



Professional Development

americanjobcenter®

Resume Building - Applicant Tracking System: What You Need To Know

1/22/2025



Moderator

- Antonio Gomez
 - Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support
- abgomez2@ilstu.edu

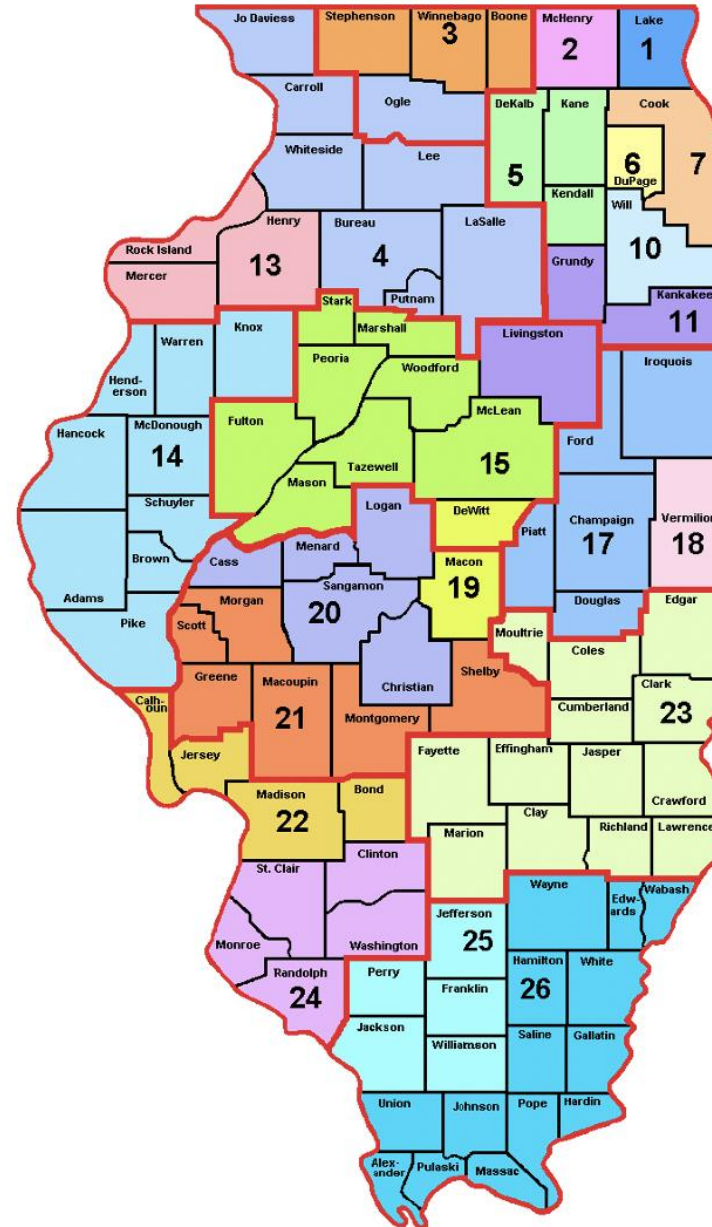


Presenters

- Jordan Johnson
 - Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support
- jtjohns@ilstu.edu

- Daniel Mariscal
 - Illinois workNet
- daniel.mariscal@siu.edu

Where is Your Local Area?



Which partner do you best represent?



Presentation Outline

BIG IDEAS

- **What is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?**
- **How to make an ATS-Friendly Resume**
- **Other Resume Tips**
- **workNet & SkillsFirst Platform**

What is an ATS?

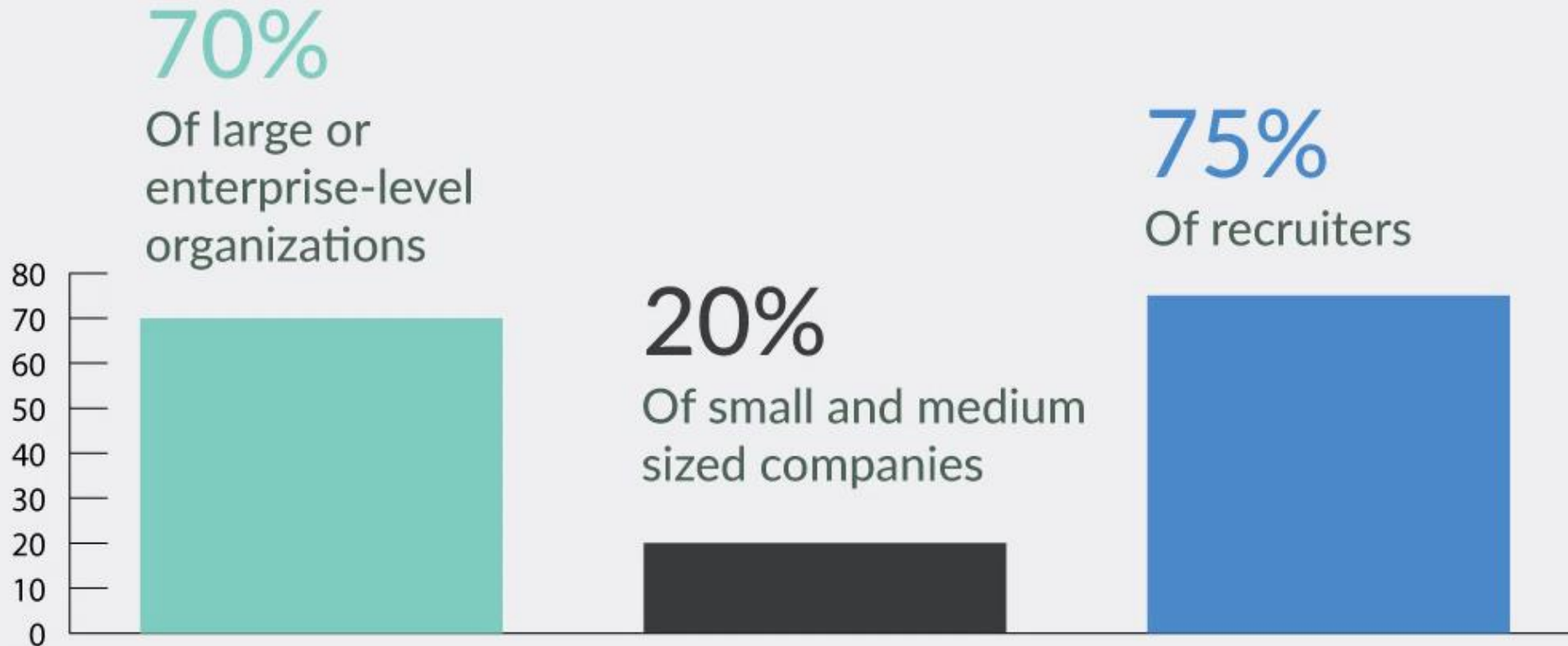
- ATS = Applicant Tracking System
- Used by employers to save time in the hiring process
- Designed to filter out unqualified applicants
- Based primarily on keywords
- Enhanced recently by AI

ATS Screening

- Searches for keywords and qualifications that align with the job
- Some documents are more “ATS Friendly” than others
- Assigns applications a ranking based on its instructions
- HR staff then reviews the top-ranking resumes

ATS Screening

WHO USES APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS?



Source: [Applicant Tracking System Statistics \(Updated for 2025\) - SSR](#)

Resume Facts

- HR spends about 6 seconds reviewing a resume
- The more visible the company, the more competition
 - Corporate roles often have 200+ applications for an opening
- 80% of jobs are never advertised online
 - This is why social capital & networking is so important for job seekers!

Building Resumes

BIG IDEAS

- **Formatting**
- **Keywords**
- **Writing Bullet Points**
- **References**
- **Skills, Objectives, Social Media**

Formatting – Templates

- The goal is to eliminate as many variables as possible.
- Not all resume templates are equal!
 - We will be covering a free resume builder that is ATS friendly in this presentation
- AVOID:
 - Microsoft Word Templates
 - Graphics, pictures, charts
 - Tables, columns

Formatting – White Space

Since HR only spends 6 seconds looking at your resume...

- More information ≠ better
- Mixture of readability and information
- Each line should offer unique value, avoid repetition
- Sections should be intuitive and easy to distinguish

Formatting – Length

- Resumes should be 1 – 2 pages in length
- Quality of prompts and jobs are more important than how much is listed
- For individuals with a lot of short-term or overlapping jobs: think of creative ways to combine entries or selectively leave out roles

Formatting – Order

- Most ATS systems use a chronological format, and is the easiest to digest for the recruiter
- Arrange the sections of the resume based on significance to the employer
 - Always put your most important points at the top
 - Education, Job Experience, Certificates, etc. can be moved around

Formatting – Example

FIRST LAST

(123) 456-7890 | youremail@email.com | City, ST | [LinkedIn](#)

EDUCATION

CDL Training Program | 160 DRIVING ACADEMY 1/2023
Champaign, IL

SKILLS & CERTIFICATES

State of Illinois CDL License | STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 1/2023
Springfield, IL

WORK EXPERIENCE

Package Handler | FEDEX GROUND 12/2022 – Present
Champaign, IL

- Lift and arrange products on pallets, load and unload trucks, and organize staging [area](#).
- Package items safely to protect from damage during transport.
- Process a high volume of merchandise daily and consistently exceed production targets.
- Train new employees on basic job responsibilities and expectations.

Packer Associate | MENASHA PACKING 12/2015 – 1/2017
Champaign, IL

- Promoted and followed safety guidelines, OSHA requirements and warehouse policies.
- Reduced warehouse hazards by disposing of trash and debris.
- Packed containers into shipping boxes while on a fast-paced line.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Guest Services Volunteer | Carle Hospital 1/2019 – 1/2020
Champaign, IL

- Greeted patients and helped them with check-in process and directing them to the proper locations at facility

Keywords – Job Listing

- Use the job posting as your “study guide”
 - This works great for interview prep as well!
- Write your resume to showcase how you are already prepared for this role
- Tailor your resume language to the posting and industry
 - Use industry specific terms where appropriate
 - Have different versions of your resume for different roles

Keywords – Active Language

- Use active language in the resume and cover letter
- Start each bullet point with an *action verb*:
 - Managed, Handled, Maintained, Coordinated etc.
- Helpful Links:
 - [Active vs. Passive Voice: What's the Difference? | Grammarly](#) (Article)
 - [Active vs. Passive Voice Printable](#) (Graphic)

Keywords – AI

- Use tools like Microsoft Copilot or ChatGPT to identify keywords
 - “Hey Copilot, could you tell me what keywords I should be sure to include in my resume based on this job listing?”
 - “What keywords are missing from my LinkedIn profile (or resume) that I should include if I am applying for a _____ role?”

Bullets – Target Goal

- Write for **where you are going** not where you've been
- Bullet points show you are **already** qualified for the role
- Use the job listing for guidance on what to focus on
- Showcase your skills **in context**

Bullets – Details

- **WHAT?**

- What did you do? What was the situation, problem, or challenge you were facing?
- What were your responsibilities or goals?

- **HOW?**

- How exactly did you do it? How did you accomplish your tasks? Did you use any tools, equipment, or computer programs?
- Did you work as part of a team or independently?

Bullets – Details

- **WHY?**
 - Why are these actions important? How did they benefit the organization? What was the result or outcome of your actions?
 - Can you quantify the results? (Note: Not every bullet point on your resume must be results-oriented.)
- If it's not in writing, **it didn't happen.**

Bullets – Poor Example

Public Health Agency: Events Coordinator

- Responsible for organizing events and panels
- Made marketing

Bullets – Great Example

Public Health Agency: Events Coordinator

- Plan and coordinate panels on public health for audiences of 25–50 undergraduates on a bi-monthly basis
- Identify and contact health professionals in the community to participate in panels
- Create marketing materials and publicize events through social media which increased attendance at several club programs by 75%

References – Where to List

- Unless specified in the application instructions, references should be on a separate document
 - This document should match your resume to be a matching set
- Do not put “References available upon request” on the resume

References – Who to List

- Unless directed otherwise, references should always be from a **professional** capacity:
 - Boss/Supervisor
 - Coworker/Colleague
 - HR

References – Who to List

- The next tier of reference would be academic references:
 - Instructors
 - Site Directors
 - Advisors
- Personal references should only be used if no other references are available, or if separate from professional on the application

References – What to List

- First & Last Name
- Current Job Title
- Company
- Company Street
- Company City, ST ZIP
- Reference email (work and/or personal)
- Reference phone (work and/or personal)
- Short sentence on your relationship with this reference:
(Example: John Smith is my current supervisor at ABC company.)

References – What to List

John Killeny

Human Resources Director

Allston Industries

52 Milton Street

Allston, MA 12435

john.killeny@allstonindustries.com

(555) 123-4567

John Killeny is the human resources director for my previous employer.

Skills Section - Advice

- Advice varies on what should go in a skills section, or if you should even have one.
- Generally, it means more to a recruiter to see skills **in context**
- Consider using items that can be objectively measured here:
 - Programming languages
 - Welding certifications
 - Typing Speed

Objectives - Advice

- Advice varies on whether to include an objective or career summary
 - *These two things are not technically the same*
- Use these when making a career transition that might confuse the recruiter
- Use these to add more content to an empty resume
- A good objective *could* help, a bad objective *will* hurt

Social Media - Advice

- 70% of employers check social media and search engines (2017)
 - Information that supports their qualifications for the job (61 percent)
 - If the candidate has a professional online persona at all (50 percent)
 - What other people are posting about the candidates (37 percent)
 - For any reason at all not to hire a candidate (24 percent)
- 54% of employers found content that caused them to not hire a candidate

Social Media - Advice

- Everyone should create a LinkedIn profile, and list in contact information of resume
- Curate your online image, don't delete it
- Helpful Link:
 - [How To Use LinkedIn for Beginners 2020 \(Setup + 9 Profile Tips\)](#)



workNet & SkillsFirst

BIG IDEAS

- Account Creation / Access
- SkillsFirst Platform Features
- Resume Builder Tool

Resource Links

workNet

- **Resume writing guide:** <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Qualify/Pages/Resume.aspx>
- **Create an Illinois workNet account:** <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Pages/Register.aspx>
- **SkillsFirst login:**
<https://apps.illinoisworknet.com/Profiles/RedirectPage/Index?title=Resume%20Builder&page=https://skillsfirst.com/organizations/illinois-worknet/people/signup/2>
- **Past presentation for reference:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTkDXuxC3kg>

Resource Links

GCF Global:

- Beginner friendly, step-by-step walkthroughs on many topics

<p>I want to...</p> <p>Get started with computers</p> <p>Learn Microsoft Office</p> <p>Apply for a job</p> <p>Improve my work skills</p> <p>Design nice-looking docs</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>Computers</p> <p>Getting Started</p> <p>Smartphones & Tablets</p> <p>Typing Tutorial</p> <p>Windows</p> <p>Online Learning</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>The Job Search</p> <p>Career Planning</p> <p>Resume Writing</p> <p>Cover Letters</p> <p>Job Search and Networking</p> <p>Business Communication</p> <p>Entrepreneurship 101</p> <p>Careers without College</p> <p>Job Hunt for Today</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>Creativity & Design</p> <p>Graphic Design</p> <p>Creativity</p> <p>Photography</p> <p>Image Editing</p> <p>Photoshop</p> <p>Learning WordPress</p> <p>More...</p>
<p>Microsoft Office</p> <p>Word</p> <p>Excel</p> <p>PowerPoint</p> <p>Access</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>The Internet</p> <p>Basic Internet Skills</p> <p>Online Safety</p> <p>Social Media</p> <p>Zoom Basics</p> <p>Email</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>Skills for Today</p> <p>3D Printing</p> <p>Freelancing 101</p> <p>Personal Finance</p> <p>Sharing Economy</p> <p>Decision-Making</p> <p>More...</p>	<p>Core Skills</p> <p>Math</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Grammar</p> <p>Language Learning</p> <p>Critical Thinking</p> <p>More...</p>
For Educators	Translations	Staff Picks	A

Resource Links

YouTube Topical Links

Topic	Video Title	Link	Length
ATS	Applicant Tracking System Explained -- Apply For Jobs With Confidence! Indeed Career Tips	https://youtu.be/DksA_vF84JA	5
Communication	How to Write a Professional Email [STEP-BY-STEP BUSINESS EMAIL]	https://youtu.be/Hkh_surdw74	5
Communication	Writing an Effective Business Email	https://youtu.be/amJZXjxnhTI	2
Cover Letter	Mastering the Art of the Cover Letter: A Career Essentials Workshop	https://youtu.be/XKL7Am--jSU	20
Interviews	STAR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS and Answers (PASS GUARANTEED!)	https://youtu.be/8QfSnuL8Ny8	15
Interviews	Top Interview Tips: Common Questions, Nonverbal Communication & More Indeed	https://youtu.be/HG68Ymazo18	5
LinkedIn	How To Use LinkedIn for Beginners 2020 (Setup + 9 Profile Tips)	https://youtu.be/YQvUbIV3sW8	10
Virtual Interviews	TOP 10 VIRTUAL JOB INTERVIEW TIPS! (How to PASS an Online Zoom, Skype, or HireVue Job Interview!)	https://youtu.be/PpbhaVjV2QI	10
Virtual Interviews	Video Interview Example: A Step-by-Step Guide for Virtual Success Indeed	https://youtu.be/lk1GH8AnqCg	10

Resource Links

Article Topical Links	
Topic	Article Title
Cover Letters	Cover Letter Guidelines and Samples Wellesley Career Education
Interviewing	Introduction to Interviewing Wellesley Career Education
Interviews	How to Use the STAR Method to Ace Your Job Interview The Muse
Interviews	Job Interview Questions, Answers, and Tips to Prepare
Interviews	How to Respond to "Do You Have Any Questions for Me?"
LinkedIn	(6) How to write your LinkedIn Experience section (with examples) LinkedIn
Negotiation	Negotiation: An Overview Wellesley Career Education
Networking	Introduction to Networking Wellesley Career Education
Personal Statements	Writing a Personal Statement Wellesley Career Education
References	How to Provide a List of Professional References
References	How to Pick a Good Job Reference The Muse
Resumes	Resume Guidelines and Samples Wellesley Career Education
Resumes	Resumes with Impact: Creating Strong Bullet Points Columbia Career Education
Resumes	How To List Language Levels on Your Resume (With Examples) Indeed.com
Soft Skills	What Are Soft Skills?