

Electronic and Scannable Résumés.

Employers are often inundated with résumés. To effectively manage a large candidate pool, more companies are now utilizing Electronic Applicant Tracking Systems that use imaging technology to scan, organize, store and retrieve résumés in an internal database. Résumés are scanned in as images and then "read" by OCR (optical character recognition) software. Screening is done by a keyword search. This handout is to help you prepare a "scannable friendly" résumé so that important information including education work experience, computer skills can be extracted from the database. Not all scannable technology is the same. However the more you abide by these "rules," the more you decrease your chances for misinterpretation and error, and increase your chances for "hits." Your résumé is then typically forwarded electronically to the person with hiring authority.

Style

Avoid boldface, italicizing, script, shading, graphics, borders, and underlining. Use asterisks not bullets. A scannable résumé is clean with crisp characters so that the OCR can recognize every letter. When your résumé is being scanned, it is designed to read text not graphics. Do not use horizontal lines or vertical lines. Computers will try to read lines and will blur them into characters. Vertical lines may be confused with the letter "l." Omit parentheses and brackets around any telephone area codes. Use 10-14 point common sans serif fonts such as Helvetica, or use clean popular serif fonts like Times Roman or Palatino as a second choice. Avoid compressing spaces between letters. Use spaces between lines as little as possible. Use a traditional reverse chronological résumé that avoids complex layouts tables or columns.

Substance

Your name should be the first text line. Avoid styles that list your contact information all on one line, such as "Joe Union, 123 Main Street, Schenectady, NY 12308, 388-6176". A keyword summary paragraph at the top of your résumé can identify important relevant skills and qualifications.

Skill-focused nouns - With scannable résumés, computers search on descriptive nouns such as manager, assisted coordinated, and organized. Also, avoid slashes "design/develop." The more facts you include, the more chances your skills will be matched with available positions. Many scanning systems are programmed to understand standard abbreviations such as BA, BS, MS, MBA, PhD.

Maximize use of industry jargon and abbreviations. It is logical to assume recruiters will instruct the search engine dictionary to pull up keywords specific to the job opening and field when trying to fill a position. Use specific buzzword in your career field such as LAN (Local Area Network), CAD (Computer Aided Design), Lotus, systems integration. Include computer software and hardware skills, degrees, majors, GPA, job titles, employers accomplishment and honors. Think about what are the essential characteristics required for the job: education, experience, and skills. The more buzzwords you have, the more likely your résumé will get selected.

Printing and Paper

Always send a standard 8 ½" x 11" original laser printed résumé which produces a sharper image for the scanner. Never use a nine-point dot matrix printer. Use a one-page format. If you have more than ten years experience consider using a second page, but make sure your name is at the top on all pages. For best contrast between the ink and the paper, use black ink on high quality white paper. Off-white or ivory paper is acceptable.

Sending and Packaging

Faxes or copied résumés are more difficult to read. If faxing is a must, set the fax machine on "fine mode," rather than on "standard mode." Always use a paper clip; staples in your résumé may cause the pages to stick together. Do not fold your résumé, because if a crease lands across a line of text, it will confuse the scanner. Send your résumé in a large flat envelope, ideally with a sheet of cardboard to keep it neat. If you are unsure whether the employer scans résumés, you can inquire or consider sending two résumés that have small removable Post-It Notes or in your accompanying cover letter. Indicate one is a "Scannable Résumé" and the other is a "Hard Copy Résumé".

Sample Scannable Résumé

JANE E. UNION
123 Winspear Ave.
Buffalo, NY 14215
716. 388.1234
ju4@buffalo.edu

SUMMARY

Human resources and computer experience; strong organizational, interpersonal, analytical and problem solving skills.

EDUCATION

University of Buffalo, State University of New York
B.S. in Business Administration, cum laude, June 2004.
GPA 3.5/4.0
Dean's List 2000-2001

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Human Resources Intern, General Electric, Schenectady, NY
Winter Breaks 2003

- *Organized and coordinated of internship program in New York State region.
- *Assisted manager with revision of COBRA benefits package system.
- *Observed labor contract negotiation over salary and vacation issues.

Career Assistant, Career Resource Center, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY
2000-2003

- *Assisted Recruiting Coordinator with resume referral program.

Personnel assistant, Springfield Medical Center, Springfield, MA
Summer 2002

- *Screened applications for clerical positions in hospital.
- *Assisted with application and interview process for hiring new professionals.
- *Developed brochure introducing programs offered by Personnel Office.

Vocational Counselor, Berkshire Center, Pittsfield, MA
Summer 2001

- *Advised individuals on job hunting strategies.
- *Presented to classes on: resume writing, filling out applications, and interviewing skills.

ACTIVITIES

Treasurer, Psychology Club, 2003-present

- *Monitored annual budget for activities throughout term.

Fundraiser, Ronald McDonald House, 2002-2003

Organized and developed campus-wide project raising \$3,000 through one-day event.

Member, Crew Team, 2001-present

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, WordPerfect, Lotus, Page Maker, FrontPage, and HTML