

ATS Guide

What is it?

A type of software called an applicant tracking system (ATS) is often used by recruiters and human resource professionals to filter through an individual's resume. The software searches for specific keywords and phrases that relate to the position and company you are applying for. Applicant tracking systems are primarily used to help hiring companies collect, organize, and filter through a large number of applicants.

Who uses it?

An overwhelming majority of Fortune 500 companies, and a growing number of small to mid-sized businesses, filter resumes through an applicant tracking system (ATS). Top employers hire for several jobs at a time and receive hundreds of resumes for any given opening. Applicant tracking systems keep all these resumes in one place and help recruiters and hiring managers stay organized as well.

What you need to know...

It's important to make sure that your top skills and qualifications are easily identifiable at a quick glance. As the applications come in, the recruiter (and ATS) will scan for keywords in that job description to figure out whether or not you might be a good fit for the role. Some applicant tracking systems can automatically compare and rank your resume to the job description. In order to optimize your application, carefully tailor your resume to the job description and include relevant keywords, skills and/or titles. Keywords raise the likelihood that the recruiter and hiring manager will take your application into consideration.

Best practices when submitting an application through ATS:

1. Submit a tailored resume for each job.
2. Use relevant keywords and connect to your to unique experiences.
3. Use basic and professional language.
4. Use both the long-form and acronym version of keywords for maximum searchability.
5. Keep your resume simple and use basic formatting with standard category headings. For example: Education, Experience, Skills.
6. Avoid tables, columns, headers, or footers.
7. Use a traditional resume font that is easy to read like Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Garamond, Georgia, Helvetica, or Times New Roman.
8. Submit the requested file type as recommended in application instructions or .docx or .pdf if no recommendation is suggested.
9. ATS can sync with social media sites so update online platform information such as Handshake and LinkedIn to correspond with your resume.