

EP. 5 - How to Highlight Your Skills & Background

Overview

In this video, the focus is on how to effectively highlight your skills and background depending on the audience: Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) or human reviewers. Candidates must tailor their resumes to suit the specific method of review in order to increase their chances of success in today's competitive job market.

1. Two Types of Resumes:

Candidates should prepare two versions of their resume:

- **ATS-Optimized Resume:** Designed to pass through applicant tracking systems used by large companies.
- **Human-Targeted Resume:** Tailored for direct submission to hiring managers or through networking, which bypasses ATS systems.

ATS-Optimized Resume:

- ATS software is the first line of screening in large companies or those using systems like Greenhouse, Workday, or Lever.
- HR managers set parameters for ATS scraping, often based on keywords, dates, or specific performance metrics.

Key Points for ATS-Optimized Resumes:

- **Keyword Optimization:** Incorporate relevant keywords from the job description (e.g., prospecting, hunter) to ensure your resume gets picked up by the ATS.

- **Structured Format:** Use clear headings, bullet points, and avoid images or graphics, which can confuse ATS systems.
- **Common Fonts and File Types:** Stick to basic fonts (e.g., Arial, Times New Roman) and formats (e.g., Word or PDF) to ensure compatibility with ATS software.
- **Match Job Descriptions:** Ensure that your resume closely aligns with the skills, qualifications, and experience listed in the job description.

Example: An HR manager hiring a sales manager in the healthcare industry might input specific keywords like “leadership” or “diabetes” and expect dates or performance metrics to be clearly stated. If these aren’t on your resume, it may not make it through the ATS system.

Human-Targeted Resume: When applying directly to a smaller company or startup, the human reviewer will focus less on keywords and more on storytelling and personal branding.

Key Points for Human-Targeted Resumes:

- **Personal Touch:** Tailor your resume to the company and role, highlighting accomplishments and relevant experiences that stand out.
- **Compelling Narrative:** Go beyond keywords to create a narrative that shows your value, your personal achievements, and your unique strengths.
- **Branding:** Use the resume to build your personal brand and emphasize what makes you the best fit for the position.

Example: Startups or smaller companies with a human-driven process will be looking for how well your experience aligns with their needs, how you fit into their culture, and the tangible results you’ve delivered in past roles.

2. The Realities of ATS Systems:

- HR managers can manipulate ATS systems by inputting specific variables like job titles or industry-specific terms. This means the system may be parsing your resume based on outdated or overly specific parameters, making it essential to align your resume with the job description.

- Many large companies using ATS systems often fail to mine their own data, meaning you may have to reapply even if you've already submitted a resume for a similar role in the past.

3. When to Use Each Type of Resume:

- **Use ATS-Optimized Resumes** when applying to large corporations or companies that routinely hire for the same roles (e.g., sales reps at FedEx or call center positions at Google). ATS systems are common in Fortune 100 companies and roles that are "always on hire."
- **Use Human-Targeted Resumes** when applying directly to hiring managers or smaller organizations, especially through networking channels. These resumes should focus on demonstrating your personal achievements and cultural fit.

4. Understanding Cultural Fit:

Recruiters and hiring managers assess whether candidates fit the team culture based on factors like background, experience, and sometimes superficial criteria such as age or industry fit. For example, applying to a fitness-focused company like Peloton might not work if you don't align with their cultural or industry expectations.

5. Creating Your Two Resumes:

- **For ATS:** Optimize for technology by focusing on keywords, clear formatting, and aligning closely with job descriptions.
- **For Humans:** Focus on personal achievements, storytelling, and establishing your personal brand.

Actionable Task:

- Create both the **ATS version** and the **human version** of your resume, using the examples provided in the video.

Final Advice:

- **Speed Matters:** Don't wait or overthink it—get your resumes done while the examples are fresh in your mind and you're in the right headspace.

Conclusion: This video emphasizes the importance of having two variations of your resume to address both ATS systems and human reviewers. By creating tailored resumes for each scenario, you'll maximize your chances of getting noticed and landing your desired role.