

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

What is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?

Recruiters, hiring managers and Human Resource professionals create job descriptions with the skills, experience, education, and qualifications that they find most desirable for a job candidate to have. **It is the key words that determine which resumes are identified for further consideration.** Simply put, **if your resume does not contain a number of these key words, your resume will not be found.** It does not matter how qualified you are, it is simply an algorithmic formula.

So now that you know what an ATS is, here is how to beat it:

1. Read the job description closely and **if you have (80%) of the qualifications, apply.** When Human Resources or hiring managers write job descriptions, they include everything they would love for a candidate to have, but since job functions are changing so rapidly, they are looking for transferable candidates. If you have (80%) of the skills the employer needs, they can teach you the rest.
2. **If you legitimately have many of the skills noted in the job description, customize your resume to contain the “key words” that are noted in the job description.** Do not try to be fancy and use synonymous words, as only the exact words will allow the recruiter conducting the search to find your resume.
3. ATS systems are a little finicky, avoid using fancy fonts, graphic elements, and color. Keep your resume to black and white, hyperlinks in color are fine. Most of the algorithm’s will not be able to decipher your resume if its is uploaded to an ATS.
4. Find a way to follow up. **If you know you meet the qualifications and are excited about a job, reach out to your network connections on LinkedIn and other channels and see if anyone works for the company.** Send them a note or call them and see if they would be willing to let the recruiter know that you are interested in the job and that they know you. That is usually enough to have them search in the ATS and find your resume.
5. **Repeat this for every job you apply for** and truly customize your resume with the key words that describe your skills and experience to get more traction in your job search.

The job search process can be complex, frustrating, and exhilarating all at the same time. However, do not ever let technology stand between you and a job you really want and are qualified for. Now that you know how to beat the ATS, change your approach and you are sure to be successful in landing that new job. Try [Jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co) to optimize your resume!

Adapted from: Steinfeld, Trudy. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trudysteinfeld/2016/05/31/decoding-the-job-search-how-to-beat-the-ats-applicant-tracking-system/?sh=3cc850586d84> Accessed 01.28.2018