

Interview Questions

1. How was your portfolio used when you interviewed for jobs? What questions were you asked? Were there any surprises?
2. Did you get any feedback on your portfolio while interviewing for jobs?
3. How did you practice presenting your portfolio?
4. What did you struggle with most when making your portfolio?
5. What do you think the most important aspect of a portfolio is?
6. Why did you choose the particular writing/design pieces you featured in your portfolio?
7. What do you think employers are looking for in a portfolio?
8. What kinds of job opportunities did you find after graduating as a PW major?
9. How do you think PW prepared you for your job/jobs after graduating?
10. What kinds of writing do you currently do?
11. Do you wish you would have known when you were in my shoes? Would you have done anything differently?
12. Are you happy you decided to be a PW major?
13. Any advice??:)

Interview Answers

1. To be honest, my portfolio wasn't brought up too much when I was interviewing, although I do believe my interviewers did look at it in addition to just my resume. They didn't pull it up or anything, but they would reference things and say, "I noticed you interned for Simon & Schuster and created this, how was that experience?"

2. I didn't get much feedback (sorry, I'm sure this wasn't the answer you were looking for :)) on my portfolio when I was interviewing, again, just that I'm pretty sure my interviewers had probably looked at it based off of a few of their questions.

3. I practiced by walking through each page of my portfolio, talking out loud to myself in my room, how I would present each of my pieces to my employer. I didn't want it to sound like I was reading right off of the screen so I practiced expressing why I chose to write in this way and why I chose to create that particular design element.

4. I think the hardest part for me when creating my portfolio was making sure that it really illustrated that it was mine. I'm sure there are many people like myself who consider themselves to be a writer, editor, and communicator, so I struggled to find the right design and wording to ensure that I was coming across in not only a professional way, but in an accurate way so employers could somewhat tell the kind of person I was from my portfolio. I wanted employers to be able to see that although there are many different individuals out there who have edited manuscripts and worked in groups to create various materials, that they were looking at what Hannah Conlin could do and who she is and would remember that.

5. To piggyback off of what I said in the previous question, I think the most important aspect of a portfolio is to make sure that you are accurately depicted throughout the pages of your portfolio. You

want employers to remember you after they review your portfolio as they probably look at thousands of portfolios a year, so it is imperative that a sense of yourself shines through in each page. Really utilize the 'About Me' section to show who you are in addition to what you can do. I talk about how I love pop culture and absolutely love to play trivia which may not necessarily help in landing jobs, but it may help me to be remembered :).

6. I wanted to really showcase pieces that I did both in a professional and collaborative environment. A lot of my documents are from my internship because I really wanted to show employers that I had experience in working for a major company and had created different pieces from my position. In addition, I wanted to show that I could work with others to create one effective and cohesive document.

7. I think employers are looking for the type of work you can do, the range of work you can do, and the type of person you are. They want to see what you can bring to the table and the quality of what you can create, coupled with the various skills you have. I think it's important to show that you're not just one person such as a writer, editor, or developer, but that you're a mixture of two or all of things. And again, as I've said before, I think they want to really see who you are. I think they want to know more about you, not just your professional side, so they can know more about the type of person they may be working with.

8. After I graduated I had dreams of moving to New York and becoming an editor or publicist for a major book publishing company; however, that didn't happen :). I realized I didn't want to leave Michigan (not yet at least :) so I began to look for work in the state. I realized that I had more to offer a company than just being an editor for YA books, I realized that I really can write in many different capacities and audiences and I can edit documents to tailor to those needs. Writing and communications jobs were the ones I began applying for and found myself working in such a position now. I currently work for Two Men and a Truck at their corporate office as the internal communications associate. I manage the pages of our company's intranet, write and edit articles that are posted to the site weekly, edit various internal communication pieces, and manage almost 40 communication plans which outline the different communicative ways we'll reach our system for the different projects and initiatives that have been created.

9. I think PW really prepared me for being able to do so many different things. Although they all of the professors told us, and I'm sure they still do, that because I was in PW I could do many different things based on the classes and projects I was assigned, I didn't realize it at the time. I'm writing quite a bit now in what I do, way more than I thought I would after I graduated, and often times it's for different audiences. In the PW classes we were constantly writing and creating pieces for so many different audiences. I didn't realize it then, but that practice has really helped me now.

10. I do several different kinds of writing. I write articles which are for franchise staff, ranging from franchise owners to moving consultants, to educate them on the new projects and programs the corporate office is currently working on. I also create the corporate newsletter that goes out each month, which only goes to people in our corporate office, so I write on what is happening both within the Two Men and a Truck franchises and then what projects will be taking place within the office. I also assist in drafting content for various documents such as the booklet that will be handed out to franchise owners and managers, vendors, and corporate staff at our yearly meeting.

11. I honestly just wish I had done more in terms of what I created while at MSU. I wish I had taken advantage of the connections and outlets that PW provides and had gotten involved with the Writing Center or a campus publication to expand the range of my work. I think this really would have helped me to not only realize more of what I could do and create professionally, but would have helped to make me realize this faster :).

12. I just would have tried to get more involved and would have tried to create more pieces to add to my portfolio.

13. Yes! I love that I graduated with a PW degree :).

14. I'm not sure if you've had Laura Julier yet, but if you have, you've probably heard her tell you to network and continue to build upon the connections you have. Do it!! Even if it's your mom's friend's aunt's hairdresser's son, that person may be able to help you get a job after you graduate or may be able to help lead you to the right person who can get you a job. Also, don't be afraid to open up about yourself to people which I know may sound silly, but I know I didn't always open up that much. It may sound silly but our marketing intern actually heard about the job by opening herself up and networking at the Las Vegas airport :)

Synthesis

1. **Synthesize your responses.** Summarize what you took away from your interview, including the major points and ideas that you a) want to report back to the class, and 2) will use when you start to design your own portfolio.

This interview has made me realize how important it is to employers that you have something unique to offer and how important it is for them to see who you really are as a person and not just as a professional because the two often correlate. My interview taught me that employers look at thousands of portfolios and most applicants have similar forms of work and experience, but to make your portfolio impressionable, you must show what you learned from each and how you apply your skills to your work and what makes your work the best out of all the other applicants. I don't think employers looks at the format and details of your portfolio, I think they are looking to see if it is professional and demonstrates your skills well. Your portfolio is a way to show an employer who you are and why they should want to work with you so I think it really needs to reflect the type of person you are. It needs to stand out in their memories so it makes a lasting impression. Employers aren't going to remember that one impressive piece they read in a portfolio, they are going to connect it to a person, someone who they liked, understood and could see as a potential employee. Your portfolio should be versatile to show the different qualities you hold so they can see you as more marketable and able to offer them a variety of aspects. She said employers want to see what you can bring to the table and what range of writing are you capable of.

When I begin to design my portfolio, I want it to reflect me as a person and as a professional. I want to exhibit pieces that mean the most to me and that I am most proud of but also the pieces that show my different strengths. I want them to move on to the next portfolio with a remaining fragment of my portfolio still in their minds. I will try and make my portfolio have an element of surprise so that I will be remembered, whether that be with the actual design or with the content.