Is An Online Portfolio Necessary For Job Seekers?

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In the heart of the digital age, the standard paper resume still holds its ground. However, when a resume leaves you with little to no room to showcase your creativity, consider enhancing it with an online portfolio.

Developing an online portfolio is one of the best ways to begin showcasing your talents and differentiate yourself from other job candidates. Resumes can be great initial indicators of a candidate's qualifications, but with the influx of applications, employers need to literally see your work and accomplishments to paint an accurate picture of the role you can potentially play. Bring a new dimension to your resume by considering the following ways to create an online portfolio that is a step ahead of the game:

1. Tell your story.
Prior to digitizing your portfolio, think about what it is you want to showcase. Consider your specific audience and what they would want to see and know about you. Your online portfolio is visual proof of your accomplishments, milestones and completed projects. To enhance this, allow your audience to discover your true character and personality beyond your showcased materials. Viewers should leave your site feeling as if they know the creator behind the displayed work. (Check out an example here.)

2. Choose a platform that is specific to you and your goals.
Another important aspect of making the most out of your online portfolio is the platform you choose. There are countless hosts for work portfolios online, but the key is to find one specific to your career goals. Be sure to explore your options before settling on a platform. For example, if you are a tech-savvy job candidate seeking corporate employment and are not looking for a platform that is solely image-based, then WorkSimple may be a great option for you. For creative professionals looking to show off their work like design and illustration, you might want to check out Carbonmade.

3. Go above and beyond.
Your online portfolio should include your contact information, resume, cover letter, reference, certifications, transcripts, and your work including writing samples, press clips, artwork, or lesson plans. Once you have included all of your materials, explain the goals and relevance of each project. Sharing insight with your audience is part of your story and the added touch is very valuable to any candidate marketing strategy.

4. Share.
An online portfolio without self-promotion is stuck at a standstill. Utilize social media to spread the word. You can do this by taking advantage of active links in your social media bios connecting potential employers to your online portfolio. All of your application materials should refer back to your online portfolio URL to boost traffic. The more eyes on your portfolio, the more chances you have to get noticed.

5. Sell yourself.
When you have completed filling in the content for your online portfolio and the story behind it, ask a third party's opinion of the message you are communicating. Your online portfolio is an enhancement to your resume, but both should have a common goal: to sell the best product and the best product is YOU. It is your job to ignite a connection between you and your audience and to present your material in the most powerful way.