

EDUCATE YOURSELF

DO WELL IN SCHOOL

- Focus on perfecting your portfolio.
 - Check spelling (No typos!) and kerning and leading consistency
 - Sweat the small details, i.e. objects lining up, no widows, etc.
 - Printing and mockups look as professional as possible
- Take as many web classes as you can.
- Learn about freelance opportunities and take them.
- Have an internship and create “real” work for your portfolio.
- Learn production skills (how to prepare print-ready files).

SEARCH

FIND COMPANIES

- Look on job boards. (AIGA, Ad Fed, Creative Hotlist, Coroflot, Behance, Krop, Craigslist, google searches)
- Look on social networks and follow, friend or become a fan of companies (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)
- Browse Print, Communication Arts and other design publications.
- Where do their employees hang out?
 - Go to paper shows, Addy awards, AIGA and networking events
 - Get involved in industry related organizations
 - Ask if anyone would be willing to review your portfolio
- Make a list and prioritize the list according to your qualifications.
 - Consider small vs. large firms
 - In-house designer vs. agency designer



PREPARE

COVER LETTER / EMAIL

- Mention how you found the company/what's unique about them and you. You might mention some of their projects that you particularly like and why.
- Make it creative and personal.
- Keep it short and sweet. Not too much information.
- Be sure to note that you will also do freelance or contract work, and if they aren't currently hiring that you would just appreciate a portfolio review.
- Include your contact info in a custom signature.

RESUME

- Call to see who to address your resume to.
- Keep it simple, one page.
- Show type skills, not too many graphical elements.
- Do not include high school stuff.
- Do not include your cover letter in the pdf file with your resume.
- Keep your resume pdf separate from any other pdfs you might send.
- Label your pdf appropriately: Name_resume.pdf

PORTFOLIO

- Create a portfolio pdf with your top 5-7 pieces. Send this along with your resume and a link to your website. Label it appropriately and include your contact info. Make sure the PDF file size is no more than 5MB.
- Websites are where it's at. Make your site sell you. Show off additional web skills.
- If you can't make your own website, consider Behance, AIGA, Coroflot, Flickr, etc.
- Show people that you can make good work, or at least have the potential to make good work.
- For your actual portfolio, show 10-15 pieces.
 - If you're not sure you should include it, don't include it.
 - Make it unique, durable.
 - Make a leave behind that matches your portfolio/resume/website.
 - Leave a business card that matches your portfolio/resume/website.
 - If you have other creative talents or interests, find a way to include them.



INTERACT

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Bring a copy of your resume and business cards.
- Show that you are passionate about design.
- Know the company you're interviewing with.
 - Know the Creative Directors, President, Vice Presidents, Group Creative Directors and history of any company you interview with (all of this can almost always be found on their website).
 - Many times (or if you ask) they'll give you the names of who you're interviewing with. Google that person and find out everything you can about them. You might have a shared interest.
- Learn how to talk about your work (brief explanation of problem and solution). Practice showing your book and be prepared to answer questions.
- Don't draw attention to mistakes or imperfections.
- Pick up on the interviewer's speed. Are they in a hurry? If so, move quickly and don't take this as a bad sign.
- Let them scroll through your portfolio at their leisure.
- Dress nice but no suits.
- Don't be intimidated, be personable. Keep in mind you're interviewing them just as much as they're interviewing you.
- Inquire about others looking to hire if they are not currently hiring.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a custom thank you card. It should match your portfolio/resume/website.
- Post a note on Twitter saying how nice it was to meet them and include their Twitter username.
- Continue to learn about the industry.
 - Keep up with industry blogs, papers, etc.
 - If you want to work at a large agency it's important to know who owns who, who the big players are, etc.
 - Know what current work is making a big splash and why.
- Stay in touch with everyone you meet so that when an availability is open, you pop into their mind.
- Remember the names of those you interviewed with. You never know when you'll bump into them around town.

