

A Targeted Resume

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will discover the advantages of using a targeted resume when applying to new job opportunities. General resumes are not usually able to provide the details and depth that employers are looking for. Job-seekers must put forth a strategic effort to highlight the specific skills and work experience that employers will find attractive. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Creating a Targeted Resume

Your resume is your first opportunity to make a positive impression with employers. Most employers and hiring managers have looked at hundreds of resumes. It is very easy to spot a resume that has been **targeted**, or tailored to meet the requirements of the role.

Some tips on how to tailor your resume include:

- Showcase information that speaks to the quality of your work.
- Explain how your success in previous job roles will benefit the employer.
- Describe your most important and relevant skills in detail.

Every part of your resume should enhance or elevate your ability to get the job. Don't just add hobbies and awards to your resume that aren't meaningful to employers. Align your list of skills with the needs of the job. Employers will not spend time strategically thinking about how your skills could fit. It's your job to show your undeniable fit for the role.



TERM TO KNOW

Targeted Resume

A resume that is tailored to meet the requirements of a specific job description, as well as the software that many employers use to quickly scan applicants' information.

1a. Resume Format

Despite what you may have heard, having a colorful, elaborate resume is neither required, nor even preferable, except in a few unusual industries. An effectively formatted resume is concise, and uses a consistent style throughout the entire document, making it easy to read. This ensures that your most important information will be evident at first glance.

Avoid using resume templates. They're both difficult to customize, and difficult for the **applicant tracking**

systems (ATS) employers use for managing the recruiting and hiring process. It may take more time to get started, but if you're able to take the time to craft the resume to a specific job, there will be fewer edits in the future.

The length of your resume can impact how much of it is read thoroughly by your prospective employer. Common advice is to try to keep your resume to one page. In some rare cases, a two-page resume is needed, especially for people who have several years of work and educational experience, or who are applying to a senior executive position. A one-page resume is best for those with minimal work experience related to their job target. Regardless of the length of your resume, be sure that it is succinct and clearly written.

The layout of your resume should follow a particular set of guidelines.

- Set up your page margins to a minimum of one-half to one inch on all sides.
- Choose a font that is professional and legible, such as Times New Roman or Ariel.
- Select the same font and font size throughout your entire resume.
- Use single spacing throughout.
- Include a blank line between each section of content.
- Use a consistent date format that includes the month and the year, such as 05/2020 – 06/2021 or May 2020 – June 2021.



TERM TO KNOW

Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

Software used by recruiters and employers for managing the recruiting and hiring process.

1b. Matching Relevant Skills

Throughout the job hunting process, you will use a number of different strategies to communicate why you are the best candidate for the open role. If the sections of your resume are the bricks that bring together your wall of qualifications, your relevant skills are the cement mortar that provides strength and brings the larger parts together.

As we have discussed previously, it is essential to develop an understanding of what the employer is looking for by carefully reviewing the job description. The next step is to explain how your relevant skills can and will satisfy the employer's needs. Choosing to share more general skills will increase your chances of being ignored or overlooked by employers.

Take a close look at the following examples of job industries, and how relevant skills might be communicated on a resume.

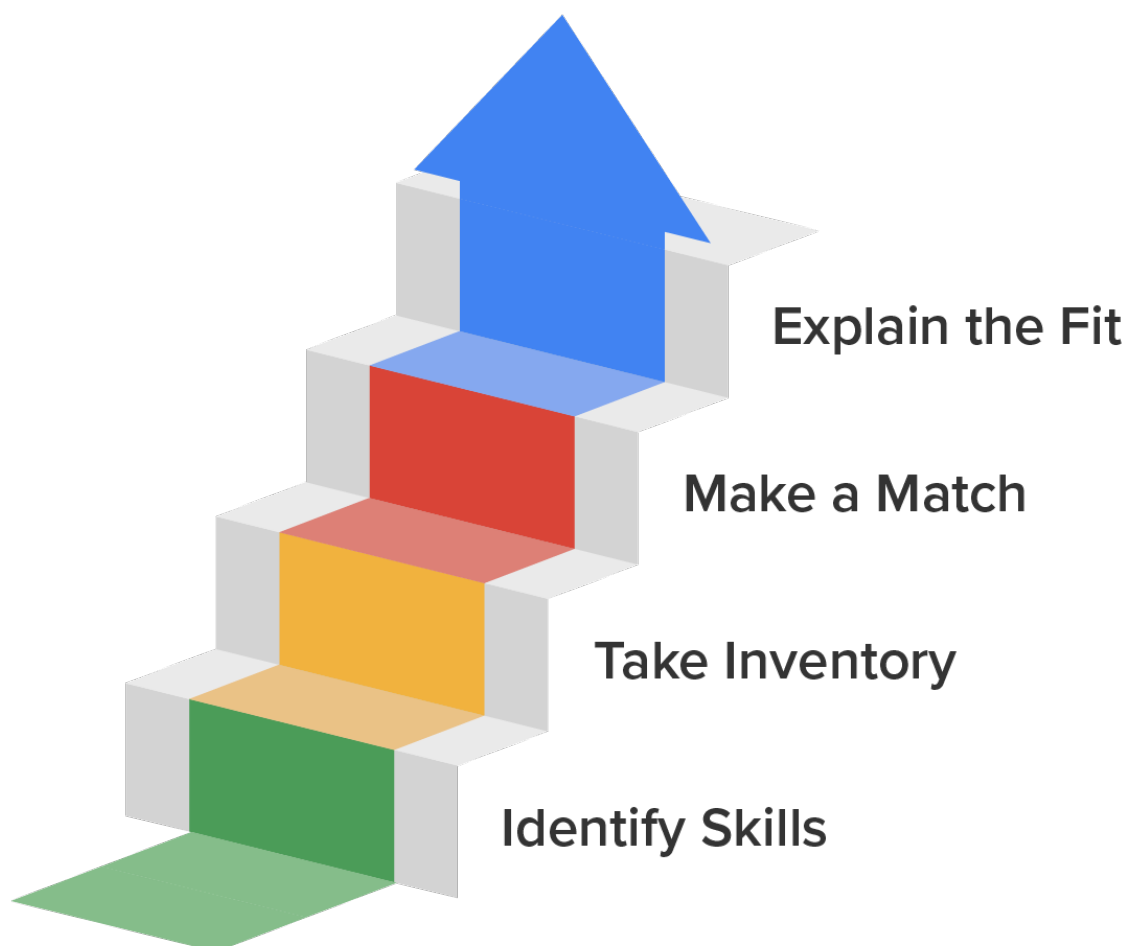
Job Industry	Relevant Skills (as listed on a resume)
Accounting/Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent organizational skills• Produce accurate financial statements• Reconcile and research differences for quarterly and annual filings
Computing/Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data importing and analysis• Troubleshooting and supporting the use of applications/systems• Installing and configuring hardware and software components

- Develop and maintain a positive environment for instruction
- Encourage and support the growth of students and clients
- Proofread and edit correspondence, reports, and other documents

It would be foolish to apply to a new job without directly communicating the skills you have that demonstrate your experience and ability to do that job well. An experienced plumber should never be hired to work as an electrician. Both trades fall under the construction industry, but their highly specialized skill sets are not relevant to each other.

Use the following process to ensure your relevant skills are emphasized in your resume:

1. **Identify Skills.** Use the job description to identify skills that the job requires.
2. **Take Inventory.** Make a list of your skills and experiences that are relevant to the job role.
3. **Make a Match.** Align your relevant skills to the job requirements.
4. **Explain the Fit.** Write down how you can satisfy the employer's needs, and incorporate your argument in your resume and cover letter.



2. Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

We've stressed the importance of customizing your resume for every job you apply to. Here's another reason why that's so important. It's estimated that over 80% of large employers use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to sort and filter the large number of applications they receive. To make it through the filter, you must clearly show that you have the skills and qualifications for the position.

An ATS will generally scan your experience section, evaluate your years of experience, and search for keywords throughout your resume.

No ATS processes are identical, but here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Format your resume appropriately.
- Customize your resume to include keywords from the job posting in your bullet points. Use the exact same language to ensure the ATS recognizes the keywords.

➔ **EXAMPLE** If the job posting requires candidates to have skills in “building relationships,” your resume should use the exact phrase “building relationships” instead of “build relationships.”

- Ensure that you show how you meet the qualifications for the position. You may have to list bullet points with the same skills under multiple positions to show that you have the years of experience required for the job.
- Try using [Jobscan](#) to scan your resume. After you upload your resume and the job posting, Jobscan will analyze your resume and give you a score to help you see how well you’ve tailored your resume to the role.



Remember, you’re creating your resume for two audiences: the ATS and the hiring manager. You need to make sure your resume works for both.



You could spend a lot of time trying to tweak and improve your resume to beat the ATS. To be even more effective in your job search, we highly recommend networking with individuals at the organization, in addition to applying to open positions. This strategy can help get your resume reviewed by the hiring manager, rather than relying solely on the ATS to flag your application.

2a. Keywords

Make sure you are using the keywords that are listed in the job description. Many resumes are never delivered to a company because the resumes didn’t include the right keywords. Below are keywords that often appear in resumes across different industries. Remember, you should always check to see how the job description you are applying for uses these keywords!

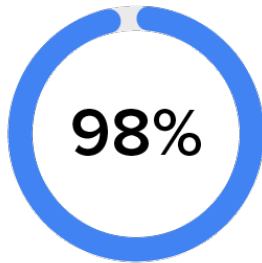
Industry	Common Keywords
Business, Finance, and Law	analyze data, budget management, GAAP, invoicing, etc.
Customer Service, Retail, Human Resources, Tourism	client relationships, hospitality, PeopleSoft, talent acquisition, etc.
Education	biology, counseling, program development, recruiting, etc.
Health Care, Medicine	FDA, nursing, on-call, public health, etc.
Information Technology, Computer Science	algorithms, C++, frameworks, SQL server, etc.
Manufacturing, Transportation	distribution, fabrication, inventory, SolidWorks, etc.
Marketing, Media, Publishing, Graphic Design	Adobe, branding, CRM, project delivery, etc.



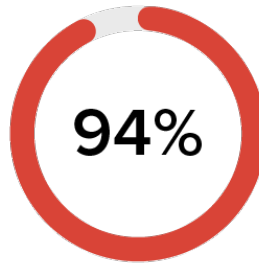
Visit [Jobscan](#) for more examples of keywords, along with other tips on how to use keywords.

2b. Data and Insights

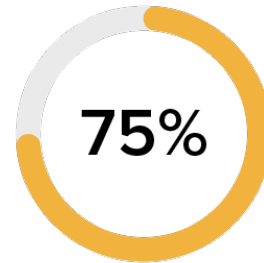
DID YOU KNOW



of Fortune 500
companies use applicant
tracking software.



of companies say
using ATS improved
their hiring process.



of resumes are filtered
out by an ATS before
being seen by a person.

Source: *Resume Now*

Larger and more well-known employers often have thousands of people apply to just one open role. In order to make their hiring process more efficient, Fortune 500 companies use software called Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to speed up the process. To make it to the interview, you have to be approved by the computer system, before you impress the people behind it.

To be considered for a job, you will likely need to modify your resume to pass a scan from ATS. This process can be complicated. ATS is computer software, and its reasoning is black and white. The selected keywords your prospective employer is looking for are either present in your resume or they are not. There is no gray area. Once the resume has been approved by ATS, your resume still needs to impress the human recruiter or human resources representative.

2c. An ATS-Friendly Resume

Compiling an ATS-friendly resume isn't complicated, but it does require a bit of work and foresight. You will need to:

- **Pick the Right Layout.** There is only a limited amount of space on your resume. That space is even smaller when you consider how much of the resume will actually be reviewed by the employer. You need to select a layout that will organize your information well and also offer a professional and concise presentation. Label the sections of your resume with bold headers. The most effective layouts are easy to read and share the information in the right sequential order.
- **Choose an ATS-Friendly Font.** Font options have evolved over time. However, you should select a resume font for the aesthetics. For ATS purposes you want to go with traditional options that are easy to read. We recommend Times New Roman, Helvetica, Calibri, Arial, Tahoma, and Garamond.
- **Use Standard Formatting.** The content that you develop shouldn't be elaborate and flashy. There are

ways for your words to stand out, but you don't want to overdo it. Tables and graphics will not be processed well by ATS. Selecting to bold or italicize your content in a meaningful way showcases your information while remaining ATS-friendly.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of **creating a targeted resume** that clearly communicates to your prospective employer that you are the right match for their open position. A targeted resume utilizes a particular **resume format**, and effectively **matches your relevant skills** to the job description. You learned about the importance of **keywords** and, through **data and insights**, that a well-written resume is compatible with the **Applicant Tracking System (ATS)** used by many employers. An **ATS-friendly resume** uses a standard format and layout, and ensures that your resume makes it to the next phase of the hiring process.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer University's career center.

REFERENCES

Lyles, H. (2021, November 17). *What Is an ATS Resume? How To Build a Bot-Proof Job Application* Resume Now. Retrieved from resumenow.wpengine.com/job-resources/resumes/what-is-an-ats-resume



TERMS TO KNOW

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Software used by recruiters and employers for managing the recruiting and hiring process.

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