Making Waves Education Foundation

ATS Resume Formatting

ATS, or Applicant Tracking Systems, is a software application used by employers to manage the recruitment process. They are often used at the beginning of application processes, typical of larger companies with high volumes of applications for their positions. ATS automates part of the recruitment process, scanning for contact details, job titles, education history, and keywords directly related to the job posting.

☐ **Fonts**
ATS can read most standard fonts. To be safe we suggest using common fonts like Arial, Calibri, Cambria, Georgia, Times New Roman, Tahoma. Font size should be between 10-12pt.

☐ **Name**
List your name alone on the first line of the document – Do NOT include anything else on this line; ATS also sometimes does not read parenthesis or quotation marks for names, instead use dash.

☐ **Contact Information**
Use city, state, and zip code for local searches, list one phone number and one email address; you can also include URLs for LinkedIn or other links – they should also be live links.

☐ **Header and Footer**
Do NOT use the document's header or footer for important information like contact info.

☐ **Columns, Tables, Graphics**
Many ATS systems can only read text and will skip over content placed in tables, columns, charts or other graphics.

☐ **Symbols**
You should only use symbols found on your keyboard such as asterisks, dashes. Unfortunately most ATS systems do not read accent marks.

☐ **Abbreviations and Acronyms**
Spell out the first time, show acronyms in parenthesis, and then use acronym

☐ **Section Headings & Resume Style**
For best chance, use common headings with keywords like Summary, Professional Experience, Work Experience, Experience, Employment History, Education, Education & Training, Certifications, Skills, Activities, Affiliations, Community Involvement, etc. For best results, write your resume in reverse chronological order.

☐ **Employment Experience**
List company name first, with location (city and state). List the job title with dates (month and years). List every job separately.

☐ **Keyword Optimization**
When an employer uses ATS, they pre-set keywords. Resumes without keywords could be screened out. The best way to determine keywords is to read through the job description - look for role-specific terms that are listed multiple times or listed as required.

☐ **Resume File Type**
A PDF is great for opportunities where ATS is not used, however may not work with all ATS. To be safe, .doc or .docx version of your resume is safest.