

In the Fall of 2015, over 88 days, 1700+ job seekers registered for the Hire-A-Thon and 825 people were hired and 72 hiring events took place! Due to this success, it has been re-launched on August 29 of this year and will run for 3 months: September, October and November.

For job seekers, this campaign includes one-to-one coaching with Career Specialists, job search workshops facilitated by Resource & Information Specialists and Hiring Events focused on a wide range of occupations held at all 6 locations of the Centre for Education and Training.

The one-to-one coaching includes discussions on employment essentials such as: (1) how to be successful at job interviews; (2) how to present your reference list to potential employers; (3) and how to create a resume and cover letter that an employer will be interested in reading.

For example, did you know that many companies now use “applicant tracking systems” or ATS scanners to rank qualifications against job descriptions? These ATS scanners will read your resume and cover letter, and then will score your skills. Only job seekers who receive high scores will get an interview. So learning how to create a resume to pass the ATS is essential. Other ATS resume tips include:

- 1) **Customize every resume:** all resumes and cover letters should be targeted for specific positions using the language or key words and expressions from the job posting or job description. One size does not fit all with ATS scanners, and instead, the more phrases you incorporate into your resume, the better.
- 2) **Edit carefully:** ATS scanners will not recognize misspelled words. If your resume survives the ATS screening, it will eventually be reviewed by a human being so it must be error-free.
- 3) **Think of the ATS as a matrix:** ATS scanners are programmed for a fixed amount of characters and are preset to count each character, so less text is best. For example, do not waste a character by putting brackets around area codes. Instead of (416), simply use 416.
- 4) **Font and style:** ATS scanners cannot read a mix of style sizes or fonts, and usually they only read size 11 or 12. So use only one size and one style throughout, not a mix. Safe readable styles are Arial, Calibri, Georgia and Tahoma.
- 5) **Do not use templates:** Most ATS scanners only read standard Word documents and do not read headers or footers, borders, lines, symbols or anything in shading, so use simple formatting. They will read bullet points, but some ATS scanners cannot read PDF formats.

6) **Resume length:** The ATS won't penalize you for length, but when it is read by a person it could be, so be smart and keep it to a maximum of 2 pages. With your cover letter the total application will be 3 pages.

7) **First line of the resume:** ATS scanners are preset to read letters first, not numbers, so have your first and last name on the first line. Do not add degrees or certifications or letters after it. To keep your brand messaging seamless, use the same name on your resume that you use on your LinkedIn profile.

8) **Write for the reader:** Initially the reader is the ATS scanner yet eventually the second reader will be a person, so be ready for one of the most important interview questions: "walk me through your resume". Know your resume intimately and be prepared to answer this question without even glancing at your resume.

If you want to learn more about applicant tracking systems and if you want to be part of the HIRE-A-THON, contact the Centre for Education & Training Employment Services (www.tcet.com).