

## 5 Tips for Optimizing Your Resume for an Applicant Tracking System

Job seekers can increase their resumes' chances of getting through an applicant tracking system by heeding the following do's and don'ts:

**1. Never send your resume as a PDF:** Because applicant tracking systems lack a standard way to structure PDF documents, they're easily misread.

**2. Don't include tables or graphics:** Applicant tracking systems can't read graphics, and they misread tables. Instead of reading tables left to right, as a person would, applicant tracking systems read them up and down.

**3. Feel free to submit a longer resume:** The length of your resume doesn't matter to an applicant tracking system. It will scan your resume regardless of whether it's two pages or four. Submitting a longer (say three or four page) resume that allows you to pack in more relevant experience and keywords and phrases could increase your chances of ranking higher in the system.

**4. Call your work experience, "Work Experience":** Sometimes job seekers refer to their work experience on their resume as their "Professional Experience" or "Career Achievements" (or some other variation on that theme). "People get very creative on their resume because they think it will help them stand out, but in fact it hurts them." "Often the computer will completely skip over your work experience because you didn't label it as such."

**5. Don't start your work experience with dates:** To ensure applicant tracking systems read and import your work experience properly, always start it with your employer's name, followed by your title, followed by the dates you held that title. (Each can run on its own line). Applicant tracking systems look for company names first. Never start your work experience with the dates you held certain positions.