

## **New Grad Job Searches**

### **General Suggestions**

- Read all relevant design publications, i.e.: Communication Arts, Print Magazine, Graphis, How, Archive, European Magazines and Graphic Design USA.
- Become a member of AIGA and attend meetings.
- Learn to recognize work by major leaders in the design industry.
- Research any company before interviewing there.
- Read the papers, stay informed about what is going on in the world.
- The more “rounded” you are the better a designer you can be- learn about history; go to museums, galleries and concerts.
- Have knowledge about the company you are interviewing at.
- Constantly work on improving your writing skills.
- Be a conceptual thinker.
- Have excellent communication skills.
- Build portfolios that show thought, originality and ideas.
- Be fluent in both video and print technologies.
- Understand the business of design.

## **Cover Letter, Resume, Portfolio and Interview Tips**

### **Cover Letter**

- Cover letters should be brief and kept to one page.
- Explain why you are sending your resume (response to an ad, referral by someone, etc.).
- Give an overview of your qualifications and experience, and include your current location and salary information.
- Call in advance to see who would be the appropriate person to address the resume to (if two names are mentioned, send a letter to both people).

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## **Resume**

- Resumes must be professional, readable, informative, and grammatically correct.
- Focus on your skills and your accomplishments.
- Order, clarity and brevity are all equally important.

A classic resume will have the following subsections:

### **Objective or Summary of Experience**

You may consider using a brief introduction or a statement of your career goals at the top of your resume to help focus the reader.

### **Professional Experience**

Outline your professional experience in reverse chronological order. Include: dates of employment, names of employers, location, position and brief description of responsibilities. Do not assume that everyone knows the companies you have worked for. Describe them for the reader “small design office”, “industrial design firm” and “cosmetic manufacturer”. Avoid listing short term, temporary employment unless it is relevant to the position you are seeking. Indicate supervisory roles, reporting relationships. Be specific. Name clients. Use professional titles (Architect, Senior Designer, Art Director, Design Director, Project Manager, etc.). Recent graduates should list at least one relevant summer employment experience and significant freelance projects.

### **Education**

Give dates of attendance, degree(s) received, name of University or College and areas of concentration in reverse chronological order. Include your high school only if it was geared to your professional objective. Never claim to have a degree that you do not actually have.

### **Awards and Honors**

If you have taken additional courses or attended school since receiving your professional degree, include any relevant information as well as the names of any exhibits, awards, etc.

### **Personal Information**

Remember that it is against the law for prospective employers to ask questions about: age, marital status, religion, sex, race, military service or health status before hiring somebody.

### **Other Information**

Include special language skills, interests and talents. List computer knowledge and software programs. List professional affiliations, activities in professional organizations, articles or works published, conferences or seminars you were involved in and professional licenses you may have.

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### **Portfolio**

- Balance the pieces that you feel best represent your strengths with the needs and tastes of the company with whom you are interviewing.
- Include neatly organized concept sketches, roughs and comps (bound format is ideal).
- Label the outside and inside of your portfolio with identification tags, however it is not necessary to label each piece. Loose portfolio pieces should be labeled with your name to avoid being misplaced or lost.
- Select appropriate size and weight, and remember "small" can be very powerful.
- Consider the order of your portfolio, start and end with your strongest pieces.
- Constantly reevaluate and update your portfolio.

### **Client Interview**

- Let the person conducting the interview set the time (if possible, of course).
- Aim to arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. Call in advance if you are running late.
- Call the day before the interview to confirm, especially if the appointment was made weeks prior.
- Bring extra copies of your resume.
- Bring additional portfolio material, written material, samples, etc., making sure that each piece looks clean and professional.
- Let the person interviewing you take the lead with the conversation.
- Be prepared to discuss your strengths, weaknesses, the kind of work you are most interested in, and specific examples from your past work experience.
- Introduce the subject of salary at the end of the interview.

### **\*Interview Follow-Up:**

- After any interview, send a simple and sincere thank you letter to the people you have met.
- Even if you are not interested in the position for which you interviewed, send a thank you letter anyway.
- The thank you letter should reiterate your understanding of the position.

### **Important On-the-Job Skills**

- Learn about time management.
- Learn how to conduct yourself in meetings.
- Learn how to do a time sheet, budget and expenses.
- Avoid sloppiness, laziness and be punctual.
- Learn about Marketing, Strategy and Research in design
- Strengthen your communications skills
- Stay abreast of your clients business
- Have a positive, hands-on approach
- Be willing to tough it out (starting out takes sweat and perseverance)

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