

# Online Applications, ATS, Keywords & Your Resume

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Career Tools Conference  
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# Reality of Application Overload

- ▶ 7.6 million job applications
- ▶ 65,000 openings



# Reality of Application Overload

- ▶ Nearly one million job applications
- ▶ 2,000 openings

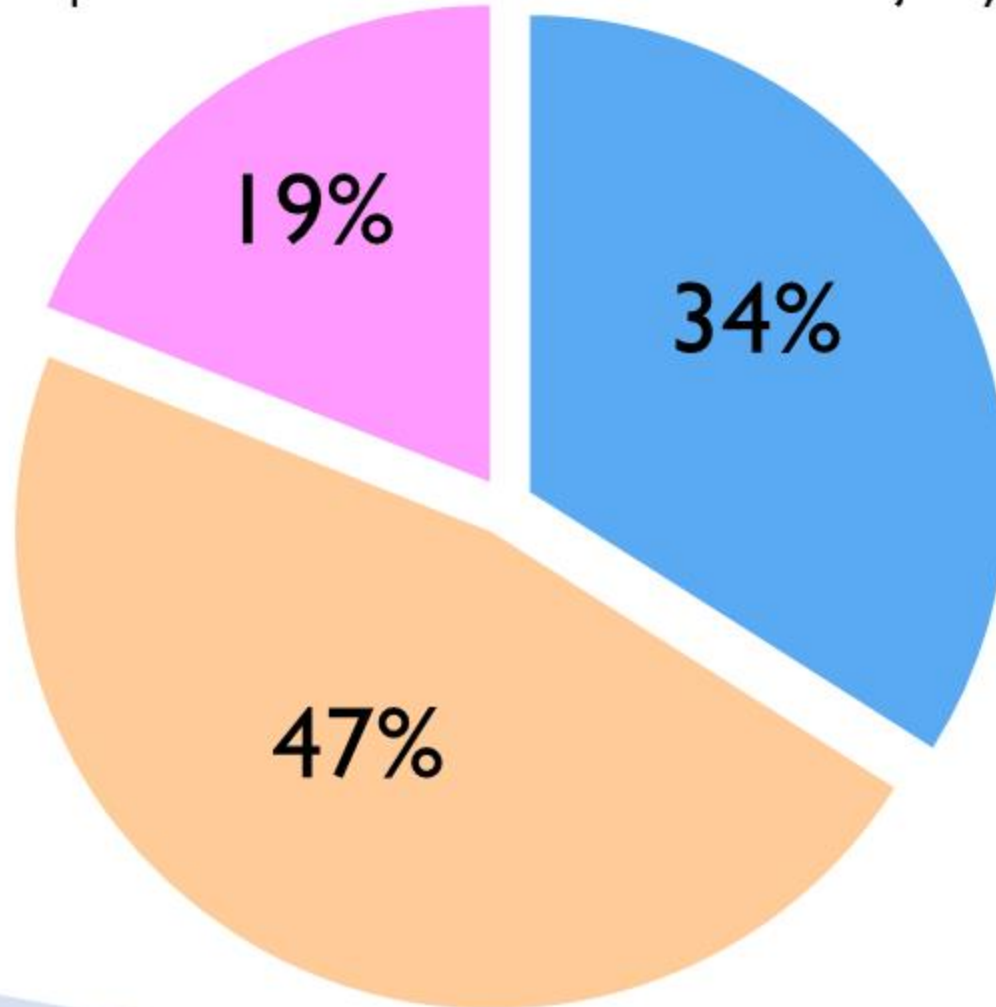
**P&G**

*Procter & Gamble*

# Who Reviews Resumes?

## SMALL COMPANIES

■ Unreported ■ Review Few ■ Review Majority



# What is ATS?

- ▶ Applicant Tracking System
- ▶ Used most often by companies with 100+ employees
- ▶ Cost \$5,000 or more
- ▶ Efficient, not foolproof
- ▶ Screens out poor candidates



# How Do They Work?

- ▶ Scan for keywords and phrases
- ▶ Former employers and experience
- ▶ Rank / score applicants



**Average cost to hire  
one new employee**

**\$3,479**



# Why does ATS Matter?



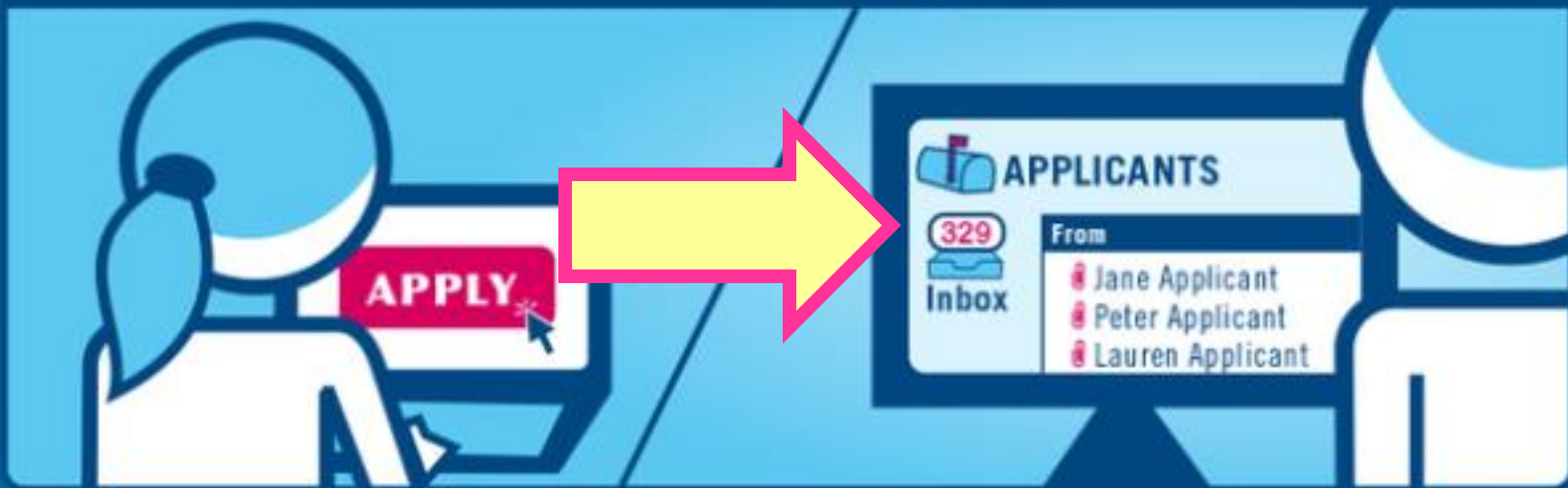
**Computer vs. Human**



# How an Applicant Tracking System Reads YOUR RESUME

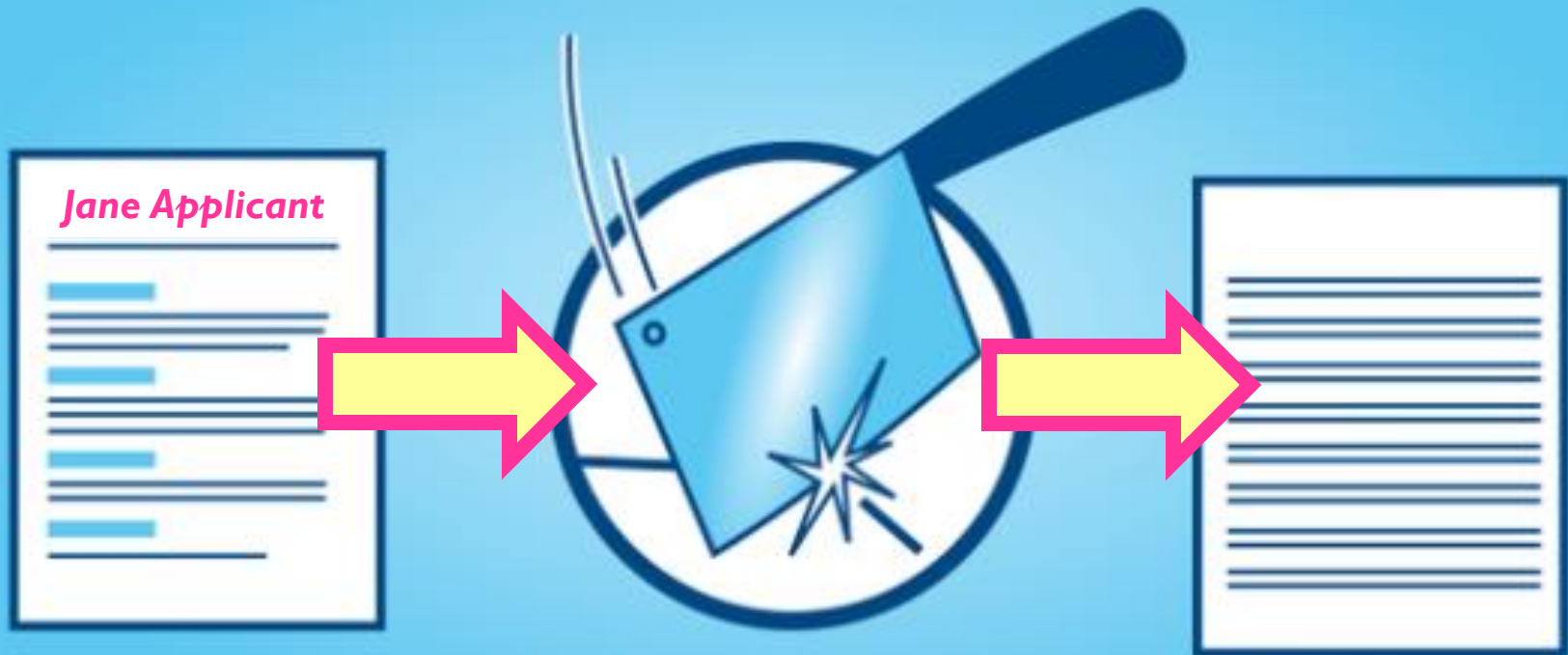
1

HR RECEIVES YOUR RESUME (along with 100's of others)



2

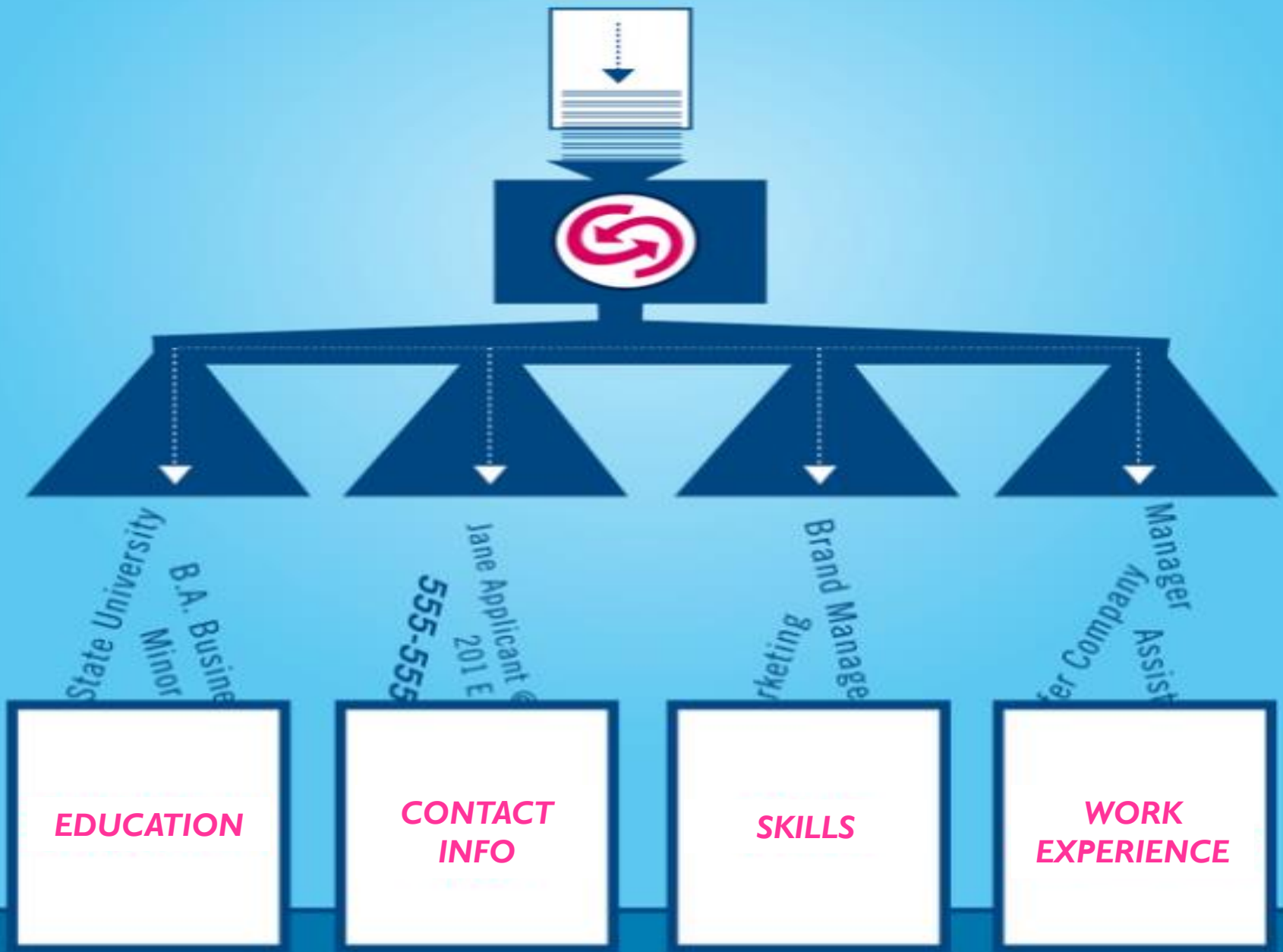
## YOUR RESUME IS RUN THROUGH A “PARSER”



A parser is a computer program that removes styling and breaks down text into recognized strings of characters for further analysis.

3

# THE PARSER ASSIGNS MEANING TO RESUME CONTENT



4

## EMPLOYER USES KEYWORDS TO SEARCH CANDIDATES

Matching terms  
are searched  
from the  
results  
collected in  
Step 3.

SEARCH APPLICANTS

*Administrative Assistant*

Enter Keywords/Skills

***Customize EACH resume to stay in the “IN” pile.***

5

## YOUR RESUME IS SCORED BASED ON RELEVANCY\*



\*Relevancy takes into account semantic matching of employer search terms and the applicant's years of experience.

**REMEMBER: High scores generate interviews!**

Select All

**John Smith**

**10.0**  
match

San Francisco, CA | Bachelor's Degree

● Branch Sales Manager, Assistant Manager and Product Manager

Top Skills	Experience
Revenue Growth	12.7 yrs
Business Development	2.7 yrs
Sales Training	2.7 yrs

**9.3**

**Jane Doe**

## Great Candidate for Sales Manager

Hi Jane, I know that you're looking to fill a Sales Manager position right now, so I thought that this would be a good resume to send you.

Save message as a note

HTML format

Plain Text





“An ‘ability to smell fear’ is a quality I’ve never seen listed on a resume before.”



# How to Beat the “Black Hole”



# #1. Mimic Keywords in Description

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

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The Administrative Assistant performs routine and advanced administrative tasks requiring knowledge of organizational policies and procedures.

### Administrative Assistant Responsibilities:

- \* Prepares and composes correspondence
- \* Answers and directs phone calls
- \* Coordinates and maintains calendars
- \* Greets, assists, and directs visitors

# #1. Mimic Keywords in Description

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- \* **Prepares and composes correspondence**
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- \* **Coordinates and maintains calendars**

# FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

Mequon, WI (Software Development Firm)

Administrative Assistant

*May 1995 to June 2000*

- Managed **routine and advanced administrative tasks** of personal and corporate business for Chairman of the Board, CEO, and Executive VP Operations ensuring 100% confidentiality
- **Prepared and composed correspondence**, researched and maintained consumer relations including **answering and directing phone calls** maintaining 94% customer satisfaction rating
- Managed scheduling for travel, committee, and management meetings, and **coordinated and maintained calendars** to effectively manage time, minimize stress and avoid over-commitment of staff

# #2. Use Simple Formatting

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2002-03 SEASON: RESIDENT LIGHTING DESIGNER,  
FLORIDA TEENY TINY THEATER (SARASOTA, FL)

2000-01 AND 2001-02 SEASONS: RESIDENT LIGHTING DESIGNER,  
TERMITE STAGE COMPANY (WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY)

**AVOID CHARTS & TABLES**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>THEATER</u>	<u>PRODUCTION</u>	<u>DIRECTOR</u>
9/01	TERMITE STAGE	KILLING TIME	G. MARCONI
11/01	TERMITE STAGE	THE COUNTRY GIRL	J. GUTENBERG
8/02	THEATRE PLAY	BEAUTY AND THE BEEPS (WORL PREMIERE)	JAMES WATT
10/02	THEATRE PLAY	EUBIE	BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

# #3. Learn & Anticipate Keywords (What's on their Website?)

## Our expectations

Everything we do shows our passion for children, and employee competence is critical to the safe, high-quality, family-centered care and services we provide. No matter what roles our employees play, our core competencies set the stage for successful employment, a rewarding career and the very best care for children and families.

## Safety

- We eliminate or lessen risks that could harm employees or the children and families we serve.
- We maintain knowledge of safety practices and related skills.
- We report actual and potential safety events.
- We fix situations that place children, families or employees at risk.
- We communicate safety risks beyond our immediate influence.

## Teamwork

- We collaborate effectively with team members that may include co-workers, children, families, volunteers or community members.
- We adopt positive attitudes toward team membership.
- We act as partners to team members.
- We Communicate in ways that build team trust.

## Service excellence

- We place children and families at the center of care and service design and delivery. We serve internal and external customer with respect and appreciation, and recognize that our customers are anyone who receives the results of our work.

# #3. Anticipate Keywords

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# #4. Maximize Your Education

- ▶ List education
- ▶ Include continuing education
- ▶ Coursera.org





# #5. Proofread to Avoid Errors



Says here that  
you're a professional  
**"Booger"**?

**Blogger.**

# Assess Your Knowledge of ATS



**SAMPLE A**

## Education



### **Reedsburg Area High School** **Reedsburg WI - 2002**

Graduated high school while gaining the tools needed to move forward with education at a higher level

### **The University Of Kansas** **Lawrence KS - 2007**

Graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree while majoring in Industrial Design. 3.3 GPA

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## Work Experience



### **Arkin Sales Inc. - Regional Sales Manager** **Reedsburg WI | Kansas City MO - 2007 - Present**

Successfully started and currently run a sales territory representing new and used manufacturing equipment and parts.

### **Nevernorm LLC - Owner/CEO** **Kansas City MO - 2007 - Present**

Currently own and operate a creative company that encompasses multiple profit generating websites, a patent, and some future opportunities for expansion.

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## Skills



Sketching  
Construction  
Model Making  
Fine Art (Painting)  
Marker Rendering

Basic Coding  
All Social Media  
Adobe Photoshop  
Adobe Illustrator

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## Certifications



### **Class A Trucking License** **Trucker Education Class - 2007 - 2047**

Successfully completed work to drive class A, B, and C trucks in the united states



## **Lessons:**

1. Avoid graphics – these can “choke” ATS and sometimes cause them to crash
2. Avoid columns and tables, especially those that read down a column

PDF

SAMPLE B



Adobe





## Lesson:

Never send PDF file of your resume **AS AN IMAGE** ... ATS can misread

# WORK EXPERIENCE

WI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, Redgranite, WI  
RED GRANITE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

**Secretary – Confidential**

May 2008 to present

**SAMPLE C**

- Manage administrative tasks and preparation of confidential correspondence, recording meeting minutes, and research for WI Administrative Code as applicable to inmate issues
- Coordinate training and facilitate workshops on Evidence Based Practices for more than 1,000 Department of Corrections staff
- Develop lesson plans and conduct in-house training for 200 staff on Microsoft 2010 Outlook, Word, and Excel



## Lessons:

1. Easy to read text,  
clean, white space  
between bullet points,  
no fancy type fonts.

2. Proper label  
“WORK  
EXPERIENCE”



# WORK EXPERIENCE

WI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, Redgranite, WI  
RED GRANITE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

**Secretary – Confidential**

May 2002 to present

**SAMPLE D**

- Manage administrative tasks and preparation of confidential correspondence, recording meeting minutes, and research for WI Administrative Code as applicable to inmate issues
- Coordinate training and facilitate workshops on Evidence Based Practices for more than 1,000 Department of Corrections staff
- Develop lesson plans and conduct in-house training on Microsoft 2010 Outlook, Word, and Excel

# Lessons:



1. Use keywords from job posting - repeat when appropriate!

*Seven Keyword phrases were pulled from the job posting from “Sample D” resume*

- 1 “Wisconsin Department of Corrections”
- 2 “Secretary”
- 3 “preparation of confidential correspondence” ... confidential appears twice
- 4 “recording meeting minutes”
- 5 “inmate issues”
- 6 “Evidence based practices”
- 7 “Microsoft 2010 Outlook, Word, and Excel”

# EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

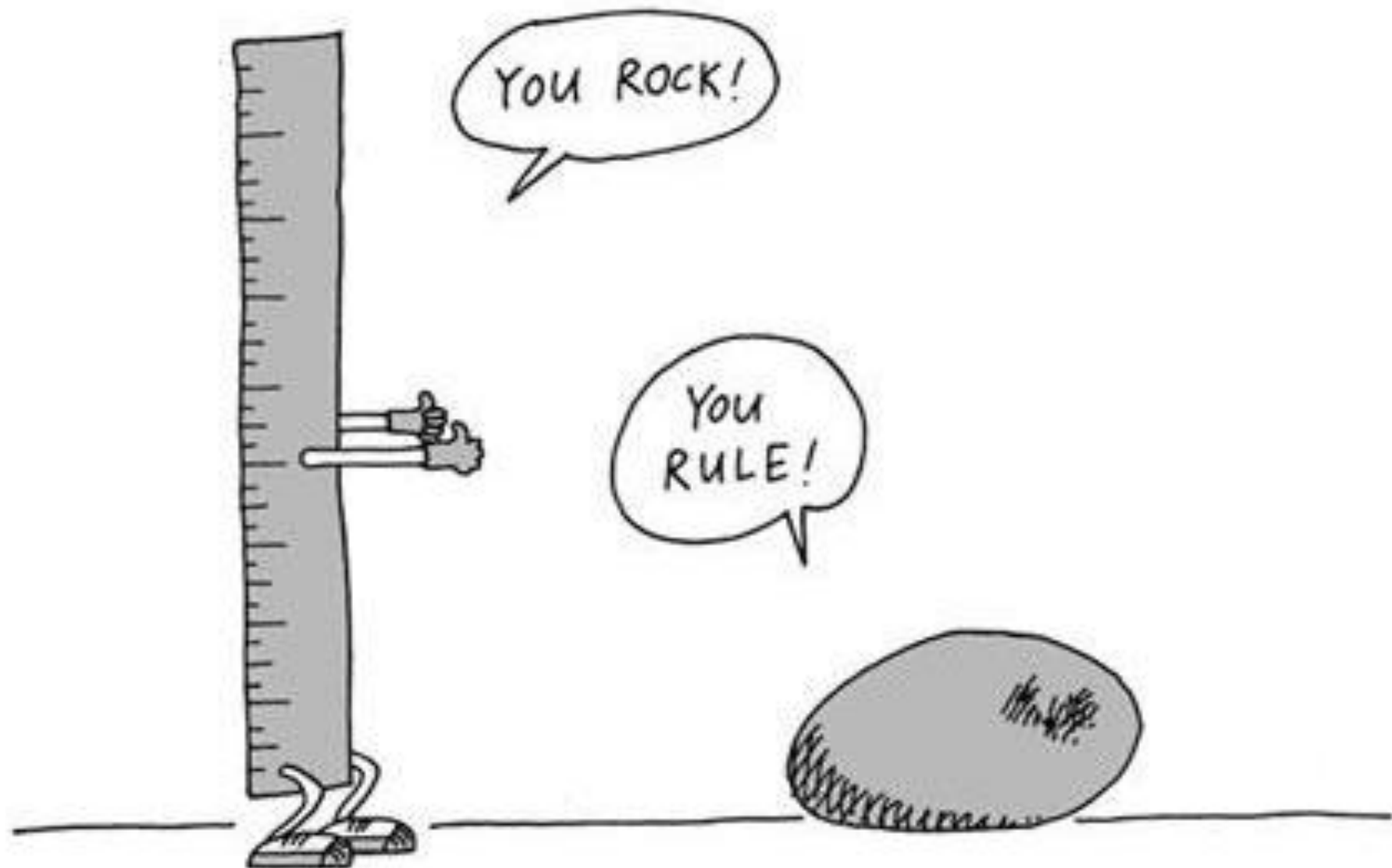
- Notary Public for the State of Wisconsin; commission expires May 2017
- International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP): Certified Administrative Professional & Organizational Management (CAP-OM); certified 2002, recertified in 2007 and 2012
- Carroll College, Waukesha, WI. Bachelor of Science: Communication Management with Minors in Business Administration and English-Liberal Arts, Graduated May 2002

**SAMPLE E**



## **Lessons:**

1. Bullet items are properly listed in reverse chronological order.
2. Appropriate grouping: “Education & Certifications”



Jonny Bevan

# Resources

## **“5 Insider Secrets for Beating Applicant Tracking Systems”**

by Meredith Levinson, 3/12/2012

<http://www.cio.com/article/701272>

## **“How Can I Make Sure My Resume Gets Past Resume Robots and into a Human’s Hand?”**

by Melanie Pinola, 12/9/2011

<http://lifehacker.com/5866630>

## **Wall Street Journal/Career**

“Software Raises Bar for Hiring” by David Wessel, 5/31/2012

“Your Résumé vs. Oblivion. Inundated Companies Resort to Software to Sift Job Applications for Right Skills” by Lauren Weber, 1/24/2012

“Seeking Software Fix for Job-Search Game” by Lauren Weber, 6/5/2012