Resume Tips for Designers

Career & Internship Services
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The information provided in this handout is a compliment to the Career and Internship Services Resume Writing Handout. Be sure to review that handout as well to get great tips on how to write strong bullet statements and how to format common resume categories such as education, experience and activities.

Common Resume Categories for Design Majors

Projects

Classroom projects can be very relevant experiences to put on your resume, especially if you haven't yet completed an internship. Include the project name, semester and either the course name or the college. You can also include bullets that explain what skills you used.

EXAMPLE:

Bachman's Holiday Project   College of Design, University of Minnesota   Fall 2021

- Collaborated with a team of 4 students to design and construct a holiday themed formal gown using materials from the Bachman's store
- Conducted extensive research about the company and target market to inform the design process
- Presented final product to Bachman's representatives, students, faculty and local television media

Shows/Achievements/Exhibitions

If your work has been displayed in an exhibit or show, it is appropriate to include this on your resume. Include the show name, location and date. You can also include bullet statements to explain the project if space allows.

EXAMPLE:

Twin Cities Chocolate Extravaganza, Minneapolis, Minnesota   November 2021

- Designed and constructed a formal gown inspired by chocolate and milk chocolate embellishments

Design Skills/Technical Skills/Computer Skills

Employers seek students with technical and design skills. If you have not mentioned them within your experiences or education section, you may want to include them as a bulleted list in a skills related section.

EXAMPLE:

Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Illustrator, AutoCAD, Sketch Up

Hand drafting, rendering and 3-dimensional drawing techniques

Space planning experience in residential and commercial design

Resume Design Elements

Employers in the design industries expect you to have a resume that shows your design style in an interesting but subtle way. Therefore, you should never use a template when creating a resume for a design field. Below are some tips for making a visually interesting, yet functional resume.

Font
A strong design resume starts with good typography:
- Avoid overused default typeface such as Times New Roman
- Small font can be tempting to designers, but remember that not all people have great vision.
- Typically your font should not go below 10 point in your resume.

Color
Color can be used on a resume, but keep the following guidelines in mind:
- All colors used should be dark so that text doesn't fade if the resume is copied or faxed.
- Limit the number of colors used so that your resume doesn't become too busy or distracting.
- Remember that color will grab attention, so use color to draw attention to key headings or titles.

Images/Thumbnails/Graphics
It is common for designers to incorporate personal logos, thumbnails of work and/or other graphic elements into a resume. This can be a successful way to add interest to your materials. A few tips to make the most of these elements in your resume:
- Use only a few images or graphics, having too many can detract from your other content.
- Make sure the images are big enough to be useful; select simple images that maintain clarity when reduced to small sizes.
- Avoid having images behind resume text – this can make it difficult to read and may cause information to be lost if your resume is copied or faxed.

Paper Type and Paper Size
Using interesting paper types and sizes may something you are considering to make yourself stand out as a candidate. A few tips to make sure this is successful:
- Choose sizes that are easy to file and easy to photocopy. Oversized documents that do not easily file will often be tossed.
- Use sturdy paper in lighter colors that will look presentable when copied in black and white.
- Consider creating the design elements that appear on your resume, rather than selecting stationary with design elements within it.

Branding Your Application
Once you develop a great resume with solid content and a strong design aesthetic, be sure to incorporate your "brand" into all elements of your application including:
- Cover Letters
- References
- Business Cards
- Thank You Notes
- Portfolios
- Leave-behinds