

# Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

## What You Need to Know

Technology and the internet have made applying for jobs quicker and easier than in the days of mailing resumes. [Glassdoor](#) reports that, on average, a corporate job posting attracts 250 resumes, of which only four to six are contacted for an interview.

So how do hiring managers find the best fit for their positions? Companies of all sizes and across industries use software called Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to sift through large groups of job applicants, and to organize and contact applicants.

An ATS is not only a filtering system but a wholistic Human Resource database. [Jobscan](#) notes that even if an application isn't the right fit for a certain position, it remains in the system. Hiring managers and recruiters can then go back into the database and pull up the application for a different position.

### **What does this mean for you, the applicant?**

Just like a search engine, a recruiter can search using Applicant Tracking Systems. These systems rank and filter applications by keywords (such as skills, job positions, industry terminology) or qualifications (such as location, education, years of experience). As an applicant, you should be optimizing and tailoring your resume specifically to fit the job you are applying for. This means first creating an industry resume, then tailoring it to showcase how you are the best fit for that specific employer's role.

### **How can I optimize my resume?**

The greatest indicators of best fit are the experiences, skills, and responsibilities identified in the job description. We recommend reading through the job description and highlighting key terms, skills, requirements and skill sets. Then, compare the highlighted areas to your resume. What are you missing? Are the highlighted terms clearly represented to the reader?

If the job description is brief, researching the employer's website including career page, about us, as well as their mission, vision, and objective is a valuable way to understanding the skills and traits that make an applicant a best fit.

To help optimize your resume and ensure it is ATS friendly, you can use a free website platform called [Jobscan](#). Jobscan will compare your resume to a job description and provide a score based on the identified key words that match the job description. Jobscan recommends an 80% match but since job descriptions vary in length and detail, we suggest striving for a minimum score of 36% and an ideal score of 50% or higher.

### **Is the process completely automated?**

Although an Applicant Tracking System has many benefits, it is not perfect and does not completely automate the process. It is simply a software used to ease the job of the hiring manager by narrowing the pool of applicants. Hiring managers will still review selected resumes and the information that the ATS provides before selecting applicants for interviews. Again, the better able you are to tailor your resume and other application materials, the more likely you are to score highly and be identified as an interview candidate.

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