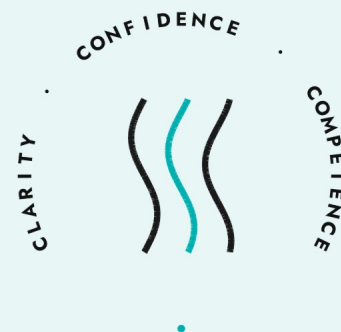


Why Your Resume Isn't Getting Interviews



The top 10 things nobody is telling you

THE REALITY CHECK

You can have 15 years of flawless executive results, but if your resume is built for human eyes only, the system can scramble it or bury it so deep that no human ever gets to it.

The ATS isn't an evil sentient AI holding a grudge. It's a database. If you don't know how to feed it, you disappear in seconds.

And yes, ATS bias is real. Just not the way you've been told.

These ten truths come from recruiter research, hiring studies, and what job seekers keep saying in their own communities. Read them, fix what you can, and if you want a second set of eyes on your resume, that's what I'm here for.

1 The robot isn't rejecting you. The volume is.

In Enhancv's interviews, 23 of 25 recruiters said their ATS doesn't auto-reject resumes over formatting. Popular roles can draw hundreds of applicants, and some employers start reviewing, or stop accepting, applications once they have a strong pool.

Do this: Set up job alerts for your target titles and companies so you can apply while a posting is fresh. Then follow up with a short note to the recruiter or hiring manager so a person knows you applied.

2 Screening questions can determine who moves forward.

Applicant tracking systems like Workday, Taleo, Greenhouse, and Lever help employers manage applications. Depending on how an employer configures its hiring process, certain screening questions may automatically determine whether a candidate advances. Requirements involving work authorization, credentials, or location can sometimes eliminate otherwise qualified applicants.

Do this: Read every screening question carefully and answer truthfully. Make sure your resume clearly demonstrates how you meet the position's stated requirements.

3 AI screening can introduce new challenges with hiring bias.

AI-assisted hiring tools can help employers manage large applicant pools, but they aren't automatically free from bias. Research has identified situations where certain AI models produced different results based on characteristics associated with race or gender. The concern is how these tools are designed, tested, and used, not that every employer's screening system is discriminatory.

Do this: Don't rely exclusively on online applications. Combine targeted applications with networking, referrals, and direct connections to recruiters or hiring managers whenever possible.

4 You're candidate #412 on page 17

Recruiters search the ATS like Google: "Salesforce" AND "B2B Sales" AND "Director." If they search "Project Management" and your resume says "Managed complex cross-functional initiatives," you may not show up at all. The search matches words, not meaning.

Do this: Mirror the posting's exact words for work you've actually done.

5 Creative job titles make you invisible

Internal titles like "Chief Catalyst" mean nothing to a search for "VP of Operations." Nobody types your company's jargon into a search bar.

Do this: Add the market-standard title next to the real one: "Chief Catalyst (VP of Operations)."

6 Pretty layouts can scramble what the recruiter sees

Columns, text boxes, graphics, and contact info tucked in headers or footers can come through jumbled or missing. That Canva template can bury you.

Do this: Single-column Word file, standard headings, contact info in the body, and a common font like Calibri, Arial, Georgia, or Garamond.

7 Duties don't get calls. Results do.

Recruiters may spend only a few seconds on a first scan. "Responsible for" tells them nothing.

Instead of: "Responsible for ERP implementation." **Write:** "Led 6-month NetSuite ERP migration across 4 business units, cutting month-end close cycle by 4 days and eliminating \$120K in legacy software costs."

Need help turning duties into results? The Career Translator app can help. Try it free at nicoledarby.coach/career-translator.

8 Your resume dates may be telling more of your story than necessary.

Including your entire career history or graduation dates can sometimes draw attention to how long you've been in the workforce rather than the value of your most relevant experience.

Do this: Focus on your most recent 10–15 years of relevant experience, where appropriate. Summarize earlier roles under "Additional Professional Experience" if they strengthen your qualifications, and consider removing graduation years unless requested or required.

9 Generic AI copy blends into the pile

Recruiters are seeing the same polished, empty bullets over and over. If ChatGPT wrote it start to finish, it sounds like everyone else.

Do this: Use AI for a first draft, then add your real numbers, names, and voice.

10 One resume for every job is no resume at all

Sending the same file everywhere is how you end up matching nothing.

Do this: Tailor the top third and your skills section to every role you really want.

Tired of screaming into the ATS black hole?

Your resume shouldn't be a biography. It's a targeted sales document. If you're ready to fix the formatting glitches, optimize for ATS keyword matching, and give hiring managers a reason to call you back, let's restructure your application.

Book a free 20-minute discovery call at nicoledarby.coach

Prefer to learn it yourself? Start the Beat ATS Anxiety course at nicoledarby.coach/beat-ats-anxiety



A note on this guide: Research and community themes gathered October 2026, with Career Cafe's perspective. Hiring systems differ by employer. Not a guarantee of results or legal advice. Career Cafe is not affiliated with any organization named. **Sources:** Enhancecv recruiter interviews (2025); University of Washington AI resume study (2024).