

There's a new technology being used by both large and small business that could be helpful to you in finding your next job. It's called electronic applicant tracking or résumé scanning. By using document imaging technology, your résumé can be scanned into an organization's computer system.

A well-constructed scannable résumé:

- Maximizes the computer's ability to "read" your résumé -- It is clean so that the scanner will get a clear image
- Uses standard fonts and crisp, dark type, such as that of a laser printer or that a 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 résumé is easy. Just like the traditional style résumé, you focus on both format and content.

Format

To maximize the computer's ability to read your résumé, provide the cleanest original designed in a standard style. The most difficult résumé 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 or patterned, script writing or excessively heavy paper.

Tips for Maximizing Scannability

- Use white 8 ½" x 11" paper, black ink and make sure you print on one side only.
- Provide a laser-printed 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, underlining, shadows, and reverses (white letters on black background).
- Do not use pictures or graphics.
- Avoid vertical lines, horizontal lines and boxes.
- Avoid two-column formatting or résumés that look like newspapers or newsletters.
- Place your name at the top of each page.
- Use standard address formatting below your name.
- Include an e-mail address in standard address information, if applicable.
- Keep your name to 28 points or less 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 résumé database in many ways, searching for your résumé specifically or searching for applicants with specific experience. When searching for specific experience, employers search for key words such as programming languages, Bachelor of Science, leadership, managed, etc. To increase the number of potential hits on your résumé, use key words from job descriptions for a particular organization.

Enhancing your Scannable Résumé

- Describe your experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. For example, it's better to use "managed a team of software engineers" than "responsible for managing, training ..."
- Be concise and truthful.
- Use two pages, or more, if necessary. The computer uses all of the information it extracts from your résumé 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 résumé).
- 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, instead of using software

package names like Microsoft Office.

- 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 and descriptive 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. Again, look at company job descriptions for suggestions and include those traits you have demonstrated or with which you can identify.

Helpful Hints

Some people may want to have two versions of their résumé, one for the computer to read and one for humans to read. The résumé that is computer ready should have a scannable format and detailed information. Send this one to an employer who uses résumé scanning in the selection process. The one for people to read - possibly with a creative layout, enhanced typography, and summarized information, should be carried to the interview or submitted to employers not using scanning technology.