

Navigating Application Tracking Systems: The Do's and Don'ts

Applying to tech jobs can be competitive, especially with the prevalence of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Below are some essential do's and don'ts to help you navigate the application process effectively and increase your chances of securing internship and job opportunities:

✔ DO understand why companies use ATSs

Many companies use ATSs to manage their hiring processes efficiently, given the high volume of applicants and the need for streamlined evaluation. Recognize the role of ATSs and how they benefit both employers and candidates.

✘ DON'T rush into the application

Take the time to prepare your application materials thoroughly. Prioritize perfecting your resume, cover letter, and portfolio before submitting your application.

✔ DO tailor your application to the job

Ensure that your application materials are tailored to the specific job you are applying for. Highlight relevant skills, experiences, and accomplishments that align with the job requirements. Make sure resumes include graduation dates in a standard month and year format. Resumes also should not include acronyms – always spell out organizations or skills for accessibility and clarity.

✘ DON'T neglect the minimum qualifications

Ensure that you meet the minimum qualifications specified in the job listing. ATSs are designed to screen out candidates who do not meet these criteria, so make sure you're qualified for the role before applying.

✔ DO complete all application fields

Fill out all required fields in the application thoroughly and accurately. Incomplete applications may be overlooked or disqualified from consideration.

✘ DON'T solely rely on your resume

While your resume is essential, make sure to enter relevant information into any ATS fields (if applicable) as well. This ensures that your application is complete and validated. Also, always submit a cover letter as part of your application! Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your communication skills and highlight your strong desire for the position!

✔ **DO simplify your text**

When entering text into ATS fields, avoid complex formatting such as bullet points. Organize your information in a clear and concise manner for easy readability. A standard resume format is also suggested. A resume which is built with a template often includes tables, more than one column, etc. These should be avoided as ATSs are designed to read templates as spam.

✘ **DON'T keyword stuff**

Avoid overloading your application with keywords to manipulate the ATS. Focus on presenting your qualifications authentically rather than gaming the system.

✔ **DO keep your information updated after you have created a profile in a company's hiring platform**

Regularly update your information in the ATS, including any new skills, certifications, or experiences you acquire. This increases your chances of being found by employers searching for candidates.

✘ **DON'T submit multiple applications**

Avoid submitting multiple applications for the same job. If you need to make corrections or updates, contact the employer directly instead of submitting duplicate applications.

✔ **DO follow application instructions**

Carefully follow the instructions provided in the job listing regarding application procedures and required documents. Failure to do so may result in your application being overlooked.

✘ **DON'T neglect your online presence**

Ensure that your online presence, including your Handshake and LinkedIn profiles, and personal website, is professional and up to date. It is likely employers will review your online profiles as part of the hiring process.

✔ **DO be patient**

Understand that the hiring process can take time. Continue to follow up on your application.

✘ **DON'T give up**

Persistence is key in the job search process. Keep applying to relevant positions, refining your approach, and networking within the industry.