

# How to make an ATS-friendly resume

Applying for jobs and getting nowhere? Your resume could be to blame. To fix it, you'll need to make your resume **ATS-friendly**. We'll explain how...



## 1 Keep the formatting simple (even tables can confuse an older ATS!)

Good formatting:

- ✓ Use a common font between 10-12pts in black
- ✓ Use basic tables (equal number of rows and columns)
- ✓ Use plain bullet points

Formatting to avoid:

- ✗ Text in headers and footers
- ✗ Complex tables (e.g. those with merged cells)
- ✗ Text with shading or colored fonts
- ✗ Logos and graphics
- ✗ Bullet points that use irregular characters
- ✗ Text boxes

## 2 Use a simple date format in your previous experience

ATS's often search for dates based on a MM/YYYY format such as 02/2021 or February 2021. Always use both the month and year as only providing a year can cause confusion.

Acceptable:

- ✓ "Cashier: March 2021 – Present"

Confusing to an ATS:

- ✗ "Cashier: Early 2021 – Present"



## 3 Include keywords that come up in role requirements

An ATS can be used to search resumes for job-related keywords. Here's how to stand out:

1. Look at the job posting and similar job postings elsewhere
2. Identify frequently mentioned skills/experience
3. Try to incorporate those skills in your resume (while being honest of course!)



## 4 Send your file in a .docx or .pdf format

ATS's tend to favor the .docx or pdf file format.

Formats such as .txt, .rtf, and .pages can be rejected by an ATS.



## 5 Don't apply to jobs you **definitely aren't qualified** for

Just because it's easy to mass-apply for jobs, it doesn't mean you should. An ATS will probably stand in your way if you're totally unqualified.

For roles where you have most of the required qualifications, apply! Companies often interview candidates that have transferable knowledge and a range of skills.



**HAPPY JOB HUNTING!**

For even more great advice, check out our full article on **making your resume ATS-friendly**.

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