

Résumé Keywords – Matching Yourself to Employer Needs

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Ever see a job you were interested in and figured, “why not?” and threw your résumé into the ring... thinking, “Well, you never know”, even though you **knew** that your skills didn't fit the bill?

Not a good idea. Chances are, a human resource recruiting software program probably caught your resume and tossed it out before any living, breathing person ever read it.

It's true. The age of humans versus computers has definitely arrived, at least in the job search field. The battlefield is getting your résumé in the door and you on the way to getting an interview.

You might not know this but there are a number of different programs out there that human resource professionals use as filtering devices to narrow down the field before selecting applicants for an interview.

So what's the key to beating the odds and ending up at the top of the list? Here are some cardinal rules to follow when sending in your résumé or a job application:

- 1) **Apples to apples.** If your skills and abilities don't fit the job description – then don't apply. You only hurt yourself if you repeatedly apply for jobs that aren't within your skill set or experience. And the applicant tracking programs can parse out every single skill you list, and if it doesn't match, you're outta there!
- 2) **Parrot the job description words back.** Does the employer's job description read, “Possess excellent financial management skills”? Does your résumé say, “Worked with budgets”? Change it to the employer's terminology – use the same phrases and words that the employers are using. Parrot it back.
- 3) **Understand what the job is all about.** Make sure you truly are able to do the job for which you are applying. That means your skill sets must match what the employer needs. Sometimes the skills that you have listed are the same but worded differently, so changing the phrases is okay, but don't misconstrue your abilities. Failure to deliver if you get to the interview stage isn't where you want to end up.
- 4) **Keywords.** Every job had certain keywords that are associated with it, whether these words are listed in the job description that the employer supplies or not. Do some research online and find out what other similar words or phrases might also describe your work. For example, if you are applying for a customer service job and already have that background, you might work into your résumé words like: listening, problem-solving, satisfaction, solution-oriented, follow-through, follow-up, etc. into your description of job duties. Industry-related words also can be helpful too, but be careful of jargon. Spend time reading websites and relevant industry trade association periodicals for job listings and be current on trends to be able to have industry-current terminology in your résumé.

By taking the time to carefully craft your résumé, cover letter and job application to match employer needs, you are increasing your chances of getting your foot in the door over all the other applicants who don't make that effort. It's worth making time to do this and the payoffs can be the job of your dreams!

