

# Electronic Resumes

With the extensive use of the Internet as a tool for job seekers, it makes sense that employers would also use this invaluable tool to recruit and screen applicants. Recent figures place employer preference for receiving and screening electronic resumes (e-resumes) at 80%. Many companies now ask applicants to submit electronic resumes or applications. An e-resume is a necessity for any competitive job seeker.

## Keywords

Whether you apply online or submit your resume as an email attachment, it is essential to understand the importance of keywords. Keywords are critical to the successful electronic search of your e-resume. Almost all online employer resume databases have a built-in search engine that is set up to look for keywords associated with particular job openings.

There is no standard list of keywords; they will vary from one job opening to another, depending on what the job requires. Keywords are determined and input into a job announcement or posting by the recruiter or hiring manager, who is looking for a candidate to fill a particular job. It is very important to use the same terminology in your application or resume that the employer uses. If you are not using the same language, your resume may not be selected, even if you are qualified.

Use the posting and/or look on the employer's website to help you determine which keywords to use. Print out the job announcement; highlight or underline the keywords in the duties and required qualifications sections. Then compare these keywords to the terminology you are using on your application or resume.

A keyword search might look for up to 60 keywords. The keywords in your e-resume indicate important information about you, such as: technical expertise, management skills, industry and university knowledge, education and training and employment history.

Once the employer's database system search engine has been given a list of keywords, it will locate resumes that contain any of the keywords, count the number of keywords per resume, and rank the resumes accordingly. Since keywords are so important to the success of your e-resume or application, consider the following tips for good keyword placement.

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Adapted from John Hopkins University Job Transition Guide

## Make a list

On a sheet of paper or in a separate word processing document, make a list of 20 to 60 terms that describe your qualifications for the job you're interested in. These terms can be both technical and non-technical. For example, you can list the computer applications you know, your technical or trade skills or your business management and personal skills.

List your keywords as nouns, not verbs (e.g., use —facilitation, not —facilitate). It's fine to place adjectives with keywords (e.g., —group facilitation.)

To be sure your qualifications are found by the search engine, list acronyms and spelled-out versions. You don't want to take a chance that an acronym could be ignored by a search engine because the hiring manager forgot to ask the engine to find either the acronym or the spelled-out version of the acronym. For example, if you put only ISDN on your resume and the manager asks for Integrated Switched Digital Network, the search engine may not pull up your resume.

## Keywords in the Text

Incorporate all of your keywords into the statements in your e-resume text. Look for opportunities to list your keywords under logical headings. For example, you could put all of your computer applications under a Computer Skills heading, or you could list your management skills in one of your Summary of Qualifications statements (e.g., —Skilled at contract negotiations, conflict resolution, benefits administration, and internal communications.)

## Applying Online

Some websites want you to copy and paste your resume from a word processing program into the employer's e-form.

On most job search websites there is a field called *Attach a Resume* where you can upload a resume, CV, cover letter, or other documentation. If there is provision for a cover letter to be attached it is best to do so. This may help the employer clarify your qualifications and give you the edge over other applicants.

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