



THE CRAIG WEISS
GROUP

THE HONEST WAY • NO GIMMICKS

Getting Past the Resume Robots

How to get your resume through AI recruiting software and land in front of an actual human — without tricks, hacks, or anything you'd have to explain your way out of later.

What's Actually Happening When You Hit Submit

No mystery here. Just a machine reading a document badly, sometimes.

Most companies past a certain size don't have a person reading every resume that comes in. Can't. Wouldn't want to, honestly — some job postings pull in a thousand applications in a week. So software reads it first. Pulls out your name, your job titles, your dates, your skills, sorts you against what the posting's asking for, and ranks you.

A real person might only ever see the top slice of that ranking. Not because anyone's being unfair. Because there's genuinely too much to read otherwise. Which means the whole game changes: your resume has two audiences now, not one. The software has to understand it before the human ever gets the chance to be impressed by it.

GOOD TO KNOW

None of this is a conspiracy against you. It's a parsing problem. The software isn't judging your career — it's just badly translating a document. Your job is to make that translation as easy as possible.

Format So It Can Actually Be Read

The single biggest reason good candidates get filtered out

A beautifully designed resume that a parser can't read is worse than a plain one it can. Every time. Save the design flourishes for your portfolio.

Skip tables, columns, and text boxes

Two-column layouts look sharp to a human eye and turn into scrambled nonsense to a parser — it often reads straight across both columns like they're one line. Plain, single column, top to bottom.

Use standard section headers

"Experience." "Education." "Skills." Not "My Journey" or "Where I've Made Magic Happen." Cute headers are for a personal website. The parser is looking for words it already knows.

Keep your contact info in the main body

Not in a header or footer. A lot of parsers skip headers and footers entirely, which means your name and phone number just... vanish, as far as the system's concerned.

No graphics, icons, or skill-rating bars

Five little dots showing you're "advanced" at Excel means nothing to a parser. It can't read a graphic. Just write the words: "Excel (advanced)." Less impressive to look at. Actually gets read.

Submit the file type they actually ask for

Usually a standard .docx or a text-based PDF — not an image, not a Canva export saved as a flattened graphic. If your PDF is really just a picture of a resume, the system can't read a single word of it.

Speak the Job Posting's Language

Not a trick. Just translation.

Most of these systems are matching your words against the posting's words. Not your talent against their needs — your actual word choice against theirs. Frustrating, but true, so use it.

Mirror the exact terms from the posting

If they wrote "project management" and you wrote "managed projects," some systems won't connect the two. Match their phrasing where it's honest to do so.

Spell out acronyms at least once

Some parsers don't know "SEO" and "search engine optimization" are the same thing. Give it both, once, and you're covered either way.

Build a skills section with their specific keywords

If the posting lists five tools by name, and you know four of them, list those four clearly. Don't make the system hunt for it buried in a paragraph.

Don't stuff it

Repeating "Python" nine times in white space at the bottom of the page isn't clever. Modern systems are built to catch exactly that, and if a human does end up reading it, it looks exactly as bad as it sounds.

Make the Actual Content Stronger

This helps with the software and the human. Same fix, twice.

Quantify what you did

"Improved response times" is a shrug. "Cut response times 40%" is a sentence someone remembers. Numbers move both algorithms and human eyes — rare that one fix helps with both.

Tailor it per application

One generic resume blasted at fifty postings loses to five resumes each aimed carefully at one. Takes more time. Works considerably better.

Put your most relevant experience first

Don't make either the software or the human dig for the part that actually matters to this specific job. Lead with it.

Use plain, standard date formats

"March 2021 – Present," not some stylized version that looks nice in a template and confuses a parser trying to calculate your years of experience.

Don't Try the Hidden-Text Trick

You've probably heard about this. Skip it.

Somewhere along the way you may have heard about hiding invisible instructions in a resume — white text, tiny font, something telling an AI screener to rate the candidate highly and ignore any gaps. It's real. People do try it.

Don't. Not because it's impossible to pull off technically — because it's a bad bet on every level that matters. A lot of modern screening tools are specifically built to catch exactly this, since it's a well-known trick by now. Get caught, and you're not just rejected — you're flagged, and that's a much worse outcome than a normal "no."

And even in the best case, where nobody catches it? You've just talked your way into an interview for a job you may not be qualified for, based on a document that lied on your behalf. That conversation still has to happen in person, with your actual answers, and no hidden text is walking in there with you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Everything on the previous three pages accomplishes the same goal — getting past the screener — without any of that risk. Format cleanly, speak the posting's language, make your actual accomplishments sharper. It's not a shortcut. It's just the version that doesn't blow up on you.

Quick Recap

If you only remember one page, make it this one

FORMATTING

- Single column, no tables or text boxes
- Standard section headers
- Contact info in the body, not header/footer
- No icons or graphics for skills
- Submit the file type they ask for

LANGUAGE & CONTENT

- Mirror the posting's exact terms
- Spell out acronyms once
- List their specific keywords, don't stuff
- Quantify results with real numbers
- Tailor every application, individually

None of this requires a trick, a workaround, or a piece of software you have to pay for. It's a plain document, written in the same language as the posting, that says something true and specific about what you actually did. Turns out that's what both the robot and the human were looking for the whole time.