

Scannable Resumes

What are they?

- "Scannable resume" refers to a document that can be successfully scanned using technology that scans your document as a graphic image and then converts it back to text. This enabled employers to receive hard-copy resumes, get that resume information into a database, and retrieve it later. The employer's computer will scan your resume for keywords, when database searches are conducted to match position requirements.
- Certain formatting would enable your resume document to be successfully scanned and not misread. Essentially, instead of doing things that would make your resume appealing to the human eye, you would keep very simple format.

What if an employer asks for one?

If someone tells you that you need to submit a scannable resume, use these formatting methods:

- No bold, italics, underlining, shading, or other enhancements.
- One font style and size throughout the document. Keep the font simple
- No vertical or horizontal lines, graphics, or boxes.
- No bullets. You may use asterisks (*) or hyphens (-).
- No parentheses or brackets.
- Even spacing throughout the document. No tabs.
- Don't condense spacing between letters.
- Left justification only. No centering or right margin justification.
- Avoid two-column format or resumes that look like newspapers or newsletters.
- Print your resume with a laser printer. Provide the employer with an original or high quality photocopy on white paper. No texture or watermark on the paper. Avoid paper with heavy texture that could interfere with the clarity of the print.
- When mailing your information, do not fold or use staples. Put resume and cover letter in a 9 x 12 envelope and paper clip them together. You may insert blank sheets (or cardstock or cardboard) surrounding your documents to reduce wrinkling.

Scannable resume content:

- Scanned resumes are typically retrieved using keyword searches. You need to research your industry and/or the requirements of the jobs you are seeking to make sure you've included appropriate information. Each time you apply for a job, review the position description. Make sure key terms that are included in the position description are also included in your resume where appropriate. You may revise your resume slightly for different positions or keep several versions of your resume if you are applying for different types of jobs.
- Be specific. For example, list the names of software you use such as Microsoft Word or Excel, instead of listing software packages.
- Use terms and acronyms specific to the industry.
- In listing acronyms, it's wise to spell out the full name; i.e., IEEE, Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. Either way the employer chooses to search for this information, your text will be found.

- Going beyond one page is okay for resumes used strictly for scanning. Be concise, but use more than one page if necessary to include all relevant information.
- Misspelled words will not be found in a keyword search.
 - If you misspell a critical word, you have effectively left it off your resume for the purposes of retrieval after scanning.
- As with any resume, typos are unacceptable.

E-mailing Resumes

See the employer's instructions!

- Before e-mailing a resume to an employer, check the employer's web site for instructions on how to do so, or ask the employer for the preferred method.
- For example, an employer may instruct you to submit your resume as a Microsoft Word document as an attachment to your e-mail. Or an employer may prefer you submit your resume as an ASCII file — a document that is pure text and contains no formatting (i.e., no font enhancements, no spacing enhancements, etc.). The employer might want your resume text in the body of your e-mail. Or the employer could have other preferences and instructions. Your goal is to prepare a version that will be readable when opened in virtually any word processing package/e-mail system, not just the one you used to prepare/send it. For plain text resumes:
 - Do not use italics, underlining, bolding, graphics - it's plain!
 - Use a fixed text (such as Courier)
 - Use fonts sizes 10 to 14
 - Save your resume document as Plain Text
 - Cut and paste it into your e-mail to the employer
 - Send it to yourself to see how it will look!
 - Do your research before sending your resume. Sending a resume that an employer is unable to retrieve and/or read will simply cause frustration for the employer and will not advance your cause of wanting to make a favorable impression on the employer.

Sending / naming attachments:

- If you're sending your resume as an attachment, NAME YOUR ATTACHMENT(S) LOGICALLY — logically for the recipient, that is. "EmilyAlderResume.doc" works fine. "Myresume4jf206" might work for you, but won't mean anything or be helpful to the employer.
- For MS Word documents, include the extension ".doc" so the employer (and the employer's computer) knows it's a Microsoft Word document.

What if I can't find any instructions from the employer?

- Send two versions with one e-mail: attach an MS Word version of your resume, and include your resume text in your e-mail. That gives the employer an option of looking at the version s/he chooses.