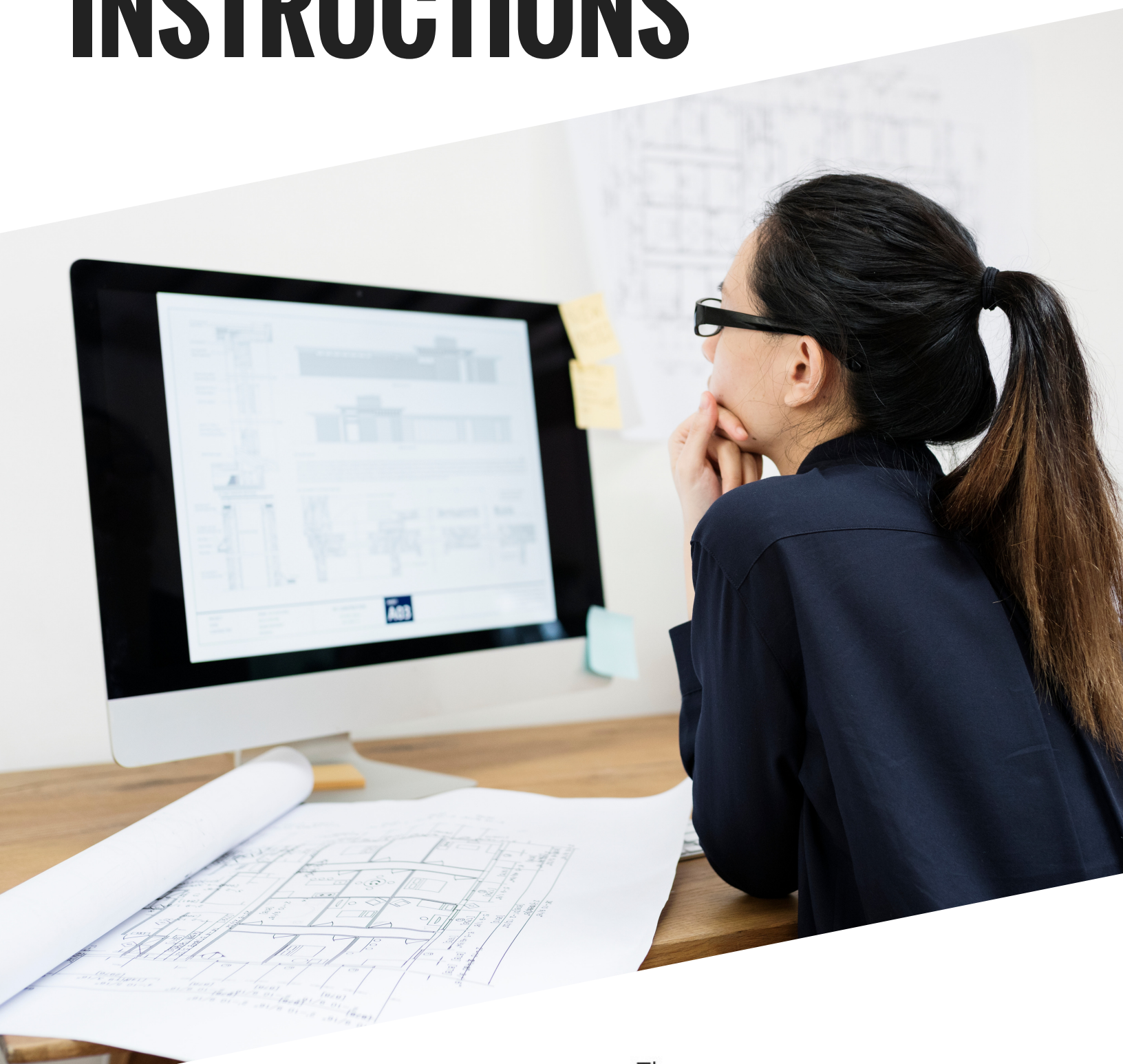


ATS RESUME TEMPLATE **INSTRUCTIONS**



The
CAREER FORCE

Your source for career advancement

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Congratulations on taking the first step to landing your next position!

Writing an effective resume is a vital part of the job change process and The Career Force is here to make it easy for you.

This guide walks you through how to build an effective resume, using our ATS (applicant tracking system) optimized resume template.

We suggest you read the entire guide before beginning the writing process.

This template can be edited in wordpad, Google Docs, or Microsoft Word. If you aren't familiar with editing a template in these programs, see Appendix C.

What's Included

Writing Your Resume

- Step 1: Understand ATS Basics
- Step 2: Choose Length and Sections
- Step 3: Write Each Section
- Step 4: Proofread and Edit
- Step 5: Customize for Each Application

Appendices

- Appendix A: How to Trim your Resume
- Appendix B: Sections and Info to Exclude
- Appendix C: How to Edit the Template (Using wordpad, MS Word, or Google Docs)
- Appendix D: Understanding ATS

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SECTION 1:

WRITING

YOUR RESUME

STEP #1

UNDERSTAND ATS BASICS

Almost every aspect of a resume can impact applicant tracking systems. The Career Force resume template is designed with applicant tracking systems (ATS) in mind. However, the content you write for each section can either enhance or detract from the ATS optimization built into the template.

Below are some general ATS principles to keep in mind as you write. Additional guidelines for ATS can be found in the instructions for each section.

Need more help understanding ATS? See Appendix D.

General ATS Guidelines

- Use the exact section titles listed in our template. Don't change "Work Experience" to "Past Jobs" or "Fun things I've done". ATS relies on standard naming of sections to check for qualifications.
- Don't change the fonts or sizes in the template. ATS relies on optical character recognition (OCR), so it's important to use a common font at a standard size.
- Don't add pictures, tables, or columns. These three items will interfere with ATS.
- Update your resume before applying to each position to incorporate keywords from the job description. ATS works by searching for specific keywords identified in advance by the hiring manager for the position. Including keywords from the job description increases your chances of making it through the ATS software.
- Don't cheat the system. Some people try to add white text in the header or footer. If you're caught, you'll look extremely unprofessional and will likely be removed from the candidate list.
- Carefully follow the instructions below for each resume section.

STEP #2

CHOOSE THE LENGTH AND SECTIONS

A common resume mistake is including too much information. Deciding on the length and choosing sections first will help you be concise. Being concise shows your future employer that you know how to prioritize the main points and communicate them clearly.

Choose the Length

Choose the length of your resume based on the amount of your career experience.

The main portion of your resume is your work experience. This means that the amount of career experience you have is the key factor to determine how long your resume should be.

Experience

Less than 5 years

5-25 years

25+ years

Length

1 page

1-2 pages

2-3 pages

Choose the Sections

Choose the sections of your resume based on your industry and career experience. A short description of each section is contained in the next portion of this guide.

Required Sections

Work Experience

Education

Contact Information

Optional Sections

Career Profile

Career Highlights

Volunteer Experience

Certifications

Publications

Presentations / Speaking Engagements

Memberships & Affiliations

Skills

Surprised not to see a section? See Appendix A for a detailed list of sections that should be excluded from your resume.

STEP #3

WRITE EACH SECTION

General Writing Guidelines

Follow the general guidelines below when writing each section of your resume.

- Prioritize the main points. This means being selective, but also ordering the key accomplishments for each position in order of importance.
- Be concise. If your resume is too long, it will raise concern that you cannot edit yourself to relevant information. A hiring manager likely will not actually read your entire resume before placing it in the “no” pile.
- Give examples of accomplishments and hard facts when possible.
- Avoid using personal pronouns such as “I”, “me”, “mine”, and “our”.
- If you have a specific job in mind, review the job description and highlight specific keywords and phrases, especially if they appear repeatedly. If you do not have a specific job in mind, review job descriptions for the type of position you will be applying for to identify general keywords of phrases.
- We suggest placing your cursor at the beginning of the line you want to replace, typing your information, and then deleting the template text. See Appendix C, “How to edit the template” for detailed instructions.

Required Sections

Personal Information

Complete the personal information in the header at the top of the resume template. Follow the specific notes below for each element of the personal information sections.

- Only use your first and last name unless you go by multiple names normally. If your name is Taylor Madison Bentley Jones and you go by Taylor, put Taylor Jones on your resume. If you go by Taylor Madison, then put Taylor Madison Jones.
- Use your current address. If you are an out of country applicant, add the country as well. Some employers will consider if you are local or not and this may carry more weight in the decision to consider you for a job.
- Use a professional email, ideally your first name and last name, such as TaylorJones@gmail.com. Make sure the email you provide is one that you monitor regularly. Most email providers have functionality to auto-forward emails to another address. Set this up if you have an email address solely dedicated to your job search.

- The best phone number is usually your cell phone as this tends to be the one where you are the easiest to reach. It should go without saying, but never put a work number when you are applying for a job.

Work Experience

Your work experience should be listed in reverse chronological order with newest position first. The Career Force template is formatted with ATS in mind, so it's important to maintain the work history layout used in the template. The company name and job title should be listed first, then dates worked written on the same line.

- If you've had more than one position with the same company, follow the same guidelines for writing each position (list the company name for each position).
- If you worked as a consultant through a staffing agency, you could show both here in the form Staffing Agency (Assignment Company).
- Be transparent about your job title. If you worked at a company with really unique job titles, you could add the more standard title in parenthesis after your actual title.
- Dates should include the start and end dates for each position (month and year). If there are gaps in your work history, don't try to cover them by listing only the year in your start and end dates. It is better to be straightforward with this information.
- Do you need help adding space for additional work experience? See Appendix C, "How to Edit the Template".

How to write the descriptions for each position.

- Use keywords that match the job description to optimize for ATS. A computer will likely read your resume before a recruiter does. Choosing keywords from the job description will increase your ATS score.
- Use present tense verbs to describe your current position (Manage team of 7 analysts, Develop best practices to streamline recruiting process). Use past tense verbs for all past positions (Managed team of 7 analysts, Developed best practices to streamline recruiting process).
- Communicate your accomplishments and responsibilities, rather than your tasks or job description. For example, if you were responsible for student admissions processes, write "Streamlined student admissions process to reduce processing time by 2 weeks" instead of "Filed student admissions documents".
- Choose action words such as implemented, analyzed, created, designed, or managed. These show behaviour in the job which can help employers understand how you may be able to deliver in similar ways for them in the future.
- Exclude responsibilities and jobs you can't speak in detail about now. If you don't remember enough to talk in detail and connect it to the job for which you are applying, consider excluding it from your resume. For example, if you used accounting software during a summer internship 10 years ago and you

can't answer questions about using the system now, exclude that responsibility from your resume.

Education

- Include degrees, trade school programs, and relevant certifications.
- Exclude details on specific coursework after you have graduated.
- If you are applying for internships or in the process of completing your degree, you can choose to list up to 5 key areas of training.
- Including GPA is optional. Exclude it if less than 3.0
- Need help adding space for an additional degree or certification? See "Appendix C: How to Edit the Template".

Optional Sections

Career Profile

This is a very brief summary of your career experience. It should say who you are, what you've accomplished, and your key skills. This profile should be under 50 words, and generally half of that. It's a 1-2 sentence statement that should also be easy for the employer to see how it connects to the role you are applying for.

Career Highlights

This section summarizes your highlights and accomplishments across all past positions in 3-4 bullet points.

The company you apply to will be trying to understand how your past experience will help contribute to their success. With this in mind, focus on these types of points:

- How you generated revenue
- How you saved costs
- How you optimized either processes or infrastructure for efficiency

You can add highlights that happened in just one role here, but there's also a more powerful approach you can take. Highlight a sum of accomplishments across multiple roles. For instance, if you're in sales, you could add up all the sales that you've made across all your sales jobs.

Volunteer Experience

Include volunteer experience if it is relevant to your desired position or if you are applying for a non-profit position. More in-depth volunteer positions could also be considered within the work experience section, especially if you held/hold a leadership position.

Relevant Certifications

Certifications that display additional mastery or expertise and are relevant to the job for which you are applying should be added. Consider which certifications are relevant to your industry. For instance, a project manager may include include Six Sigma certification or Project Management Professional (PMP).

Do not include certifications for trainings on basic systems (ie - Intro to Excel). These should be evident in your work experience descriptions.

Publications

There are two primary times when you should include information on published works: the new position you are applying for requires writing/publication, or the content in your previous publications is relevant to the position or industry

Presentations / Speaking Engagements

As with publications, there are two primary times when you should include information on presentations or speaking engagements: the new position requires these skills or the content you presented is relevant to the position or industry

Memberships to Professional Organizations / Affiliations

This shows engagement within your industry. It should definitely be included if you held/hold a leadership position.

Skills

It is best to incorporate skills in your work experience descriptions. This gives you the opportunity to show how you've used those skills.. Avoid listing generic skills such as "detail oriented" or "excellent communicator". You can show an employer that you possess these skills by providing them with a polished and professional resume.

It may be useful to include a list of hard skills (systems) if your desired position is in a technical or scientific field. You can also list skills in this section which you have acquired through training, but may not have implemented in previous jobs.

Other Optional Sections

There is a possibility that your unique industry would call for sections we haven't discussed. If you know there is something critical that we have skipped, then add it in. For instance - you're applying for a job requiring security clearance, which you have.

STEP #4

PROOFREAD AND EDIT

The resume you send to a potential employer is your one opportunity to make your first impression. Submitting a resume with spelling and grammar errors will leave a negative first impression with your potential employer. Use the checklist below to ensure your resume is error free.

Grammar and Spelling Check

- ❑ Read your resume aloud. Doing this will help you identify grammar and spelling errors that your eyes might skim over when reading silently.
- ❑ Check verb tense in your work experience section. Use past tense verbs for past positions and present tense verbs for current positions.
- ❑ Look for commonly misused homophones (“two”, “to”, “too” and “their”, “they’re”, and “there”).
- ❑ Do not use contractions. Spell out the words instead.
- ❑ Avoid personal pronouns such as “she”, “he”, “I”, “me”, and “mine”.
- ❑ Check for misused apostrophes. The most common error is using an apostrophe in a plural word. CORRECT: “Supervised 500 employees”
INCORRECT: “Supervised 500 employee’s”

ATS & Content Check

- ❑ Review the ATS guidelines in “Step One: Understand ATS Basics” to ensure you followed them throughout your resume writing process.
- ❑ Check your resume against the job posting to ensure you included specific keywords from the job posting. This will increase your ATS match score.
- ❑ Check the “excluded content” section of this guide, and make sure your resume does not include any of these sections.
- ❑ Check the length based on the guidelines in “Step Two: Choose Length and Sections”. If your resume is too long, reference Appendix A: “How to Trim Your Resume”.

STEP #5

CUSTOMIZE FOR EACH APPLICATION

Customize your resume before applying to each job. Doing so will increase your chances of a higher ATS score which means it's more likely you'll be called for an interview. We will help you create a solid foundation, so updating your resume before applying will only take a few minutes.

To complete this step, review the job description of the role for which you are applying. Highlight keywords and phrases, especially those that appear multiple times.

Using the resume you have developed, make modification to include these exact keywords and phrases. In many cases, you will be able to make a direct switch for other phrasing you have used. In other cases, you may need to rewrite several points.

When you are ready to submit your resume for a specific job, save a copy of your resume with a title of your first name, last name, and the position for which you are applying. For instance, "Taylor Jones - Project Manager". This helps ensure it is very clear what the document contains.

SECTION 2:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HOW TO TRIM YOUR RESUME

Your resume is an opportunity to show your future employer that you know how to effectively communicate in a clear and concise way. A resume that is too long may cause an employer to doubt your ability to prioritize the main point. Use the tips below to trim your resume if it exceeds the length guidelines listed in step two.

Review your resume sections

All resumes should include work experience, education, and contact information. After you've incorporated these sections, review the list of optional sections in step two of this guide.

Do you need to keep every optional section that you initially chose to include? Consider your industry career goals and make sure the optional resume sections you chose support your goals.

Review your content

- Check for duplicate information. Did you list your phone number in the header? If so, there's no need to repeat it in the footer.
- Can you be more concise in a description while conveying the same message?
- Did you have the same job over multiple time periods during college? Consider combining these into a single section - or excluding completely if you aren't early career.
- Review the oldest sections of your resume and consider eliminating information.
- Read Appendix B: "Sections and Info to Exclude", and eliminate unnecessary or inappropriate information.

APPENDIX B

SECTIONS AND INFO TO EXCLUDE

There are many things to put on your resume, but also plenty that are either inappropriate, outdated, or just don't make you like the strong candidate that you are. Most of the items below fall into one of two categories: they are either outdated/irrelevant practices or inappropriate.

Outdated or Irrelevant Practices

Objective Statement

This is a popular section that many people just won't let go of. You are applying for a specific job, so your objective is obvious. A generic objective statement tells a potential employer that you are not serious about this specific position and that you are likely applying many places.

Irrelevant Certifications

Certifications should be included if you can connect them to your desired position. However, if the certification does not relate, exclude it from your resume.

Example: If you are a hair stylist now and you want to be a corporate executive, it's okay to omit your hair styling licenses and certifications. Rather, highlight your leadership experience in the salon.

Generic Skills

You will appear to be a stronger candidate if you list specific skills. Listing generic skills makes you look weak. Avoid listing skills like multitasking, attention to detail, or good grammar skills. You can show your attention to detail by having a well written resume, so you don't need to list "attention to detail" as a skill.

The same is true for grammar, writing skills, and written communication skills. If you are applying for a position that requires a lot of writing, be specific about your writing experience and accomplishments.

Your Entire Job Description for Previous Positions

Focus on specific responsibilities and achievements - not a listing of everything the job entailed.

Awards / Group Involvement from Early Career

Highlighting awards from 10 years ago without showing recent achievements that are similar or better may make an employer wonder if you are still as capable. If you choose to have a section like this, make sure it focuses first on what you've accomplished recently. This could also be contained in the Career Profile or Highlights.

References

It is no longer common practice to include references on a resume. When references are required as part of the job application, send or upload a separate page with a list of references. This list should include each reference's name, job title, company, address, phone, and email address.

References Upon Request

A company will ask you for references if they are required. Employers assume that any good candidate will have professional references available. This means that you don't need to list that references are available upon request.

Inappropriate Information

Detailed Personal Information

A resume should never include your marital status, date of birth or age, social security number, etc.

A Picture

While common in several other countries, including a picture of yourself when applying with a company in the US is unprofessional and inappropriate.

Hobbies

Unless your hobby directly relates to the job you're applying for, it's not relevant to include on your resume.

Contact Information at Your Current Job

The exception is when you are applying for an internal position.

APPENDIX C

HOW TO EDIT THE TEMPLATE

(USING WORDPAD, MS WORD, OR GOOGLE DOCS)

The Career Force resume template is designed with applicant tracking systems (ATS) in mind. It is important that you do not change the formatting of the template. The margins, font, font size, and section title names were chosen very purposefully.

When you download the template, first save a master copy and then create a working template using “Save As” (in WordPad or MS Word) or “Make a Copy” (in Google Docs).

To Edit a Section

Place your cursor at the beginning of the section you would like to edit. Type your text. Use the delete key to erase the template wording.

If you delete too much template text, use the undo button. Alternately, you could use your keyboard to press and hold the “Ctrl” button, and then press “Z”.

To Delete a Section

Place your cursor at the beginning of the section you would like to delete. Highlight the desired section by clicking and dragging the cursor over the text. Press the delete button on the keyboard.

To Add More Bullets to a List

Place your cursor at the end of the last bullet point. Press enter. This should create a bullet on the next line. Begin typing. Keep the number of points roughly consistent for each position.

Tips for Success

Don't delete too much of the template. Place your cursor at the beginning of a line, and type your text. After you've entered your information, delete the template wording.

Save your resume after updating each section.

APPENDIX D

EVEN MORE ABOUT ATS

Applicant tracking systems are software used by companies to sort through all of the applications they received and identify resumes that might be a good match for the job. This technology works by converting the resume you submit into a standard basic format (without fancy text styles or formatting) and matching your resume content with the job description.

How ATS is Set Up in the Background

ATS is set up in connection with a specific job so that companies can narrow down which candidates are most relevant to the position. If a resume is considered to be a good match, then they go to a person to confirm whether the applicant will be contacted to take the next step.

The hiring manager defines important skills for the position which are then loaded into the applicant tracking system. These can be weighted to give more value to certain words or terms. The ATS software then searches for matches on all resumes that are submitted, normally creating a match score to identify those which best (and worst) align with the desired skills.

How ATS Affects Your Chances

Because ATS creates a score for each resume on how well it matches for desired keywords, it's key that you take time to modify your resume to reflect each job for which you apply. Once you have your resume set up in an ATS friendly format, this should be a relatively quick process as you'll be starting from a strong foundation..

On the other hand, if you don't take the time to tailor your resume for each position, the most likely outcome is that ATS will reject you automatically for not being a match. You will have wasted your time with applying by not taking the time to adapt your resume.