

What is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?

Recruiters, hiring managers and human resource (HR) professionals create job descriptions (JDs) with the skills, experience, education, and qualifications that they find most desirable in a candidate.

Keywords determine which resumes are identified for further consideration. Simply put, **if your resume does not contain a number of these keywords, your resume will not be found.**

It does not matter how qualified you are, it is simply an algorithmic formula.

How to Beat ATS

1. Read the JD closely and apply if you have **80% of the qualifications**. When HR or hiring managers write JDs, 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 JD, **customize your resume** to contain the **"keywords"** from the JD. Don't try to be fancy and use synonymous words, as only the **exact words** will allow the recruiter to find your resume.
3. ATS are a little finicky; **avoid using fancy fonts, graphic elements, and color**. Keep your resume to black and white (hyperlinks in color are fine).
4. Find a way to follow up! If 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 a note or call to see if they are willing to let the recruiter know of your interest and that they know you, which is enough for them to search ATS and find your resume.
5. **Repeat this** for every job you apply for and truly customize your resume with the keywords 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. But don't let technology stand between you and a job you really want and qualify for. Now that you know how to beat ATS, change your approach and you are sure to land that new job!

Try [jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co), a FREE mock ATS, to optimize your resume.