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SUBMITTING YOUR RESUME

WAIT! DO YOU HAVE APPROPRIATE KEYWORDS?

Before you apply, scan the job posting to make sure that you've included appropriate keywords and phrases in your résumé. This will help the potential employer link your job qualifications with the requirements of the position, as well as help you get through an ATS (next page). Below are some tools to use in helping you identify keywords.

- Word Cloud (www.tocloud.com, www.wordle.net, or www.tagcrowd.com) - Highlight keywords or phrases in a job posting - the larger the word, the more relevant it is! Here is a great YouTube video to show you how to use these tools: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-JYLNKuILU.
- www.mynextmove.com - Plug in your ideal job title, and this website will give you a description along with the preferred skills, education, and even typical personality traits.
- Dictionary of Occupational Titles (www.occupationalinfo.com) - Find short job descriptions including possible keywords based on title.
- Other Job Descriptions/Postings - Find similar job postings on LinkedIn, Monster, or other online job sites to see what keywords and phrases are common.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO APPLY

Found a job you're interested in? Great! Time to apply using your newly minted résumé. After all that toiling, it's important to take care in how best to submit your résumé. Here are some tips:

Deadlines
- Submit by the application deadline. If you are one to procrastinate, set yourself a reminder on your calendar or phone. Often times, deadlines are firm, so it's best to act sooner rather than later.

Applying Online
- Today, the vast majority of applications are submitted virtually and require a résumé upload. You may also be asked to fill in employment and education information into fields that will likely flow into an ATS. Follow careful instructions and make sure to answer all questions.
- Most employers will allow you to upload a cover letter, but you may find that this is not an option.

Mailing or Hand Delivering a Physical Résumé
- Print your résumé and cover letter on white card stock (60lb cover weight). Make sure there are no blemishes in the ink or on the paper. Avoid using color in your résumé.
- If mailing, place résumé and cover letter in a large envelope, unbent. Write "DO NOT BEND" on the outside. Make sure to clearly address the envelope and apply proper postage.
- If hand-delivering, place résumé and cover letter in an envelope or folder. When at the company, either ask to speak with the hiring manager directly or request that it be delivered to him or her.

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APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM

It is estimated that somewhere between 60-75% of medium to large companies (and all Fortune 500 companies) employ an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) in managing and screening applications. These virtual databases not only help employers stay compliant with EEOC regulations, but they also help them efficiently sift through hundreds of résumés. In many instances, an ATS is a core piece of the HR infrastructure.

An ATS scans résumés for keywords, usually associated with the job description, and assigns each one a score. A résumé must have a particular score or better in order to earn the chance of being reviewed by a human being. Though some systems have become more sophisticated, there are some flaws. Joe Konop, contributor to Forbes. com, states that, "Studies have shown that up to 75% of qualified applicants are rejected by ATS programs because they can't be read." It is therefore critical to understand how to optimize your résumé with an ATS in mind.

TIPS ON GETTING THROUGH AN ATS

Format your past employment correctly
- Some ATSes will reject a résumé simply for having information in the "wrong" place, because it won't be able to make sense of it. For instance, when stating each past employment position, list the job title first then the dates you worked there. The information will then be appropriately linked.

Use a .doc, .docx, or .txt file type
- In the eyes of an ATS, format and design matter less than the actual content. PDFs can also sometimes be seen as a large image, and the résumé will be automatically discarded.

Integrate keyword and phrases
- When accurate and appropriate, include keywords and phrases from the job posting in both a qualifications list and in job responsibility descriptions. Pair like keywords and use keyword synonyms to increase relevancy. Make sure the context makes sense. How recent or far back in your professional timeline keywords appear is also considered and weighted differently.

Avoid using tables or templates
- Again, focus less on aesthetics and more on keywords and phrases. Some templates and tables can throw off an ATS, and information can be jumped over and missed completely.

Upload your résumé
- Some ATS' prioritize uploaded résumés over ones that are typed in (copied and pasted).

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