts as a gatekeeper – searching thousands of resumes for specific words, phrases and skills.

Examples of ATS Programs

- Bamboo
- Pinpoint
- Greenhouse
- Breezy
- Jobvite
- ClearCompany
- Arcoro
- Marketware
- Hire Road
- Recruitee



Product	Deployment	Assessment Management	Candidate Tracking	Internal HR	Interview Scheduling	Recruiting Firms	Resume Parsing
BambooHR 4.6 (2262)		✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Pinpoint 4.8 (56)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greenhouse 4.5 (633)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Breezy 4.5 (1371)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jobvite 4.1 (547)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
ClearCompany 4.4 (297)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arcoro 4.1 (100)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Marketware 5.0 (1)		✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
HireRoad 4.6 (36)		✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Recruitee 4.4 (174)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What Do ATS Programs Do?

- Parse Resume
- Share with recruiters
- Schedule Interviews
- Coordinate with Internal HR
- Track Candidates
- Assess Candidates against Predefined Criteria
- Often SAAS and Cloud based

Winnowing Candidate Pool

- Companies get thousands of applicants
- Looking for candidates with relevant
  - Qualifications
  - Experience
  - Personality
- Your FIRST effort is to make sure you don't get REJECTED
- Later, effort is to get ACCEPTED

Weed Out Basic Qualifications

"Most recruiters report that at least 50% of job hunters don't possess the basic qualifications for the jobs they are pursuing."

Source: online.wsj.com/article by Lauren Weber, 1/24/12

Review only “top” candidates

“Only 19% of hiring managers at small companies look at a majority of the résumés they receive, and 47% say they review just a few.”

Source: Your HR Digest

reported in online.wsj.com/article by Lauren Weber, 1/24/12

Sample Output

AUTOHIRE

My Home | Create | List | Process | Search | Reports | Tools | Help | Log Out

Candidate Submittal Summary

HR Generalist/Benefits Manager (Job ID #873565)

External Hiring | Internal Hiring

	Origin	Score (%)	Candidate Name	Date Applied/ Submitted	Last Updated	Application Status	Previous Status	Scheduled Date/Time	Source	Recruiter
○		n/a	Cunningham, Cassie	10/20/2004	10/20/2004	**Does Not Meet Company Criteria**	Matched			
○		n/a	Martin, Megan	10/20/2004	10/20/2004	**Does Not Meet Company Criteria**	Matched			
○		n/a	Whiting, Merry	10/20/2004	7/22/2008	**Does Not Meet Company Criteria**	Matched		Browsing Internet	
○		n/a	Smith, Leovihilda	10/20/2004	7/22/2008	**Not Hired/Other Reason**	Matched		Browsing Internet	
○		n/a	Salcedo, Felipe	10/20/2004	7/22/2008	**Not Qualified**	Matched		Americas jobbank	
○		67	Smith, Maria	10/20/2004	7/22/2008	**Not Hired/Other Reason**	Matched		Browsing Internet	
○		67	Babiuch, Andrzej	10/21/2004	7/22/2008	**Does Not Meet Company Criteria**	Applied			
○		67	Jennings, Jill	10/20/2004	7/22/2008	**Not Qualified**	Matched		Careershop Posting	
○		67	Goss, Kristin	10/19/2004	7/22/2008	**Not Qualified**	Matched			
○		100	Hernandez, Mindie	10/21/2004	11/24/2010	**Scheduled Interview**	Contacted by Email	10/26/2009 2:00:00 PM	Browsing Internet	
○		100	Wagner, Mary	10/26/2004	11/24/2010	**Assessed Interest**	Contacted by Phone		Job Board Posting	
○		100	Johnson, Karyn	10/20/2004	11/24/2010	**Interview Completed**	Scheduled Interview	10/27/2009 1:00:00 PM	Browsing Internet	
○		100	Finniss, Kenneth	10/20/2004	11/24/2010	**Scheduled Interview**	Contacted by Phone	10/25/2009 12:00:00 PM	Browsing Internet	

Back | Show History | Update Application Status

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Reduce Hiring Costs

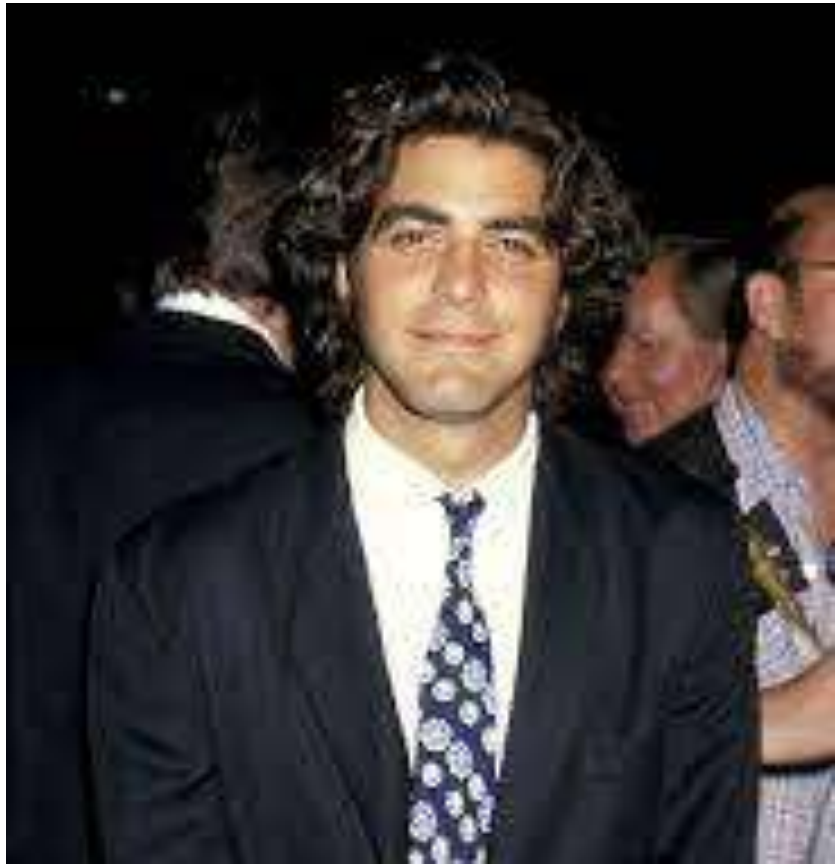
The average cost of hiring a new employee:

$3,479

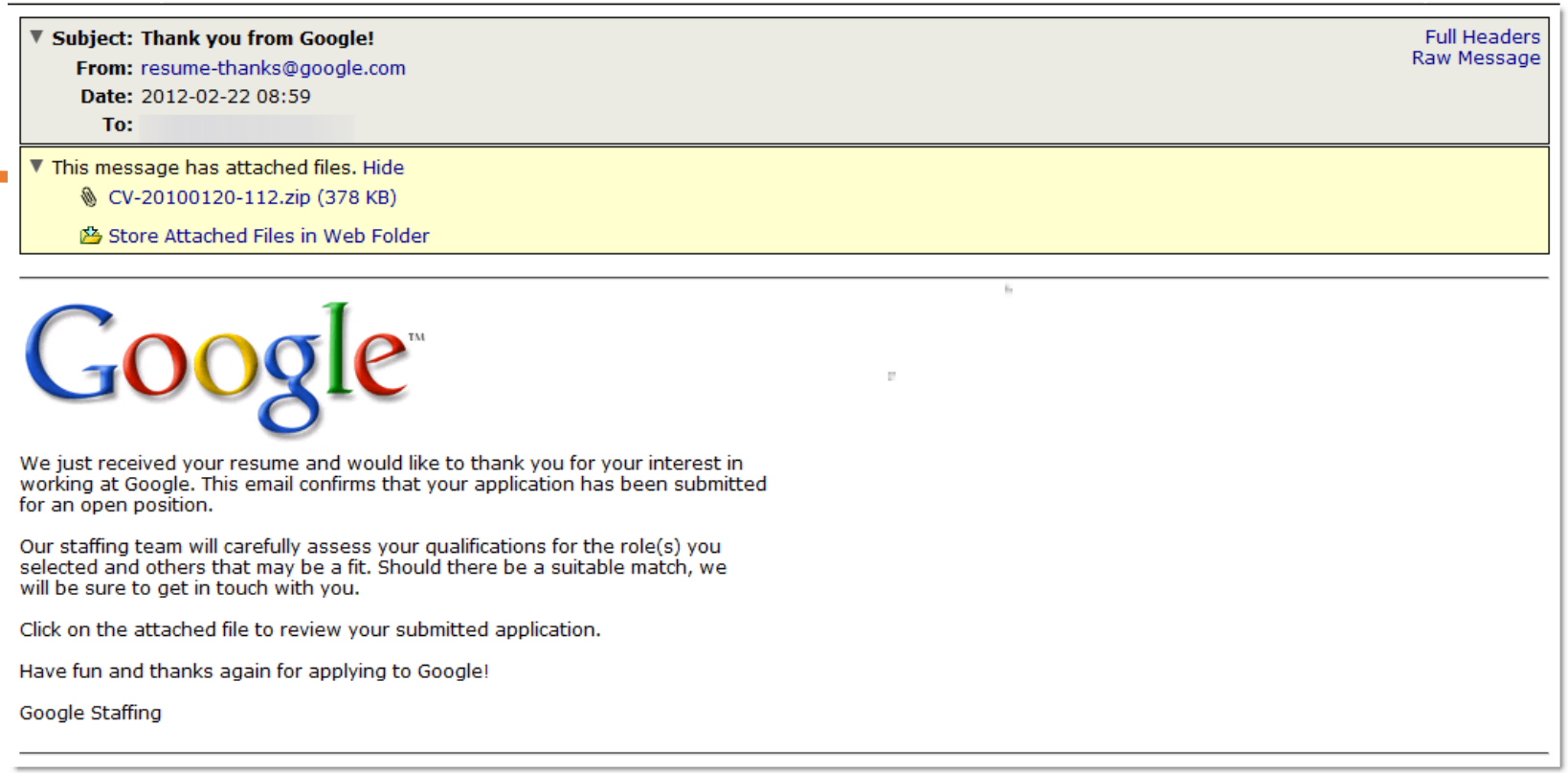
Source: Bersin & Associates

It’s All About ATTITUDE

- George Clooney spent his first years in Hollywood getting rejected at auditions.
- In the eyes of the nameless actor groveling for a role, it is the casting director’s job to hold the authority, and it is the actor’s job to wait passively to be picked.
- Clooney realized that casting was an obstacle for producers, too – **they need to find somebody, and they’re all hoping that the next person to walk in the room is the right somebody.**
- **Auditions were a chance to solve their problem – not his. He was going to be the answer to their prayers, not the other way around.**



Automate Application Process



Subject: Thank you from Google!
From: resume-thanks@google.com
Date: 2012-02-22 08:59
To:

Full Headers
Raw Message

This message has attached files. Hide
CV-20100120-112.zip (378 KB)
Store Attached Files in Web Folder

Google™

We just received your resume and would like to thank you for your interest in working at Google. This email confirms that your application has been submitted for an open position.

Our staffing team will carefully assess your qualifications for the role(s) you selected and others that may be a fit. Should there be a suitable match, we will be sure to get in touch with you.

Click on the attached file to review your submitted application.

Have fun and thanks again for applying to Google!

Google Staffing

Track EEO/Title VII Compliance

Job Categories		Number of Applicants (Report employees in only one category)														
		Race/Ethnicity														
		Hispanic or Latino		Not-Hispanic or Latino												Total Col A-N
				Male						Female						
		Male	Female	White	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (s)	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	White	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (s)	Asian	American Indian or Alaska Native	Two or More Races	
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Executive/Senior Level Officials and Managers	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Level Officials and Managers	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
First Level Officials and Managers	1.2	0	0	16	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	21
Professionals	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Technicians	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sales Workers	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Administrative Support Workers	5	1	3	7	2	0	0	0	0	8	5	1	0	1	0	28
Craft Workers	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operatives	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laborers and Helpers	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service Workers	9	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Other		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	10	**1**	**3**	**30**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**14**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**61**

Is Prospective Employer Using ATS?

- If they are a large employer – probably YES
- If they are taking in resumes through LinkedIn, Taleo, Ames, ResumeStar or other similar software platforms – YES
- If they use software that is parsing your resume – YES
- If they have you send your resume to an email address outside the domain – probably YES
- Smaller or nonprofit organizations, or those that have you submit resume to a domain specific email address - NO

Who Uses ATS?

over 95%

of Fortune 500 Companies

Writing a Parsable Resume

Look for Keywords on Job Description

Keywords

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Competencies
- Education,
- Experience
  - Type
  - Duration
- Certifications
- Licenses

- Characteristics
  - Enthusiastic
  - Detail oriented
- Personality
  - People person
  - Energetic
  - Communicator

Context based keywords

- Older ATS use just a keyword search.
- Newer ATS use a contextual search - determine how long and how recently a skill (keyword) was used.
- Thesaurus is your friend
  - Use keyword
  - Use synonyms for keyword
  - Then repeat keyword
- Describe your past jobs/experiences in light of the keywords!

Keywords - Sources

- Job Titles
- Job Descriptions – Requirements, Duties
- Company Website
- Industry Publications
- Book: Best Keywords for Résumés, Cover Letters, & Interviews, by Wendy S. Enelow
- Wordle.net
- Jobscan.co

Industry Specific Keywords

- Include keywords specific to your industry
- Google search for "[industry] resume keywords."
- Some of these keywords may have already been included in the job description.
- If you find industry keywords that weren't included in the job description but reflect your relevant experience, including them in your resume could help you stand out as an expert within your industry.

Position Specific Keywords

review your resume and make sure it includes keywords that are specific to the role you are applying for.

The two major role-specific keywords you should always use are the **company's name** and the **exact position title**.

You can do this by **incorporating the position title and name of the company into your resume's summary statement** or career objective section.

You should also include any education, certifications or licenses that are specific to the position you are applying to.

Finally, make sure your resume includes enough hard skills, which are the technical skills needed to be successful in the role.

Optimizing Your Résumé

- Customize your résumé for each job posting.
- Match the language of the job posting as closely as possible (while remaining truthful).
- Keep basic contact information at the top of the page, NOT in a header or footer.

Licensing, Education and Qualifications

- Highlight any mandatory certifications if you have them
- Use the same terms as the application/description
- If you have SIMILAR certifications then cite the similar certifications AND mention the one they are looking for (e.g., ARA certified (similar to NMR certification))
- If you have an expired required certification – mention the certification
- If you are working toward certification, mention the certification and progress
- If you are eligible for the certification, mention that.

Optimizing Your Résumé

- Use simple headings (do not combine sections), with white space before and after.
  - Use a basic chronological résumé
  - Incorporate keywords into Experience section for contextual search ATS.
  - Keywords on p. 1 rank higher than those on p. 2; those higher on the page rank higher than those lower on the page.
  - Appropriate repetition of keywords improves rank.

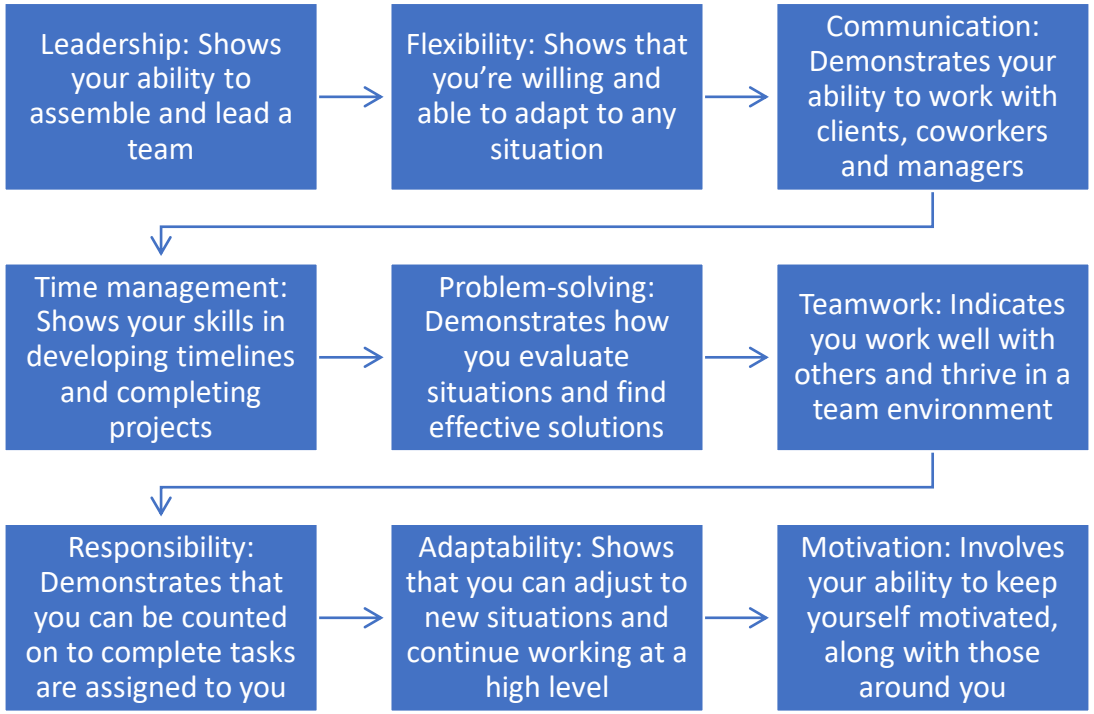
Placement

- Include key words in summary statement, education, experience and skills sections.
- Cover letter should include several of your chosen keywords.
- Focus on the keywords that match your greatest strengths and highest level of experience in your summary statement or career objective.
- Include relevant information about your education such as the type of degree you have and specific areas of study.
- Use the experience section of your resume to include role-specific keywords from the duties and responsibilities section of the job listing.
- Make sure your skills section includes a combination of hard and soft skills relevant to the industry and position.

Tell A Story

- Use keywords to know what employer is looking for
- What KIND of person and what skills
- Use your descriptions of previous jobs to tell the story of why you are the person they are looking for
- Loop the keywords into descriptions of all of your previous jobs, education and hobbies. Including volunteer jobs.

Core Competencies



- Focus: Shows your level of attention to tasks
- Integrity: Indicates that you only submit finished work that meets your own high standards
- Commitment to excellence: Illustrates that you are someone who strives to do their best
- Career-focused: Verifies that you are focused on moving forward in your career path
- Ambitious: Shows your work is the best it can be, and you're not afraid to take risks
- Avid learner: Shows your commitment to improving yourself
- Results-driven: Signifies that when you work on a project, you always look to provide the best results
- Collaborative learner: Confirms that you enjoy working with others to learn on the job

Skills

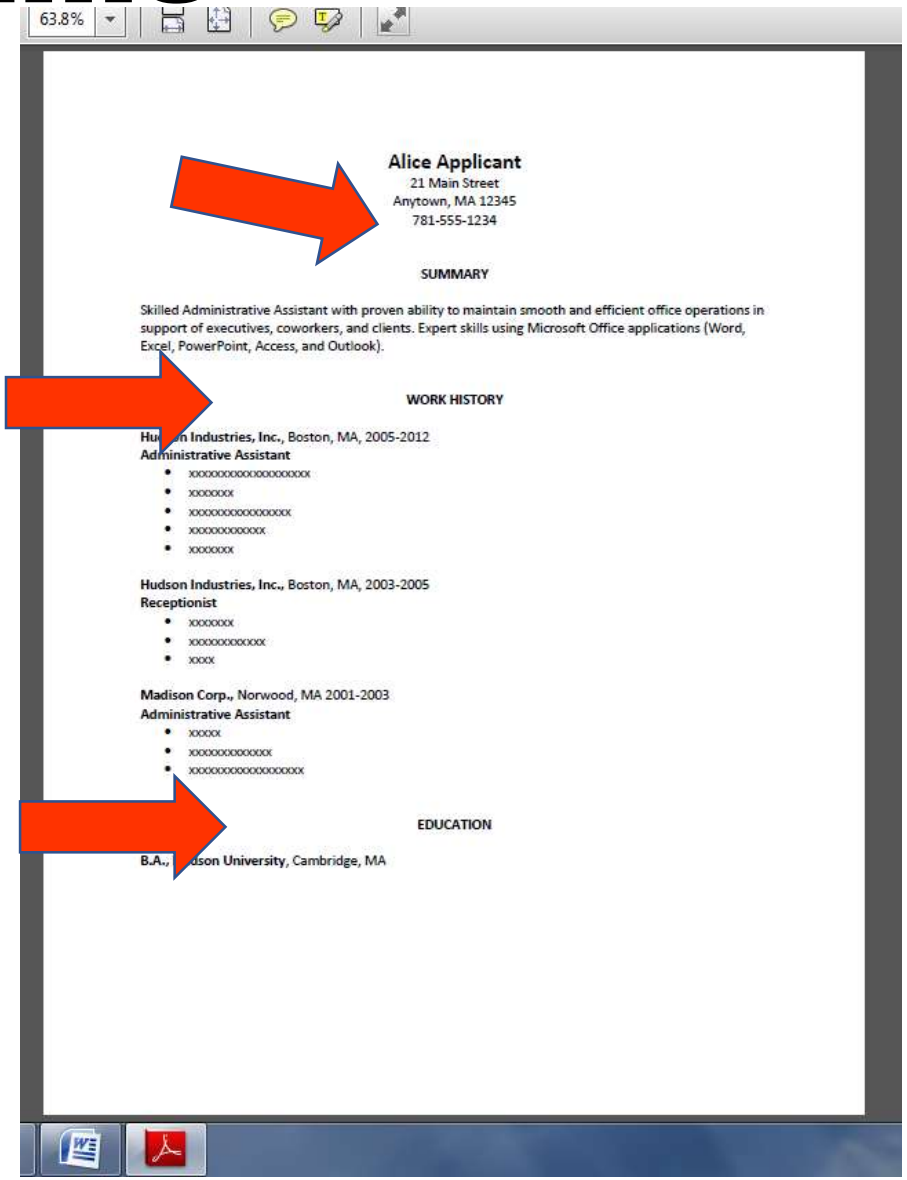
Hard Skills
vs.
Soft Skills
• Bilingual or multilingual
• Database management
• Adobe software suite
• Network security
• SEO/SEM marketing
• Statistical analysis
• Data mining
• Mobile development
• User interface design
• Marketing campaign management
• Storage systems and management
• Programming languages
(such as Perl, Python, Java, and Ruby)
• Integrity
• Dependability
• Effective communication
• Open-mindedness
• Teamwork
• Creativity
• Problem-solving
• Critical thinking
• Adaptability
• Organization
• Willingness to learn
• Empathy
Hard skills are technical knowledge or training that you have gained through any life experience, including in your career or education.
Soft skills are personal habits and traits that shape how you work, on your own and with others.

Choose the Right File Type

- While PDF is excellent at preserving file data without compromising any of the document's integrity, it may in some instances not work with ATS. There are multiple types of tracking software, but not all accept PDFs.
- Before uploading your resume, make sure you check for a provided list of acceptable file formats.
- If it doesn't list PDF as a viable option, upload a .doc or .docx version of your ATS resume instead.

Optimizing Your Résumé

- Simple Organization
- Contact information at top
- Objective/Summary
- Apply consistent headings
- Consistent style
  - Job title
  - Dates
  - Location
  - Accomplishments/Description
- Education



Optimizing Your Résumé

- Include keywords
  - Incorporate them into work history or education, each time they are relevant
  - Include the basics, even if they seem obvious
  - Avoid hiding keywords by listing them with a white font
- Follow these steps to ensure your resume's keywords are optimized to pass ATS:
  - Read the job listing carefully.
  - Include role-specific keywords.
  - Include industry keywords.
  - Place your resume keywords in the right location.
  - Use spelling, numbers and abbreviations correctly.
  - Write your resume for both the ATS and the recruiter or hiring manager.
- Allow the résumé to be as long as it needs to be to include the necessary information

Optimizing Your Résumé

- Most systems can read .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, .odf, LinkedIn. However, avoid .pdf (most are images and aren't searchable for keywords).
  - Remove tables
  - Eliminate graphics
  - Avoid templates
  - Remove special characters

Make Your Resume CLEAN

- Remove headers/footers
- Left-justify the content
- Do not place dates on the left
- Avoid extra spaces in section headings or names, such as

E X P E R I E N C E

ATS Resume Template

- ATS-friendly resume templates are designed to work in favor of applicant tracking system processes.
- Even when using the best practices and proper keywords on your resume, you still might not meet the standards set within the ATS.
- These systems parse through text within your resume and import valuable information into a profile.
- By using a template, you can eliminate such oversights.
- Some templates come pre-formatted with ATS in mind, sorting information into sections using the most common keywords and making the information easier for the ATS to understand overall.

Upload to Website

- Given a choice of uploading or copying and pasting, upload your résumé.

Be Responsive

- Respond quickly – within 24 hours – to a company that contacts you.
- Check spam filters for automated replies from employer ATS programs.

Track Your Submissions

- Do not submit duplicate résumés for the same position.
- Do submit separate, customized résumés for different positions at the same company – but make sure the basic factual information is consistent.

Follow Up With Contacts/Referrals

- If possible, find an inside referral and indicate source of job lead when you apply.

Referrals Are King

ATS software flags employee referrals and assigns them higher ranking.

“At least 28% of all hires came from employee referrals.”

Source: Gerry Crispin, CareerXRoads

2011 Survey of Fortune 100 Companies

Active Networking

For best results, combine this process with active networking.

- If you are a strong match, the ATS may assign your application a higher ranking.
- If you are not a strong match, the recruiter may take note and consider your application anyway.
- Companies have been known to rewrite the job requirements to match the candidate they want to hire.

Questions?

- Mark Rasch