

## Maximizing Applicant Tracking System (ATS) Scoring

### What is an applicant tracking system (ATS)?

ATS is a software application used to process applications and streamline the hiring process. The ATS does the initial selection of candidates by efficiently scanning resumes with the goal of finding a match between the candidate's experience, qualifications, and skills, and the description of the job posting.

### Why should I care?

95% of large companies / 50% of mid-sized companies use applicant tracking systems.  
75% of resumes never make it to the hiring manager because they are screened out by ATS.

### So how do I write a resume that passes the ATS?

1. **Upload your resume in Word format.** Though some applicant tracking systems can read PDFs, many cannot.
2. **Use keywords in context.** Mirror phrases, action verbs, keywords, and skills from the job description. If the job description states "hotel management" experience and you have that experience, use the same exact keywords in the resume.
3. **Do your research.** Look at the company's website to see what industry terminology they use. Look up current employees of the company on LinkedIn.com and see how they describe their experience.
4. **Use standard formatting.** This includes fonts (ex. Times New Roman, Arial), section titles (ex. Education, Experience), and work history (ex. job position, employer, dates). Avoid using headers, footers, text boxes, tables, or graphics.
5. **Go over the 1-page rule if needed.** If you have relevant experience that goes over one page, feel free to write a longer resume as long as it is directly related to the job description.

Sounds a bit complicated, right? By networking with peers, alumni, and industry professionals, oftentimes you can have your resume sent through a separate application process that bypasses the ATS altogether.

### Resources

- **Jobscan** (<https://www.jobscan.co/>) – Copy paste the job description and resume text to compare how they match in terms of hard skills, soft skills, and keywords.
- **WordClouds** (<http://www.wordclouds.com>) – Copy paste the job description in this word cloud generator to identify common keywords in a job description.

## Sample Job Description

### Summary/Objective

The human resource intern is directly responsible for the overall administration, coordination and evaluation of the human resource function in collaboration with human resources staff.

### Essential Functions

1. Develops and **administers** various human resources plan and **procedures for all company personnel**.
2. Plans, organizes and controls all activities of the department. Participates in developing **department goals, objectives and systems**.
3. **Develops**, recommends and **implements** personnel **policies and procedures**; prepares and **maintains handbook** on policies and procedures; performs benefits administration to include claims resolution, change reporting, approving invoices for payment, annual re-evaluation of policies for cost-effectiveness, information activities program and cash flow.
4. Establishes and **maintains department records** and reports. Participates in administrative staff meetings and attends other meetings, such as seminars. Maintains **organizational charts** and employee directory.
5. **Evaluates** reports, decisions and results of department initiatives in relation to established goals. **Recommends** new approaches, policies and **procedures** to effect continual **improvements in efficiency** of department and services performed.

## Sample Tailored Experience on Resume to Maximize ATS Scoring

### Lead Peer Advisor

September 20xx – Present

San Jose State University, San Jose, CA

- Lead and implement office policies and procedures for team of 12 student peer advisors
- Evaluate student needs and direct students toward resources and staff based on department systems and organization
- Collaborate with front desk manager to develop, maintain, and administer student handbook
- Organize and maintain print and electronic records of 200+ student logs and survey information
- Analyzed current procedures and recommended new approaches of conducting feedback surveys, which was successfully carried out in Fall 2016 resulting in a 50% shorter processing time