



# Scannable Resumes

## ◆ Ready Resource 32

◆ Career Services

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 or resume scanning and it's being used by both large and small business alike. By using the latest in document imaging technology, your resume can be scanned into an organization's computer system.

A scannable resume:

- Maximizes the computer's ability to "read" your resume (it is clean so the scanner gets a clear image)
- Uses standard fonts and crisp, dark type such as that of a laser printer or typewriter with a new ribbon would produce.
- Maximizes your ability to get "hits" (a hit is when your skills match the computer search)

Preparing a scannable resume is easy. Just like the traditional style resume, you focus on both format and content.

### **Format**

To maximize the computer's ability to read your resume, provide the cleanest original designed in a standard style. The most difficult resume for the computer to read is that of poor quality that has an unusual format. Unusual formats include a newsletter layout, adjusted spacing, large font size, graphics or lines, type that is too light, paper that is too dark, marble paper, script writing, or heavy paper.

### **Tips for Maximizing Scannability**

- Use white 8 1/2 x 11 paper, black ink, and make sure it's printed on one side only

- Provide a laser printer original or a typewritten original; do not send copies or dot matrix printouts
- Do not fold, staple, or paperclip
- Use standard typefaces such as Arial, Courier New, Helvetica, Futura, Optima, Univers, Times, Palatino, and New Century Schoolbook
- Use a font size of 12 to 14 points
- Don't condense spacing between letters
- Use boldface type and/or all capital letters for section headings as long as the letters don't touch each other
- Avoid fancy formatting such as italics, underline, shadows, and reverses (white letters on black background)
- Do not use pictures/graphics
- Make sure your resume is no more than 2 pages.
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics, and boxes
- Avoid two-column format or resumes that look like newspapers or newsletters
- Place your name at the top of each page
- Use standard address format below your name
- Include an e-mail address in standard address information if applies
- Your name may be up to 28 points in size
- Date ranges should be on the same line (i.e. May 1999 to June 2000)
- Text can be continued on a second page

### **Content**

Recruiters and managers access the resume database in many ways, searching for your resume specifically or searching for applicants with specific experience. When searching for specific experience, they'll search for key

words such as programming languages, B.A., B.S., leadership, etc.

### **Enhancing your Scannable Resume**

- Describe your experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. For example, its better to use "managed a team of software engineers" than "responsible for managing, training . . ."
- Be concise and truthful
- Use two pages if necessary. The computer 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 (spell out the acronyms for human readers on your resume).
- Increase your list of key words by including specifics, for example, list the names of software you use such as Microsoft Word and Lotus 1-2-3.
- Use common headings such as: Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Positions Held, Appointments, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications,

Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Affiliations, Publications, Papers, Licenses, Certifications, Examinations, Honors, personal, Additional, Miscellaneous, References, etc.

- Use complete school name, degree, and dates.
- Use complete job information and dates.
- If you have extra space, describe your interpersonal traits and attitude. Key words could include skilled in time management, dependable, high energy, leadership, sense of responsibility, and good memory.

### **Helpful Hints**

Some people may want to have two versions of their resume, one for the computer to read and one for humans to read. The resume that is computer ready should have a scannable format and detailed information. Send this one. The one for people to read - possibly with a creative layout, enhanced typography, and summarized information, should be carried to the interview.