**Resumes**

“I tell advisees to describe previous work in bullet points. Use only strong verbs: led, managed, created, built, sold, exceeded, presented, collaborated, implemented and succeeded.”

More companies than ever are using software to screen their mountains of job applications. Getting seen by a human recruiter takes some effort.

**How it works**

So-called predictive hiring tools evaluate résumés by finding keywords related to categories like skills, experience and education, and weighting them according to the job requirements and any other factors the hiring company has specified. The system may weight applicants who have worked at certain companies more positively. It may infer how old a skill seems to be from where it appears in a job history.

Artificial intelligence is used to understand what people mean to say — for example, if Carleton is a person’s name, an alma mater or a company the applicant worked for.

## Giving yourself the best shot

Making it through the automated screening can require tailoring your résumé, not just the cover letter, to each job you are applying for. Greg Moran, chief executive of OutMatch, a system that screens more than 10 million applicants a year for companies including Pepsi, Toyota and Walmart, confirmed that the following actions would help applicants avoid an automated rejection.

Include in your résumé the same keywords, or similar ones, that the job posting uses for the knowledge, skills, experience and duties involved. Use the most relevant keywords in your most recent job listed. If you mention data analytics in a job 10 years ago but not in more recent work, the algorithm may give it less weight.

Words like “significant,” “strong” and “mastery” in a job description can be clues that those skills will be weighted heavily, so they should be emphasized in your résumé and included on your descriptions of your more current experience.

Quantify wherever possible. “Managed a team of five that increased sales by 40 percent over two years” works better than “Managed a team that significantly increased sales.”

Make sure the system can “read” your résumé. In some systems, the PDF file format can make your résumé appear as a single image, so Microsoft Word may be a better choice. Fancy formatting like columns or added images can be less readable if the system is scanning left to right. Don’t try to trick the software with keywords in white text — the creators have already thought of that.

Mention all your skills. The system may scan for specific experience with, for example, the programming language R or Tableau, so don’t lump them together as “experienced in data analytics.”

If you are part of an underrepresented group, use terms that will let the system identify you to companies that are trying to diversify their work force.

## Don’t neglect your other tools

Mr. Moran cautioned applicants not to rely on the new systems alone to secure a job. He advises job seekers to make sure their LinkedIn profile is up to date and includes recommendations from managers and colleagues. Twitter or other public social media accounts should include “digital bread crumbs” of information highlighting skills, experience and interests.

Candidates should also seek out people inside their target companies that can refer them for the position, Mr. Moran said, because those referrals can significantly lift the chance of being hired.

“The more technical things get, the more you can get noticed by going old school,” he said.