

SCANNABLE RESUMES

Human resource professionals in small, medium and large organisations are investing in new state-of-the-art computer systems to increase efficiency in storing and accessing resume information. By using artificial intelligence capabilities, resumes are optically scanned into the computer system as an image. The computer then 'reads' the resume and creates a database of the applicant's relevant skills, degrees and achievements in the form of key words. Employers then access a candidate's resume by searching for key words.

To maximise the potential employment opportunities, it is important to be prepared to submit an effective "scannable resume". Develop your resume by using the following guidelines for format and content.

- Keep it simple.
- Standard serif and sans serif fonts work best. Avoid ornate fonts and fonts where the characters touch. Font size is also important. Use sizes between 10 points and 14 points type size.
- *Italics* and underlining cause problems for the scanner, *especially if combined*. Use **boldface** for emphasis or ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Vertical or horizontal lines should be used sparingly. When used, leave at least a quarter of an inch of space around the line.
- Avoid graphics ... and shading or shadowing.
- Do not compress or expand the space between letters or lines.
- Do not double space within sections.
- Use understandable abbreviations or synonyms.
- The resume you submit should be an original. It should be printed with a laser printer on white or light coloured A4 paper. Print on one side only.
- Resumes, which have been folded, stapled or otherwise mutilated, will not scan well.
- It is imperative that you describe your skills and accomplishments in key word phrases.
- Use the language of your profession.
- If faxing your resume, ensure that you put the setting on "fine mode".

Nouns are more distinguishable to a computer than action verbs. Label yourself with phrases that describe activities or experiences. For example: Use "managed training and development" versus "trained and developed" or use, "assisted with salary survey" versus "surveyed salaries of...". You may also want to consider a summary of accomplishments that focus on results not duties and responsibilities. Remember to keep the resume basic in format, style, and language.