



## The Career Center

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### PREPARING A SCANNABLE RESUME

#### **New Technology**

There's a new technology that could be very helpful to you. It could help you find your next job. It's called electronic applicant tracking, and its being used by leading organizations in both the public and private sectors.

By using the latest in document imaging technology, your resume can be scanned into a computer system and kept "alive" for a long period of time. In our system, your resume will be kept active (alive) for six months. The computer can search for just about anything in your resume. You could be qualified and considered for jobs you never thought of. The computer can make it easier for you to be considered for more jobs, and it keeps your *one* resume on file so it's quicker to update your information.

Here's how it works. Your resume is scanned into the computer as an image. Then OCR (optical character recognition) software looks at the image to distinguish every letter and number (character) and creates a text file (ASCII). Then artificial intelligence "reads" the text and extracts the important information about you such as your name, address, phone number, work history, years of experience, education, and skills.

#### **New Opportunity**

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." A scannable resume is clean so the scanner can get a clear image. A scannable resume has standard fonts and crisp, dark type such as a laser printer or a typewriter with a new ribbon would produce, so the OCR can recognize every letter. And a scannable resume has plenty of facts for the artificial intelligence to extract. *The more skills and facts you provide, the more opportunities you'll have for your skills to match available positions.*

A Scannable Resume does two things: (1) Maximizes the computer's ability to "read" your resume (2) Maximizes the ability to get "hits" (a hit is when one of your skills matches a skill for which the computer is searching).

Preparing a scannable resume is easy. Like the traditional resume, you focus on format and content.

## Format

To maximize the computer's ability to read your resume, provide a clean, clear resume in a standard resume format.

The computer can extract skills from many styles of resumes, including chronological (*list your jobs in order by date*, with your current/most recent job first), achievement (details achievements), functional (organized by skills), and any combination of these styles.

The most difficult resume for the computer to read is a poor quality copy with an unusual layout, such as a newspaper layout, adjusted spacing, large font sizes, lines/graphics, type that is too light, or paper that is too dark.

## Tips for Better Scalability

- Use white or light colored 8½ x 11 " paper, printed on *one side only*, with 1-1½ inch margins.
- Use a laser printed original if possible. A typewritten original, a letter quality dot matrix, or a high quality photocopy is also OK.
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics, bullets, and boxes.
- Don't condense spacing between letters or lines.
- Use bold face and/or ALL CAPITAL LETTERS for section headings as long as the letters don't touch each other.
- Use standard typefaces such as Arial, Futura, Optima, Univers, Times New Roman, Palatino, Aquiline Book, and Courier, with a font size of 10 to 14 points. (Avoid Times 10 point.)
- Avoid fancy treatments such as *italics*, underline, shadows, and reverses (white letters on black background).
- Avoid two-column formats or resumes that look like newspapers or newsletters.
- Place your name at the *top* of the page on its *own line*. (Your name should also be the first text that appears on subsequent pages.)
- Use a standard address format below your name and list each phone number on its own line.

## Content

The computer extracts information from your resume. You can use your current resume; however, once you understand what the computer searches for, you may wish to include key words to increase your opportunities for matching requirements or getting "hits".

Employers access the resume database in many ways, searching for applicants with specific backgrounds. When searching for specific backgrounds, they will search for key words, usually nouns such as writing, BA, programming administration, counseling, RN, bilingual, Spanish (language fluency), etc. So make sure that you describe your education and experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. The computer system will extract the words and information from your sentences. *You can write your resume as usual.*

## Tips For Maximizing "Hits"

- Use enough key words to define your skills, experience, education, professional affiliations, etc.
- Describe your experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. For example, its better to use "managed a team doing software engineering" than "responsible for managing, training..."
- Use more than one page if necessary. The computer can easily handle multiple page resumes, and it uses all of the information it extracts from your resume to determine if your skills match available positions. It allows you to provide more information than you would for a human reader.
- Use jargon and acronyms specific to your industry, but remember to spell out acronyms for human readers.
- Increase your list of key words by including specifics, for example, list the names of software you use such as WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, Lotus 1-2-3, Fox Pro, etc. Remember however, the system has a limit to the amount of information that it can extract from your resume. Therefore, you may wish to place more important information near the beginning of your resume.
- Use typical resume headings such as Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Positions held, Appointments, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Papers, Licenses, Certifications, Examinations, Honors, Personal, Additional, Miscellaneous, References, etc.

Some people may want to have *two* versions of their resume, one with a scannable format and detailed information for the computer to read (send this one) and one with a creative layout, enhanced typography, and summarized information to carry to the interview for people to read.