

CREATING A *Killer Resume* IN 2024:

A JOB SEEKER'S FAQ



‘Is it okay to use AI to write my resume?’

‘Should I include keywords?’

‘Does the one-page rule still apply?’

Resume-writing rules and best practices seem like they’re changing all the time. And things are different than they were even a few short years ago, thanks to the advent of tools like ChatGPT.

In this job seeker’s guide, you’ll find answers to the most common questions about your resume, including:

- Resume content
- Resume format
- Using AI to help create your resume

Ready to craft a killer resume – and land an interview for your dream job?

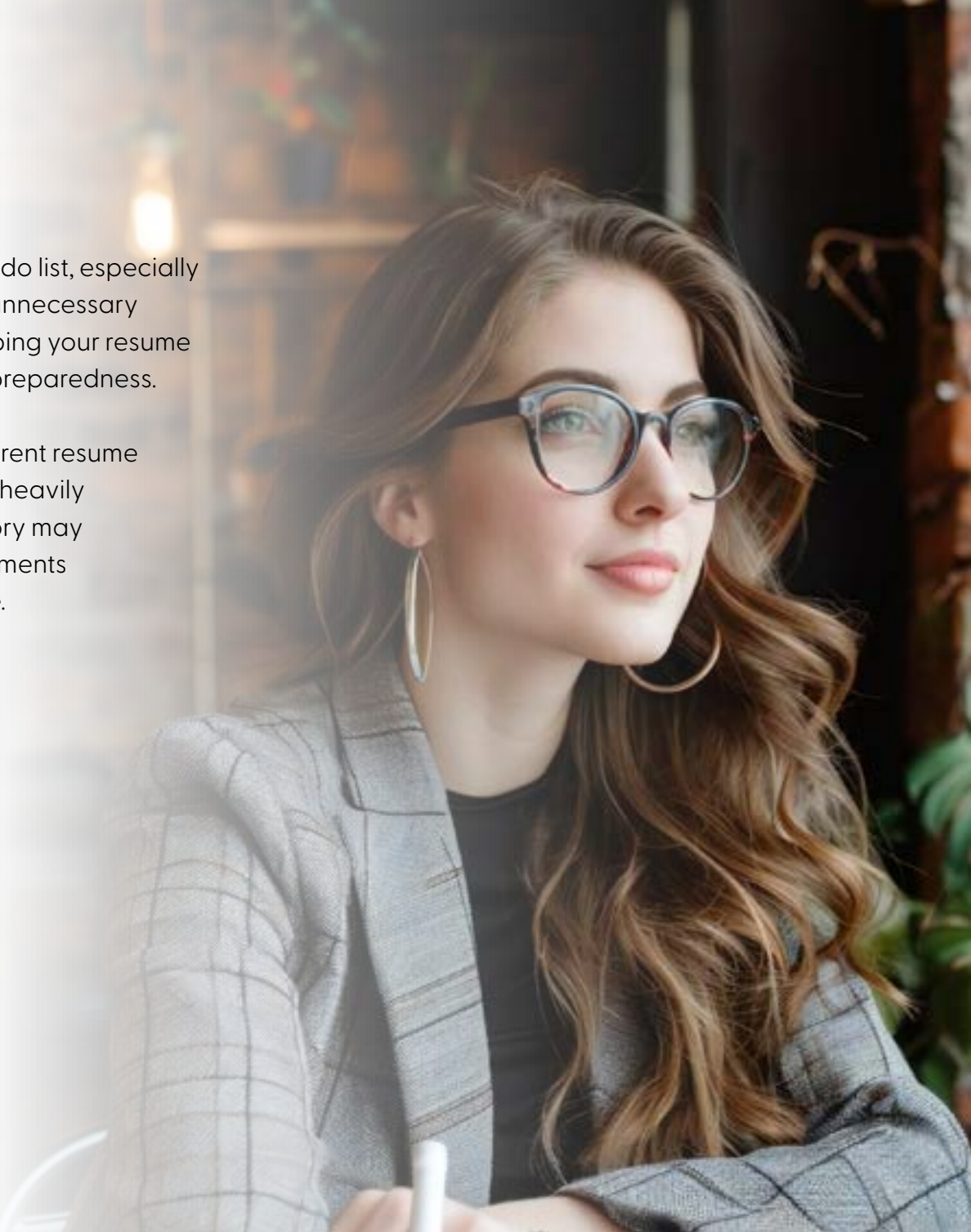
Let’s get started.



Why You Should Continually Update Your Resume

Updating your resume may not be at the top of your to-do list, especially when you already have a job you enjoy. It can feel like unnecessary work or even disloyal to your current employer. But keeping your resume updated is vital to personal career advancement and preparedness.

Even if you're not actively job hunting, maintaining a current resume is a smart career move. Recruiters and hiring managers heavily weigh recent experience, meaning outdated work history may not carry much relevance. Your most recent accomplishments and skills should be highlighted to showcase your value.



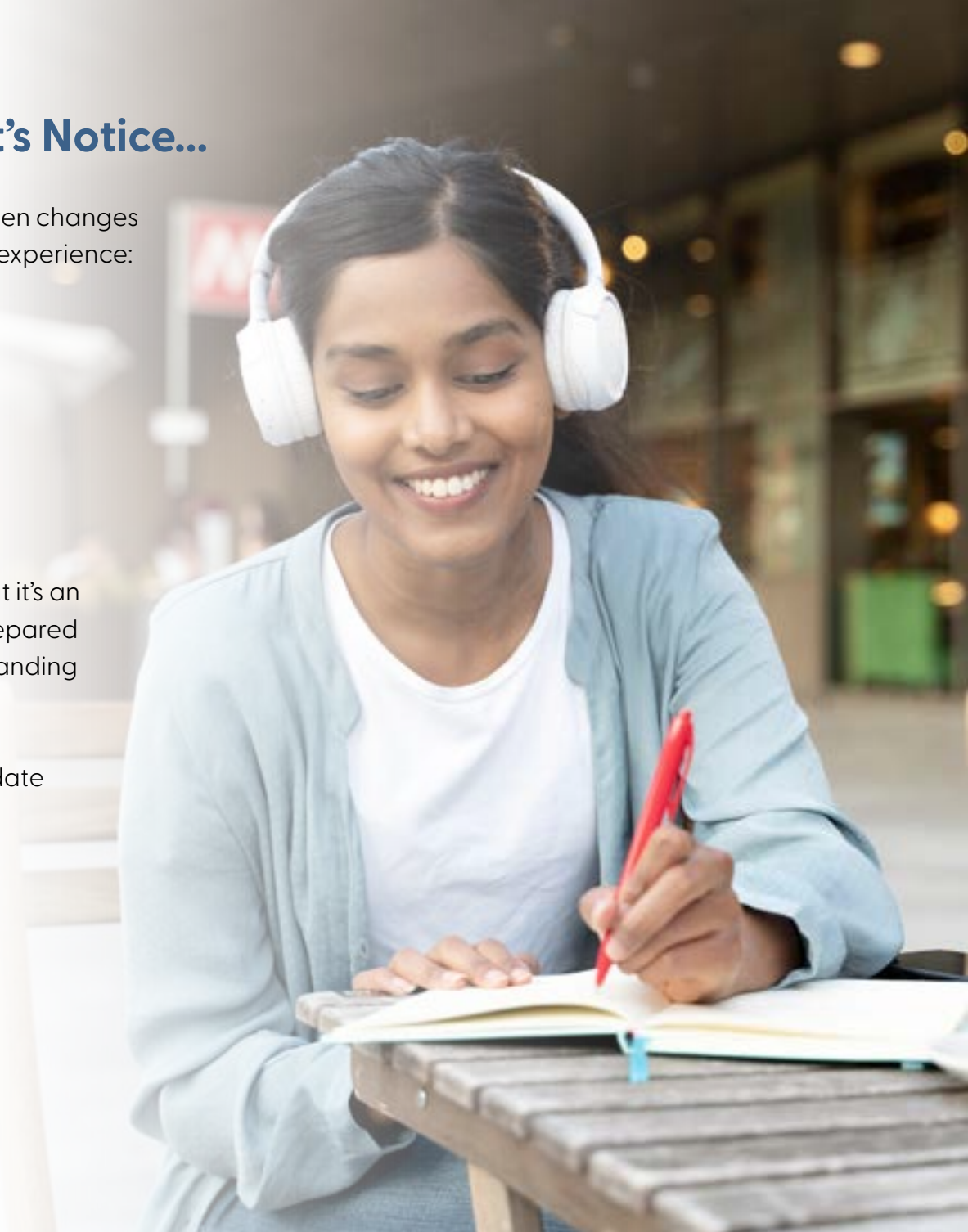
Things Can Change at a Moment's Notice...

Think back to 2020. The pandemic taught us that unforeseen changes can happen at any time. You never know when you might experience:

- Layoffs
- Major economic shifts (like a pandemic)
- A company buy-out or restructuring
- New management with whom you don't gel

We certainly hope none of these things happen to you, but it's an unfortunate possibility. In any of these scenarios, being prepared with a current resume can mean the difference between landing a new opportunity quickly and being caught off guard.

Now that we've discussed why you should continually update your resume, let's get into some specific questions.



For Your Resume, Content Is King

It's easy to get so caught up in your resume's look, format and length that you forget what's most important: the content.

Remember, this is a document meant to grab the attention of a hiring manager and impress them enough to keep reading. Making sure the content is valuable and relevant is the best way to do that.



How can I identify and highlight transferable skills when changing careers or industries?



When changing careers or industries, it's essential to identify and highlight transferable skills that can be valuable in the new field. These skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, adaptability and organizational abilities.

In your resume, emphasize the skills that overlap both industries and showcase how you've used them in relevant situations. Also, be sure to highlight any volunteer work, hobbies, or personal projects that demonstrate transferable skills and may make you stand out.





What should I include in my resume if I am a new graduate with little to no professional experience?



Focus on highlighting your education, academic achievements, projects and extracurricular activities. Showcase any relevant coursework, honors, awards or leadership positions you held while studying.

Additionally, consider including internships, part-time jobs or volunteer roles that demonstrate transferable skills and relevant experience. Focus on quantifiable achievements and skills developed in these positions.



What are some effective strategies for highlighting leadership experience and potential in my resume?



Use action verbs and metrics to demonstrate the impact you've made. Highlight specific leadership roles you've held, such as team leader or project manager, and describe how you led, motivated and organized the team to achieve goals.

Also, mention any public speaking, mentorship or training experience you've had. Don't forget to include how your leadership resulted in concrete outcomes, such as revenue growth, cost savings or customer satisfaction improvement.



How can I effectively display certifications, professional development courses or continuing education on my resume?



Create a separate section on your resume and list them in reverse-chronological order. Include the name of the program, the issuing institution and the date of completion or expiration.

If the certification is relevant to the job you're applying for, provide a brief description of the skills or knowledge you've gained. And if a certification is outdated or irrelevant, it's best to leave it out entirely.



When and how should I include internships, co-ops or apprenticeships in my resume?



First, think about how these experiences align with the job you're applying for and how they demonstrate relevant skills and experience.

Treat these experiences like any other professional position and include the name of the company, your job title and your main responsibilities.

Use bullet points to describe concrete achievements, skills and lessons learned during these periods. Also, include the start and end dates and specify whether it was a part-time or full-time role.



What's the current consensus on adding a photo to my resume?



Opinions remain split on this one! In some cases, a photo can be seen as a positive way to personalize the application and display a professional appearance. However, in many cases, adding a photo can be seen as unprofessional, as it may introduce bias based on appearance or cultural backgrounds.

To be safe, research the company culture and the industry norms before deciding whether to include a photo or not.



What's the best way to present freelance or temporary work, consultancy roles, or a series of short-term positions without looking like a job-hopper?



To present freelance/temporary work, consultancy roles or a series of short-term positions, focus on highlighting the skills and achievements gained rather than the job titles and lengths of employment. Create a section on your resume that summarizes the breadth of experiences and competencies developed during these roles and use bullet points to highlight specific achievements and projects. Highlight how these experiences can benefit the job you're applying for and make you a more versatile and adaptable candidate.



How should I list technical skills and software proficiency, and how detailed should this section be?



Prioritize the ones that are most relevant to the job you're applying for. Use bullet points to list the tools and programs that you've mastered. Use industry-standard terms and abbreviations and be truthful about the level of proficiency you possess.

If possible, describe how you've used these tools to achieve business goals or solve complex problems, or link them to specific projects or certifications you've obtained.



How do I address returning to work after an extended absence, such as a sabbatical or parental leave?



Honesty is the best policy here. When returning to work after an extended absence, be transparent about your situation while focusing on the skills and experiences you possess. Highlight any volunteer work, personal projects or continued learning activities that demonstrate how you've kept your skills sharp.

Additionally, mention how you've kept track of industry developments and technology advancements during your time away. Use a functional resume format rather than a chronological one, as it allows you to focus on the skills and accomplishments you've developed rather than the gaps in employment.



FAQs: Format

Formatting Matters!

Unless you're a professional graphic designer, formatting your resume properly can feel like a steep hill to climb. Let's look at some common questions regarding resume formatting.

Q What's the ideal way to format my resume? Is there a layout or template that's considered the most professional?

A The ideal way to format a resume is to keep it clean, concise and easy to read. While there are several templates and layouts available, choose one that aligns with your industry and level of experience. For instance, a traditional format works well for conservative industries like finance or law, while a more creative format may be suitable for industries like design or marketing.

Use bullet points to highlight achievements and skills, and maintain consistency in font type, size and spacing. Always proofread your resume (ask a friend or family member to put a second set of eyes on it) before submitting it.





What is the ideal length for my resume?

The ideal length of your resume depends on your level of experience. For most professionals, a one-page resume is sufficient and preferred by many recruiters, especially for entry-level positions. However, if you have extensive experience or relevant accomplishments, a two-page resume is acceptable.



For senior-level professionals or academics, a longer CV may be necessary to capture detailed experiences and achievements. Regardless of length, ensure that all information is relevant and presented clearly.



What essential sections should I include in my resume?



Essential sections include a header with your name and contact information, a summary statement or objective, a professional experience section, an education section and a skills section.

Optional sections may include volunteer work, certifications, awards or relevant affiliations. Use industry-specific terminology and keywords and focus on quantifiable achievements and skills.



Does the use of bold and italicized text help or hinder the readability and impact of a resume?



Using bold and italicized text can help improve the readability and highlight key information on a resume. Bold text can be used to emphasize section headings, job titles or specific achievements, while italicized text can be used for company names, degrees or certifications.

Just be sure to use these formatting styles sparingly to avoid overwhelming the reader and maintain a professional look.



Should I include references on my resume, or is it enough to state they are available upon request?



It's recommended to state that references are available upon request rather than including them directly on the resume. This saves space and keeps the focus on your qualifications and achievements. Ensure that you have a separate document prepared with your references' contact information and provide it when requested by the employer.





Should I use bullet points or paragraphs to describe my work experience, and how many bullet points are too many?



It's generally recommended to use bullet points rather than paragraphs to describe your work experience on a resume. Bullet points make the information more scannable and allow you to highlight key accomplishments and skills more effectively.

Limit the number of bullet points for each job to 5-6 concise statements to keep the content focused and relevant. Too many bullet points can make the resume text dense and difficult to read, so prioritize quality over quantity.

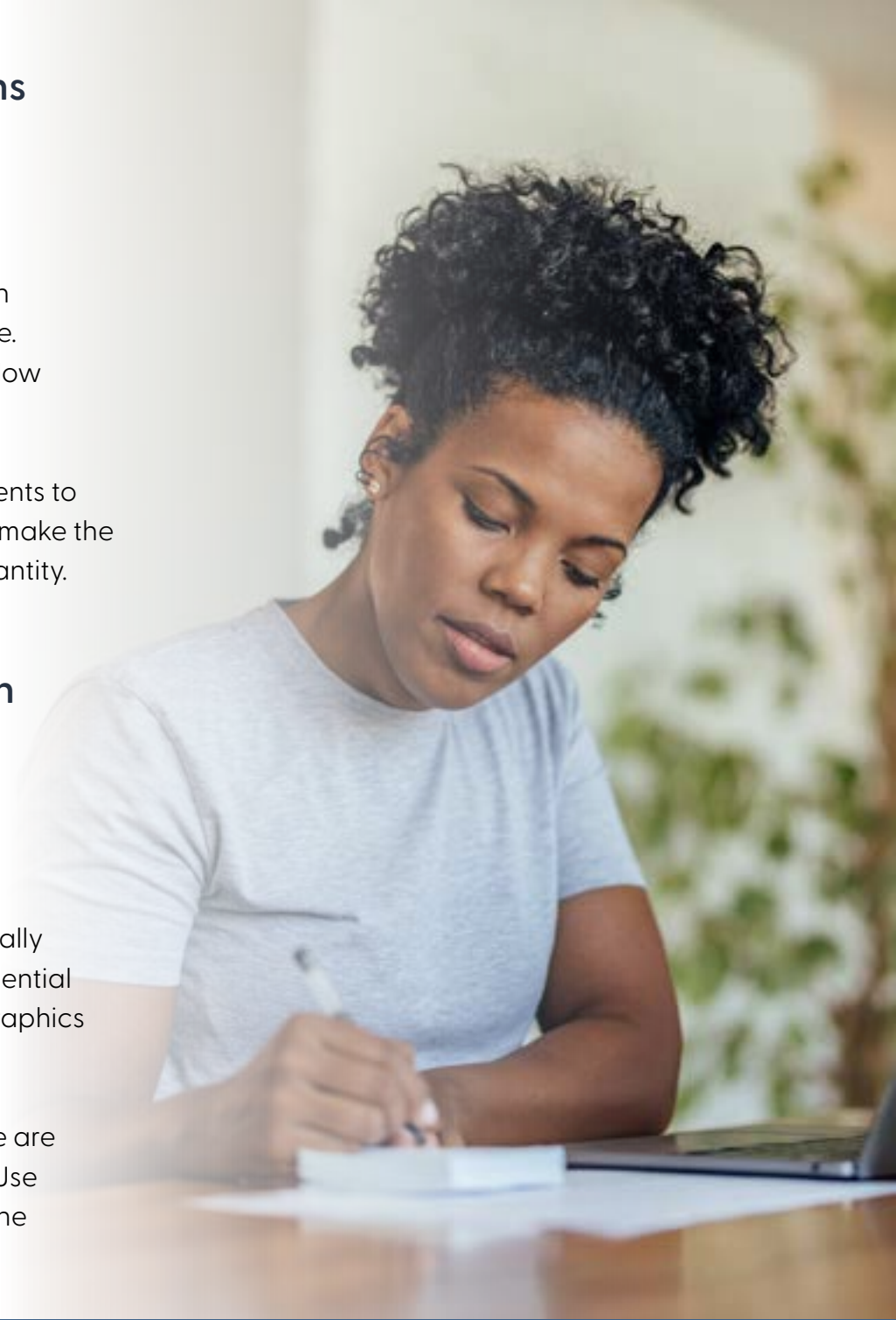


Are visual resumes the future for certain industries, and how can visuals or graphics be effectively incorporated without overshadowing content?



Visual resumes can be effective in certain industries, especially those that require creativity or design skills. However, it's essential to strike a balance between visuals and content and use graphics sparingly to enhance the message rather than overshadow it.

Some effective ways to incorporate visuals or graphics on a resume are to add icons, graphs, or charts to showcase skills or achievements. Use a consistent color scheme and font type and size, and ensure that the graphics are easy to read, even when viewed on different devices.





Can adding a personal branding statement or a video resume link to my traditional resume make a significant difference? How should this be executed?



Adding a personal branding statement or a video resume link can make a significant difference in setting you apart from other candidates.

A personal branding statement encapsulates your unique value proposition and summarizes what you can offer to the employer, while a video resume link provides a more dynamic and personalized introduction.

When incorporating these elements, ensure that they align with the company culture and values, and focus on showing how your skills and experience match the job requirements.



For creative industries, does the integration of QR codes that link to online portfolios or personal websites add value to a resume? What's the best practice here?



In creative industries, the integration of QR codes that link to online portfolios or personal websites can add value to a resume, but it's essential to use them judiciously and contextually.

QR codes can be included in the contact information section or the header, and they should link to a well-designed, mobile-optimized website or portfolio that highlights your best work. However, ensure that the website or portfolio aligns with the job requirements and industry standards and provides easy navigation for the recruiter.

FAQs: AI and Applicant Tracking Systems

Resumes for the Robots: Writing Resumes in the Era of AI and ATS

Long gone are the days of handing a paper resume to a recruiter or hiring manager. Today, your resume is likely to pass through multiple layers of technology before it ever gets in front of human eyeballs. That's why crafting it for both AI and humans is so important.

Who will be reading my resume?

Should I write it to HR?

Hiring managers? An ATS? AI?

The short answer: all of the above.

Your resume may be read by a variety of individuals, depending on the hiring process. It's important to write your resume with both humans and technology in mind to ensure that it passes initial screenings and resonates with the ultimate decision-maker. For more details on how to tailor your resume to these different audiences, read on.





How important are keywords in a resume? Should I optimize my resume for applicant tracking systems (ATS)?



Keywords play a crucial role in resume optimization. Many companies use an ATS to filter resumes based on specific keywords and criteria.

Research the job description and industry trends to identify keywords relevant to the desired position. Incorporate these keywords strategically throughout your resume, matching them to your skills, experiences and qualifications. However, it's equally important to maintain a natural flow and not overstuff your resume with keywords.



How can I make my resume stand out to both AI and human recruiters?



To make your resume stand out to both AI and human recruiters, it's essential to strike a balance. While ATS may prioritize matching keywords, human recruiters appreciate well-crafted resumes that demonstrate your unique achievements, skills and qualifications.

Use a clean and visually appealing format, highlight your notable accomplishments, and provide specific examples of your impact in previous roles. Optimize your resume for ATS, but also ensure that it reads well and engages human readers.



In what ways can I safely incorporate AI tools in crafting or improving my resume? Are there specific AI services recommended for resume building or reviewing?



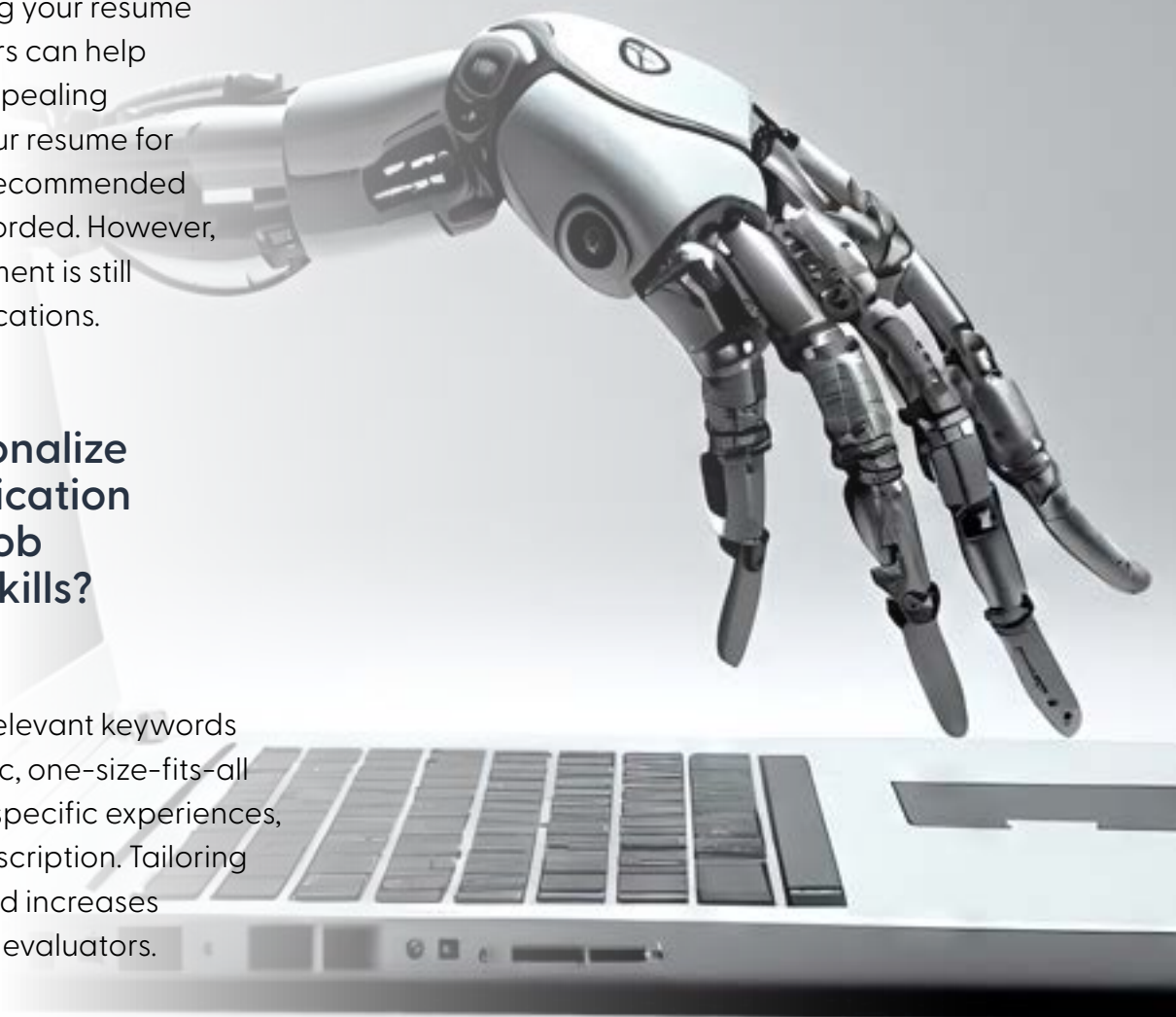
Incorporating AI tools in crafting or improving your resume can be valuable. AI-powered resume builders can help you create a well-structured and visually appealing resume. AI services for resume review can analyze your resume for readability, clarity, and keyword optimization. Some recommended AI resume tools include Jobscan, Rezi and Resume Worded. However, remember that these tools are aids, and human judgment is still essential in tailoring your resume to specific job applications.



To what extent should I personalize my resume for each job application when using AI tools to scan job descriptions and match my skills?



While it's efficient to leverage AI to identify relevant keywords and requirements, avoid submitting a generic, one-size-fits-all resume. Customize your resume to highlight specific experiences, accomplishments, and skills that align with the job description. Tailoring your resume showcases your suitability for the role and increases your chances of being noticed by both AI and human evaluators.





How do I showcase soft skills and emotional intelligence on my resume in a way that's appealing to AI screening as well as to a human hiring manager?



Focus on presenting these skills through concrete examples or achievements. Instead of simply stating soft skills, provide specific instances where you demonstrated them, such as successfully collaborating on a team project or resolving conflicts. Quantify your achievements whenever possible. This approach demonstrates your ability to effectively communicate and work with others, which is valued by both AI and human recruiters.



How can I ensure that my resume is both visually appealing and ATS-friendly when utilizing AI tools for optimization?



Use a clean and structured layout with clear section headings and bullet points to enhance readability for both human reviewers and ATS systems. Incorporate relevant keywords strategically throughout your resume based on the job description and industry trends to pass ATS screenings.

Opt for a professional and legible font to ensure easy readability by both humans and AI algorithms. And finally, avoid excessive graphics or design elements that could impede ATS parsing.



Make Your Search a Success: Partner With a Recruiter!

Updating your resume is a crucial first step on your journey to a better career – but it isn't the only tool in your arsenal. A professional recruiter is your secret weapon.

Seeking expert guidance from a recruiter or staffing agency can provide the direction and insight needed to optimize your career opportunities. Working with a recruiter, you'll be able to take advantage of:

- Resume shaping expertise: Recruiters provide insider perspective to highlight top selling points and marketable skills effectively.
- Career advancement opportunities: Staffing agencies place candidates in ideal assignments to build work history and acquire valuable skills.
- Increased visibility to employers: Recruiters ensure your resume receives proper attention from hiring managers due to their trusted recommendations.
- Accelerated job search: Expert guidance from recruiters optimizes career opportunities and provides valuable direction in a competitive market.

***Ready to craft a killer resume and take your career to new heights?
Get in touch with a recruiter today to get started.***