

Resume Facts That Matter: Insights for Blind and Low Vision Job Seekers

Your resume can make or break your chances of getting an interview. This fact sheet shares key findings from a study of 99 blind and low vision job seekers. Researchers reviewed their resumes for content, language, layout, and style using a detailed nine-section scoring rubric. They also checked how well the resumes worked with an applicant tracking system (ATS)—software that scans resumes before a human ever sees them. Understanding these findings can help you create a resume that gets noticed by people *and* software.

The Basics

This section shows how blind and low vision job seekers structured their resumes—what formats they used and how long their resumes were. Most used formats that help resumes get through the ATS and into the hands of hiring managers.

FORMAT

- **48%** of resumes used a chronological format. This format lists jobs from most recent to oldest and is the most ATS-friendly.
- **32%** used a combination format. This format blends a skills summary with job history and is also ATS-friendly.
- **14%** used a non-standard format. These resumes often had missing sections, unconventional headings, or unusual layouts like numbered lists, which can confuse employers and ATS software.
- **6%** used a functional format. This format focuses on skills instead of job history. It may hide employment gaps but often gets rejected by ATS software.

LENGTH

- The average resume length was **1.81** pages.
- **88%** were 1 to 2 pages—the recommended length for most job seekers.
- **12%** were 3 to 7 pages—longer than advised in most cases, as these resumes are hard to read quickly and often include outdated or unnecessary information.

The Big Picture

This section highlights the findings about overall resume quality (the average score across all sections of the rubric) and ATS compatibility. Some resumes were strong, but most had issues that could make them less competitive.

OVERALL QUALITY

- On a 0 to 4 scale, the average quality score was **2.04**, meaning that most resumes needed improvement.
- Only **11%** were rated “acceptable,” with a score of 3 or higher.

ATS COMPATIBILITY

- On average, the ATS correctly read **84%** of resume content.
- Chronological and combination formats worked best, with about **88%** of the content read correctly.
- Functional resumes worked worst, with only **55%** of the content read correctly.

Facts and Fixes

This section pairs key findings from the study with practical tips to help you strengthen each section of your resume. Even small changes—like adjusting formatting or adding keywords—can make a big difference.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Key Facts:

- Almost every resume included basic contact information.
 - **97%** included a phone number.
 - **94%** included an email address.
 - Only **11%** included a LinkedIn profile.
 - Some contact details were hard to find or missed by the ATS, especially when placed in headers or formatted incorrectly.
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Suggestions:

- Put your name, phone number, and a professional email address at the top—not in a header or footer.
 - If you have a LinkedIn profile, include the full URL ([linkedin.com/in/yourname](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname)) or a hyperlink to it.
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EDUCATION

Key Facts:

- Most resumes had an education section, but many were inconsistent, not in reverse chronological order, or missing key details.
 - **79%** had an education section detected by the ATS.
 - **14%** included education, but the ATS missed it due to layout or formatting issues.
 - **7%** didn't include an education section at all.
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Suggestions:

- Use a clear heading like “Education.”
 - List education in reverse order with your most recent degree first.
 - For each entry, include school name, location, degree, and major (if applicable).
 - Keep the education section separate from other sections so it stands out.
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EXPERIENCE

Key Facts:

- Nearly all resumes included an experience section, but many were incomplete, inconsistent, not in reverse chronological order, or hard to follow.
 - **96%** had an experience section detected by the ATS.
 - **4%** listed experience, but the ATS missed it due to unclear headings or formatting.
 - Resumes with strong, measurable accomplishments stood out (e.g., “Increased social media engagement by 75%”), but many lacked action verbs or numbers.
 - Some resumes had long, unexplained gaps in work history or outdated jobs from decades ago.
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Suggestions:

- Use a standard heading like “Experience.”
 - List experience in reverse order with your most recent job first.
 - For each role, include job title, company name, location, and dates employed (either months and years, or just years).
 - Focus on your most recent and relevant jobs.
 - Use bullet points that start with action verbs like “Managed” or “Developed.”
 - Use numbers to show results, but only if you can back them up.
 - Avoid using “I” or “my,” and include keywords from the job description.
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OPTIONAL CONTENT

Key Facts:

- **67%** included a professional summary, such as an objective, profile, or overview.
 - Many objectives were vague (e.g., “seeking an exciting position with a growing company”), taking up valuable space without adding useful information.
 - **88%** included at least one other section (e.g., “skills”), but some were disorganized or unprofessional.
 - **32%** disclosed a visual impairment, either directly (e.g., by stating they are “blind” or “visually impaired”) or indirectly (e.g., by mentioning braille or screen reader use).
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Suggestions:

- If you use a professional summary, make it specific—highlight skills and accomplishments that relate to the job.

- If you include optional sections like “skills” or “certifications,” keep them organized, relevant, and professional.
 - Disclosure is a personal choice. If you decide to disclose, think carefully about when and how. For guidance, see our [disclosure resource sheet](#).
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LANGUAGE, LAYOUT, AND STYLE

Key Facts:

- A few resumes stood out for their clarity, professionalism, and formatting—but only **8–9%** received top scores for language, layout, or style.
 - **84%** had language issues (e.g., incorrect grammar, spelling errors, unclear wording).
 - **74%** had layout issues (e.g., inconsistent spacing, visually cluttered sections, random line and page breaks, crowded text).
 - **63%** had style issues (e.g., inconsistent fonts, formatting, capitalization, or bullet points)—or no formatting at all.
 - When resumes had formatting issues or used complex layouts like tables or columns, the ATS often missed important details (e.g., contact information, education, experience).
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Suggestions:

- Use one font throughout (e.g., Arial), and keep spacing and formatting consistent.
 - Format section headings using bold, all caps, or both to make them stand out.
 - Align education and job details neatly, and add blank lines or extra spacing between sections to create white space.
 - Avoid tables, columns, and text boxes—simple formatting usually works best for ATS and screen readers.
 - Use spell check and ask someone, ideally a resume expert, to review your resume for errors, clarity, layout, ATS compatibility, and overall presentation.
 - If you use a resume template or online resume builder, ensure it’s ATS-friendly (e.g., simple layout, standard headings)—verify with an online ATS checker if needed.
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Stay Current

Your resume is your first chance to show employers what you can do. A clear, well-organized resume that works with modern hiring systems—especially ATS software—can help you stand out. But remember, what works today may not work tomorrow. As hiring tools and trends evolve, it’s important to stay up to date. Use trusted sources for guidance, and update your resume regularly to make sure it meets the latest standards.

Your resume is your story—make it clear, current, and competitive.

Learn More

To learn more about the research behind this fact sheet, check out this article:

Antonelli, K., Cmar, J. L., & Dabbs, S. M. (2025). [Resumes of job seekers with visual impairments: Characteristics and quality](#). *The New RE:view*, 3(2), 69–84.
<https://doi.org/10.56733/TNR.24.016>

For more information about the job search skills training research project, visit the [project overview page](#).

This resource is intended to support blind and low vision job seekers in strengthening their resumes based on research findings. For personalized guidance, consult a career counselor, vocational rehabilitation professional, or resume expert familiar with accessibility and current hiring practices.



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