

Online job searching has exploded in popularity, both with job seekers and employers alike. Job seekers appreciate the ease and convenience of searching for a job and submitting their resume electronically, while employers appreciate the cost savings and efficiency that comes from using an automated electronic system.

If you plan to use the Internet to conduct a portion of your job search, you will need to prepare an online version of your resume that includes some specific characteristics to maximize your chances for success. The following are some simple guidelines to help you make your online resume shine.

Content characteristics

Automated processing of resumes uses scanning software that looks for phrases and keywords to capture and record. Human resources personnel and hiring managers can then search the resume database using phrases and keywords related to a specific job posting and thus generate a list of likely qualified candidates.

Your job is to write your resume with the keywords and phrases that relate to the job you want so that the scanning software will pick them up and record them in your file. Most software finds it easier to spot nouns than verbs, so instead of using a phrase like this:

"marketing and selling"

use a phrase like this:

"managed marketing campaigns and sales activities"

Another useful tip is to write your summary to include specific accomplishments and results rather than highlighting previous job duties and responsibilities. This will help the scanning software pick out key information that will help your name come up when the database is searched.

Formatting

The format you use for the online version of your resume is critical. Automatic scanners do have some limitations in terms of what they can and cannot translate clearly, so it works to your advantage if your formatting is set up to make it easier for the software to read your material.

Here are some formatting tips to help make your resume better for online use:

Font - Do not use fonts that are too fancy or fonts where the individual letters touch each other. Instead, use a standard serif or sans serif font in a size that is at least ten to twelve points or larger.

Italics/Underlining - Most scanning software does not recognize italics or underlining, so if you want to emphasize something opt instead for bold type or use all capital letters for the part you want to be notices.

Graphics - Do not use graphics or other types of shading in an online resume. Scanning software cannot effectively deal with these items so it is better to leave them out entirely.

Spacing - Use a maximum of single spacing between sections; double spacing is problematic for most scanning software. It is also good practice not to expand or compress the spacing between lines or between letters.

Print quality - If a potential employer asks for a hard copy of your resume that they will scan in themselves, make sure the printed copy is pristine. That means using a laser printer, plain white paper, and printing only on one side. Avoid stapling or folding your resume, as this will make it more difficult to scan.