

## Tips for writing a scannable resume

*As seen on Careerjournal.com*

HR departments nationwide are inundated with hundreds of resumes each month. In an effort to streamline their resume screening process, many companies have implemented "applicant tracking systems". These systems scan your paper resume and convert it to a computer file which can then be maintained in a database. HR directors utilize keyword searches to locate resumes which fit their specific qualifications.

In order to be a contender in this new age of scanning technology, your resume must be formatted appropriately. Designing a scannable resume is easy to do if you heed the following helpful tips:

1. Use common, plain fonts such as Arial, Times, Palatino, Helvetica, or Bookman.
2. Use a point size between 10 and 14 - never smaller.
3. Use bolding with moderation. Bolding characters can cause them to touch, which makes it difficult for OCR software to read.
4. Try not to use italics, script and underlines. They too cause characters to touch.
5. Avoid the use of horizontal or vertical lines. When you do include graphics lines, make sure that they do not touch any text.
6. Omit parentheses around the area code in telephone number. They also can be confused with the letter "l".
7. Avoid compressing space between letters in an attempt to fit all information on one page. Again, when letters touch, they can be misread by OCR software.
8. Use a high quality printer, preferably a laser printer. A 24-pin dot matrix is okay, but high quality ink jet or laser is better. Never use a 9-pin dot matrix printer.
9. Only use well known abbreviations on your resume.
10. Frequently use jargon and abbreviations common to your industry, like CAD (computer-assisted design) and TQM (Total Quality Management).
11. Avoid complex layouts like the "brochure" format or double columns. Computers read the text left to right and don't know to stop at the end of a column.
12. Only print your resume on standard 8.5 x 11 paper. When you use 11 x 17 or other odd size paper, the HR employees have to cut your resume to fit the scanner, something they may not take time to do.

13. Print your resume on light colored paper. White is best, but eggshell or light gray will pass. Good contrast between print and paper makes the resume easier to read for the software. Also, only send original printouts or very good copies.

14. Your name should be the only thing on the first line of your resume, followed by your street address, city/state/zip, and phone number, each on separate lines.

15. When faxing your resume, make sure to send it at "fine" resolution. This, again, will make it easier for the computer on the other end to read.

16. Do not staple or fold your resume.