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5 ways to optimize your resume for AI tools that recruiters use

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Craft your resume for the new corporate gatekeeper: AI. Image credit: Recruitbot, Adobe

By **Jeremy Schiff**

New to the job market? Looking for your next gig after years at your most recent role? Or maybe you are happy in your current position, yet you are still open to other interesting opportunities and would not mind if a recruiter got in touch.

Here is something you need to know: These days, there is almost always a robotic gatekeeper standing between your resume and an actual human's eyeballs.

Bot screening

First, there is the applicant tracking system, or ATS. It is a type of software that recruiters and organizations use to manage and streamline the screening and hiring processes.

These platforms typically use machine learning and artificial intelligence to quickly scan candidates' submissions and identify prospects who align with specific job criteria.

Recruiters also dip into their ATS to review past job applicants when new roles open up within an organization.

Then, there are various kinds of digital screening and sourcing tools that outbound recruiters use to find you wherever you are online, whether that is LinkedIn, other social media platforms, career sites such as Monster and Indeed, industry-specific destinations including GitHub and Medium, or elsewhere.

As the job market evolves, recruiters are leaning more heavily into outbound approaches to find candidates, rather than simply waiting for talent to come to them through a traditional application process.

Recruiters often use technology-driven solutions to automate this outreach and sort through the endless collection of resumes, profiles and assorted data points across the Internet and within their internal ATS.

Whether you are hoping to get your resume past an ATS or catch the eye of an outbound recruiter, it is more important than ever to optimize the information that you share about your skills and experience.





Jeremy Schiff is CEO of Recruitbot

High five

Here are five things to keep in mind as you refine your resume or profile:

Use keywords that are relevant to the job you are applying for or want to be recruited for.

When you browse through job descriptions that appeal to you, what are the skills, credentials, titles and terms that show up over and over again? Call these out explicitly in your resume or profile so the ATS or sourcing software will understand that you are an ideal match.

Each time you apply for a different role, tailor your resume to mirror key language from the posting.

Keep your information up to date.

Even if you are not actively looking right now, refresh your online career profiles with keywords that capture your latest achievements, training experiences and areas of expertise. And always, always make sure your contact details are current so that recruiters can get in touch.

If you are looking, refresh often. Most systems prioritize candidates that have changed their data recently.

Remember that recruiters may reach out via social media instead of email or phone, so you will want to check those inboxes regularly and tweak your settings to receive alerts about new messages.

Format your resume in a simple, easy-to-read manner, using a clear, professional typeface and size.

Fancy graphics, special formatting and ornate text styles can confuse the sourcing systems and ATS software.

If you are applying for a job, always submit the file type specified in the posting, such as a Word document or PDF.

Avoid putting critical information in headers, footers or tables, since an ATS can miss them entirely.

Use organizing techniques such as bullet points and chronological order to list educational achievements, professional credentials and job history. This helps ensure that the ATS or outbound recruiting tool does not inadvertently convert your neat and tidy profile into incomprehensible blocks of text.

Remember that it is not just about the automated tool or ATS.

If your application, resume or profile makes it through the initial screening technology, a real person will eventually read the information you share.

Focus on crafting a compelling and genuine narrative to help ensure your success when you get to that stage. Because at the end of the day, most humans appreciate good stories more than robots do.

TRY OUT these simple tips now to increase your chances of making a meaningful connection with your next employer.

Jeremy Schiff is founder/CEO of [RecruitBot](#), a San Francisco-based hiring platform. Reach him at jeremy@recruitbot.com.

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