



WHITE PAPER SERIES

The Traditional Resume is Dead: The Technology Behind Recruiting

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Abstract

Resume writing styles and tips haven't changed in a generation. While electronic job boards and technology have made it possible for an applicant to apply for a single job in less than 30 seconds - the art behind resume writing has not kept pace with the innovation occurring at the recruiting level. Fuzzy logic and Boolean search systems have rendered the old fashioned resume silent as it is often lost in a sea of applicants. New trends to address the needs of the technical sorting and screen processes are needed to produce logical employment profiles that directly and clearly speak to the electronic gatekeepers for the middle skill employment candidate.

Introduction

Even if you already have a decent resume and cover letter, if your resume is not in the top 10%, you might be out of luck. In order to write a resume that consistently succeeds in competitive labor market environments, you must have an intimate understanding of the **assembly-line hiring processes** that are practiced by most employers.

It seems that email spamming was a precursor to resume spamming. Resume spamming is the process whereby applicants use Web technology to deluge a large number of company websites or job boards with volume applications for almost every job available. Think of it, the time is rapidly approaching when, with the push of a button, any person could literally apply to scores of openings at a time. The technology already exists, and as soon as some smart entrepreneur begins to offer the service, applicants will no longer have to visit individual sites to apply for a position. Technology will seek out the sites and automatically apply for them. The horror story behind this is that the volume of resumes received by any company could increase one hundredfold, putting a dramatic strain on current applicant tracking and resume sorting systems.

Before you dismiss the notion, consider that as organizations and job boards are making it easier and easier to apply for a position (as they should), there will be a temptation for individuals to over apply to as many jobs and firms as possible. Why not? There's no penalty for submitting multiple applications. It's in the applicant's best interest to float their resumes to positions that they might only be minimally qualified for and to any company or location for which they might only be remotely considered. It's just human nature to consider increasing the number of resumes you send in, because it increases your odds of your resume being viewed. The result will be that company websites will be inundated with a huge volume of resumes, many of which will be of low quality.

Technology to the Rescue

As the volume of resumes increases, the quality will not - this is, in my opinion, an inevitable result of human nature. With such a huge volume of incoming resumes and applicants, it will be virtually impossible for humans to physically sort through the number of resumes that will be received.

As a result, applicant tracking systems must be dramatically improved or be replaced by next-generation systems. This is already occurring. These new systems can handle a large volume of data while accurately sorting and screening resumes. The past tendency to rely solely on keyword searches is an old technology that is quickly becoming outdated. Clever applicants can fool or trick the systems by merely selecting the right words. As applicants continue to learn to beat the system, companies are employing fuzzy logic tools to improve the accuracy of their resume sorting capabilities.

As with many advancements, technological innovation is the solution for resume sorting. Fuzzy logic refers to the mathematical techniques used to address imprecise data and problems that have many solutions rather than one. Remember, Human Resource Managers are more interested in finding the best candidate or candidates, not just those who meet some minimum standard of a screening process. In this way, applicant screening systems are being asked to make logic decisions about candidates. Although it is implemented in digital computers which ultimately make only *yes/no* decisions, fuzzy logic works with ranges of values, solving problems in a way that more resembles human logic. Simple keywords can no longer trick or fool a system. The days of the traditional resume are quickly coming to a close. **It's time to learn to write a new type of resume.**

Recruiting Trends

Currently little effort is made to demonstrate or quantify the quality of the applicants on a job board. As recruiters become more sophisticated, they will demand a smaller volume of resumes and a higher quality of candidates. Because online recruiting automatically generates easily usable recruiting data, recruiting will shift from being art and move into the realm of science based on technological sophistication.

An additional trend worth noting is that while most people placing resumes on the current job boards are actively seeking employment, many of the most desirable candidates are currently employed as top performers for other organizations. These people are much less likely to post their resume on a large job board. This will, in my opinion, herald a large opportunity for recruiters to seek candidates from job boards that point to candidates on learning sites or alumni sites. People who are actively involved with skill development will be seen as passive but highly desirable candidates. This trend will continue with successes that see the roughly 1700 customized job boards already in existence expand to meet ever more granular skill specialties. Specialized job and niche job boards will gain in both usefulness and popularity with serious recruiters.

Conclusion

As with any trend, those most affected by the inevitable shifts in recruiting practices will be those in the middle of the bubble on the bell curve of employment. Middle income earners will find it harder and harder to be seen on an increasingly crowded landscape. Resume writing and posting skills that may have worked 5 or 10 years ago are no longer

valid to get past the initial first screening process. As computers and logic programs take the place of humans for this first glance, resumes need to be prepared for a 'microprocessors eyes'. All of this is important for an applicant to make it through the screening process. In the final analysis, the decision to hire a person is still an emotional decision based on objective and subjective conclusions. Getting to that decision point seems to be a process that increasingly relies on science to communicate knowledge, skills and abilities in a way that simple wordsmithing cannot attain. The old resume is dead and in its place the **logical employment profile** is emerging.