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Mployee.me Research

# ATS Score Benchmark Report 2026

How job seekers are adopting ATS checkers and why 85%+ is becoming the competitive resume-readiness norm in India

| | |
|---|---|
| Report focus | ResuScan-focused: ATS checker adoption, score trends, candidate benchmark validation, and readiness benchmarking |
| Geography | India |
| Data period | August 2023 to April 2026; May 2026 excluded from summary metrics |
| Public data disclosure | Only aggregate summary metrics are disclosed. Underlying company datasets, source scan tables, and complete internal records are retained privately. |
| Report version | DOI-ready public aggregate draft \| Prepared May 2026 |

**Core claim**

In 2026, job-search success is shifting from random application volume to ATS readiness, job-role relevance, and consistent execution.

## Abstract

This report focuses on the candidate side of AI-filtered hiring: how job seekers are becoming more ATS-aware, how ATS checker usage reflects a new resume-readiness behavior, and why 85%+ ATS score should be treated as the competitive norm before applying at scale.

The dataset covers August 2023 to April 2026 with 33 score-summary records. Total scans, excluding May 2026, were 734,492 on an aggregate basis. This public version reports aggregate and summary findings only; complete company datasets and source scan tables are retained internally as proprietary original data.

Average ATS score increased from 30.41 in August 2023 to 52.37 in April 2026, a gain of 21.96 points or 72.2%. The score trend was strong at +0.77 points per month with R2 = 0.898.

To identify a practical ATS-score target, mployee.me also reviewed a 200-candidate observational validation sample with ATS scores ranging from 50% to 95%. Candidates at the 85%+ readiness level showed an observed employer response rate of up to 3%-5%, supporting 85%+ as the target standard for serious applicants.

The report connects ResuScan's ATS checker data to broader hiring-market changes. Employer-side research shows growing use of LLMs and AI in early hiring stages, while external labor-market research shows increasing AI use among recruiters and job seekers. ResuScan data adds the missing candidate-side signal: job seekers are not only aware of ATS systems; they are actively checking and improving their resumes.


### Key data points

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **33**<br>Score-summary records | **734,492**<br>Total scans, aggregate only | **200**<br>Candidate validation sample |
| **52.37**<br>Latest score, Apr 2026 | **21.96 pts / 72.2%**<br>Score increase | **3%-5%**<br>Observed response at 85%+ |

## 1. Why ATS Checkers matter in 2026?

ATS checkers are becoming a candidate-side response to employer-side automation. The scoping review by Tripathi et al. shows that LLMs in hiring are concentrated in early pipeline stages including screening, ranking, summarization, and assessment [1]. For job seekers, that means resume readability and role alignment now matter before a human review begins.

The regulatory context also matters. The European Commission describes the AI Act as a risk-based framework for AI and identifies AI tools for employment, worker management, and access to self-employment, including CV-sorting software for recruitment, as high-risk use cases [6]. Annex III of the EU AI Act specifically includes AI systems intended for recruitment or selection, placing targeted job advertisements, analysing and filtering job applications, and evaluating candidates [7]. Although this report's dataset is India-focused, the AI Act illustrates how resume screening and candidate evaluation are becoming governance-sensitive use cases globally.

SHRM's 2025 AI-in-HR research reports that recruiting is the HR area where organizations most commonly use AI, with common use cases including generating job descriptions, screening resumes, automating candidate searches, and

communicating with applicants [8]. LinkedIn's 2026 research also reported major expected growth in recruiter AI use and AI-enabled pre-screening [3].

This creates a practical behavior change: candidates are using ATS checkers not as a cosmetic resume tool, but as a readiness checkpoint. ResuScan data shows that this behavior is scaling.

## 2. Dataset and method

| Item | Description |
|---|---|
| Dataset period | August 2023-April 2026 |
| Records analyzed | 33 score-summary records |
| Excluded row | May 2026 excluded from summary metrics and charts |
| Primary public metrics | Average ATS score, aggregate total ATS scans, score trend summary, and candidate benchmark validation |
| Public scan disclosure | 734,492 total scans disclosed only as an aggregate figure; source scan tables and complete internal records are withheld as proprietary company data |
| Latest included score | 52.37 in April 2026 |
| Primary trend metric | Linear score trend slope: +0.77 points/month; R2 = 0.898 |
| Benchmark validation | 200-candidate observational sample; ATS scores ranged from 50% to 95%; 85%+ candidates showed an observed employer response rate of up to 3%-5% |

## 3. Finding 1: Average ATS scores have risen sharply

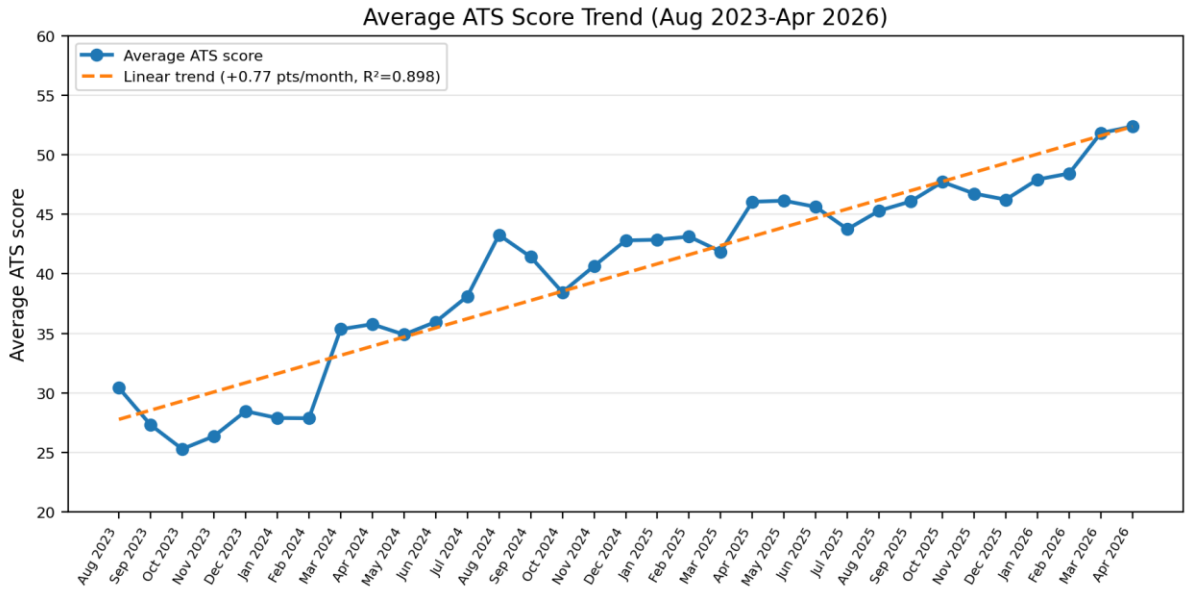

*Figure 1. Average ATS score rose by 21.96 points, or 72.2%, from August 2023 to April 2026.*

The trend is not a short-term spike. A fitted trend line explains most of the movement in average score across the observed period (R2 = 0.898), indicating a persistent upward shift in resume readiness.

This is the candidate-side counterpart to employer-side AI adoption. As recruiters use ATS and AI to process applications, candidates use ATS checkers to improve parseability, keyword alignment, and role-specific positioning.

## 4. Finding 2: 85%+ ATS score is supported by candidate validation

To identify which ATS score should be treated as a practical industry-readiness target, mployee.me reviewed an observational validation sample of 200 candidates. The sample included candidates with ATS scores ranging from 50% to 95%.

The clearest performance signal appeared at the 85%+ readiness level. Candidates at or above 85% ATS score showed an observed employer response rate of up to 3%-5%, especially when applications were aligned to relevant roles.

This finding does not mean 85% is the statistical average. It means 85%+ is the practical target candidates should aim for before applying at scale, because it represents a stronger readiness band in an AI-filtered application environment.

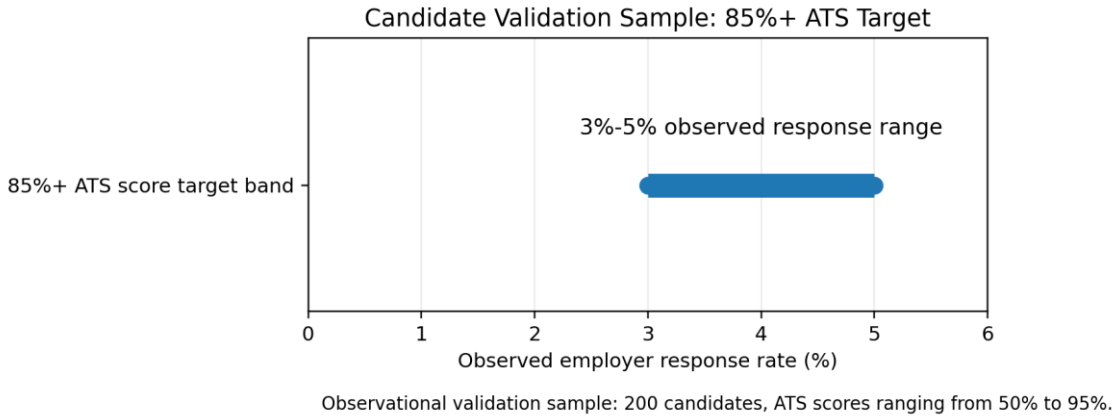


*Figure 2. In a 200-candidate observational validation sample, the 85%+ ATS score band showed an observed employer response rate of up to 3%-5%.*

## 5. Why 85%+ is the new competitive ATS norm?

The latest average ATS score in the dataset is 52.37. That does not mean 85% is the average. It means 85% is the new competitive norm - the readiness level candidates should target before applying at scale in an AI-filtered market.

The benchmark logic is as follows: if the market average has shifted upward by 72.2%, a candidate at 50% is no longer ahead of the market. They are close to the emerging baseline. To stand out, a candidate needs a resume that is clearly above the baseline and strong enough to support role-specific matching.

The 200-candidate validation sample strengthens the benchmark recommendation: candidates in the 85%+ band showed up to 3%-5% observed employer response rate, making 85%+ a practical readiness standard rather than an arbitrary score target.

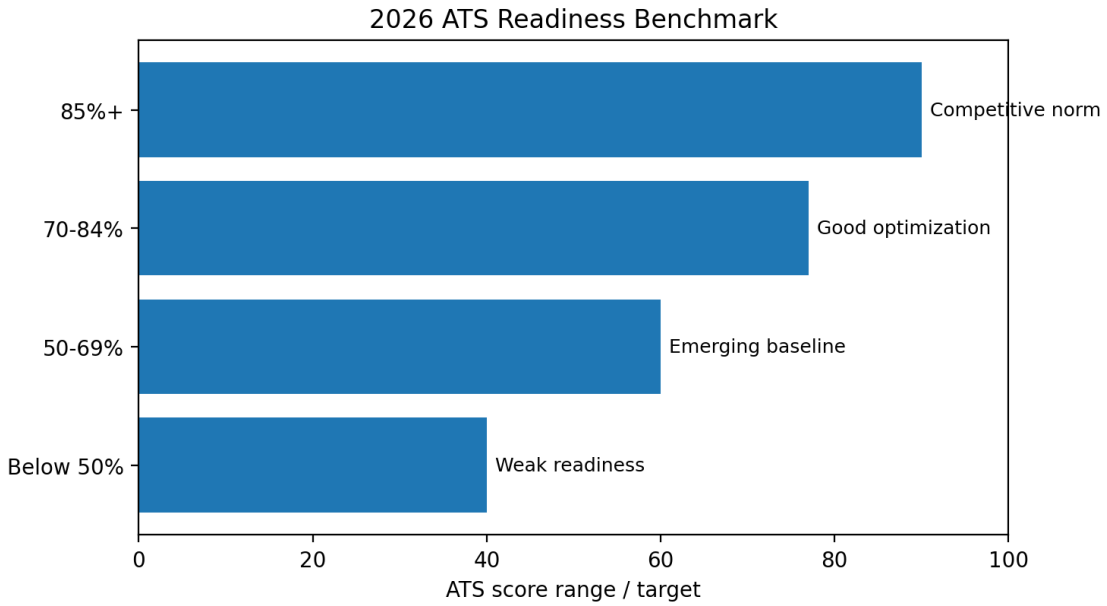


*Figure 3. Proposed ATS readiness benchmark for 2026. 85%+ represents competitive readiness, not the statistical average.*

| Benchmark level | Interpretation | ResuScan recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| Below 50% | Weak readiness; low parseability or limited role alignment. | Fix structure, keywords, and formatting before applying. |
| 50-69% | Close to emerging market baseline. | Use ResuScan feedback to improve role-specific fit. |
| 70-84% | Good but not yet top-tier in a more optimized market. | Tailor to target roles and close missing keyword gaps. |
| 85%+ | Competitive norm for serious job seekers. | Ready for scaled applications to high-match jobs. |

## 6. Validation interpretation: Score readiness works best with relevant applications

The 200-candidate validation should be interpreted as observational evidence, not as a randomized controlled trial. It shows that 85%+ ATS readiness is a stronger pre-application standard when candidates also apply to relevant roles.

The result also clarifies what an ATS checker can and cannot do. It cannot guarantee a response, interview, or offer. It can help ensure that a resume is structured, readable, and role-aligned enough to compete before the candidate starts applying at scale.

For ResuScan, this validates ATS checking as the first layer of job-search readiness: scan first, improve the resume honestly, reach the 85%+ target, then apply to high-match jobs and track outcomes.

## 7. The ResuScan Readiness loop

**Scan -> Diagnose -> Rewrite -> Tailor -> Rescan -> Apply to high-match roles**

| Stage | What the candidate should do | Success signal |
|---|---|---|
| Scan | Upload resume and get ATS score. | Baseline score known. |
| Diagnose | Identify missing keywords, formatting issues, weak sections, or unclear skill evidence. | Clear list of fixes. |
| Rewrite | Improve achievements, role keywords, structure, and measurable outcomes. | Score improves without adding false claims. |
| Tailor | Create versions for target roles and job families. | Role relevance increases. |
| Rescan | Check again until ready. | Target 85%+. |
| Apply | Apply to matched jobs and track employer response rate. | Response rate can be evaluated over a defined application period. |

## 8. Implications for Job Seekers

The 2026 job seeker must treat ATS readiness as a measurable pre-application step. Applying with a weak or average score wastes time because the resume may fail before role fit is even evaluated.

| Candidate question | Old job-search behavior | 2026 behavior |
|---|---|---|
| Is my resume ready? | Ask a friend or use a generic template. | Measure ATS score and target 85%+. |
| Which jobs should I apply to? | Apply to many jobs randomly. | Apply to high-match roles only. |
| How do I measure progress? | Count applications submitted. | Track employer response rate and profile-role fit. |
| When should I revise? | Only after long periods without results. | After every defined application batch or when score/match is weak. |

## Conclusion

ResuScan data shows a clear candidate-side shift. Over 33 score-summary records, average ATS score increased by 21.96 points, or 72.2%, while aggregate total scans reached 734,492. The public report shares only aggregate and summary metrics, while complete company datasets remain private.

The 200-candidate validation sample supports 85%+ as the new competitive norm. Candidates in the 85%+ ATS score band showed up to 3%-5% observed employer response rate, especially when applications were aligned to relevant roles.

The core message is simple: do not apply first and optimize later. Scan first, reach 85%+, then apply to relevant roles.

## Limitations

This report combines internal platform data, aggregate scan totals, score-summary metrics, and an observational candidate validation sample. The validation sample was not a randomized controlled trial. Response rates may vary by industry, role, location, salary expectation, notice period, candidate profile strength, and hiring cycle timing.

The 85% ATS score recommendation should be interpreted as a competitive readiness benchmark. It is not a guarantee of employer response, interview selection, or job offer. ATS score is most valuable when paired with role relevance, authentic skills evidence, and consistent application tracking.

Underlying company datasets and source scan tables are proprietary original data. This public report intentionally limits disclosure to aggregate totals, score-summary metrics, and aggregated validation findings.

## References and source notes

[1] Tripathi, A., Tripathi, A., Darena, F., & Mishra, P. K. (2026). Mapping the use of large language models in hiring decisions: a scoping review. Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence, 9, 1798519. DOI: 10.3389/frai.2026.1798519. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/artificial-intelligence/articles/10.3389/frai.2026.1798519/full

Source use: The review maps LLM use across hiring stages and identifies concentration in screening, interviewing, ranking, summarization, and assessment tasks.

[2] Figshare supplementary file: Data Sheet 1 - Mapping the use of large language models in hiring decisions: a scoping review. Record: 31772953.
https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/Data_Sheet_1_Mapping_the_use_of_large_language_models_in_hiring_decisions_a_scoping_review_pdf/31772953?file=62867512

Source use: Supplementary dataset referenced for the employer-side LLM hiring literature map.

[3] LinkedIn Corporate Communications. (2026). LinkedIn Research: Nearly 80% of people feel unprepared to find a job in 2026. https://news.linkedin.com/2026/LinkedIn-Research-Talent-2026

Source use: Reported global growth in recruiter AI use and job seeker AI adoption.

[4] People Matters. (2026). Applicants per job double in India, intensifying job search pressure: LinkedIn. https://www.peoplematters.in/news/recruiting-and-onboarding/applicants-per-job-double-in-india-intensifying-job-search-pressure-linkedin-47949

Source use: Reported India-specific LinkedIn findings on applicants per role and recruiter difficulty finding qualified talent.

[5] The Indian Express. (2026). 72% of Indians seek a job change, but only 16% feel prepared. https://indianexpress.com/article/education/india-job-market-2026-27-gen-z-boomer-worker-unprepared-ai-takeover-workforce-linkedin-report-data-10461008__trashed-10461034/

Source use: Reported India-specific LinkedIn findings on job seeker AI adoption.

[6] European Commission. AI Act overview. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai

Source use: Provides the official European Commission overview of the AI Act, its risk-based approach, and high-risk employment examples including CV-sorting software for recruitment.

[7] EU AI Act, Annex III summary and text - high-risk systems in employment, recruitment, application filtering, and candidate evaluation. https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/annex/3/

Source use: Provides Annex III text identifying recruitment, job-application filtering, and candidate evaluation AI systems as high-risk employment-related use cases.

[8] SHRM. (2025). The Role of AI in HR Continues to Expand. https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/research/2025-talent-trends/ai-in-hr

Source use: Reports organizational use of AI in recruiting, including resume screening and candidate search.

[9] World Economic Forum. (2025). Future of Jobs Report 2025. https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/

Source use: Provides broader labor market context on skills transformation and employer workforce strategies.

[10] World Economic Forum. (2025). The future of jobs in India: employers seek to boost tech talent to drive AI and digital growth. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/04/the-future-of-jobs-in-india-employers-seek-to-boost-tech-talent-to-drive-ai-and-digital-technology-growth/

Source use: Provides India-specific labor-market context and skills-based hiring transition.

[11] LinkedIn Talent Solutions. (2025). The Future of Recruiting 2025. https://business.linkedin.com/hire/resources/future-of-recruiting

Source use: Provides recruiting and quality-of-hire context.