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LCC 3401 Video Resume Critique

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Some professionals believe that video resumes are the wave of the future. In addition to providing much of the same basic information as a normal resume, video resumes give employers insight into the personality of a candidate. This is both a positive and a negative. On one hand, employers will be able to judge what candidates might best fit into their environment. On the other hand, a poorly done video resume can prejudice employers against a candidate, even if the job they seek does not involve any of the skills necessary to create a video. While a professionally produced video will certainly impress potential employers, however, the most effective video resume is one that presents the necessary information in a clear, concise, and interesting manner, regardless of video quality.

A common theme among the video resumes that I viewed was people giving examples of themselves in action, or samples of their related works. Erik Zarnitz, for instance, created a meteorological resume consisting mostly of him providing weather forecasts. At first glance, this seems to be a good strategy: it gives employers a chance to see exactly how competent you are, and is a good use of the film medium. Unfortunately, many people seemed to take this to the extreme. Mr. Zarnitz gave a brief resume screenshot at the beginning of the video, and then provided seven minutes of short forecast clips. Gary Schutt offered up several minutes’ worth of music samples. Though the samples were well performed, providing only one or two would have had a much higher impact, leaving the listener wanting more instead of wishing it would end.

Josh Garner took this idea a step further, and offered nothing more than three minutes of shots of him surfing set to music. While the video definitely demonstrates his surfing skills, it gives no indication of his objective or whether or not he has won any awards. In many of the shots it is impossible to tell who is on the surf board. If Josh were to introduce himself in the beginning and explain that he had won several awards, anyone viewing his essay would have little doubt that the surfer was in fact him.

In several videos, the samples given did not appear to be the author’s best work. For instance, in Brooke’s video resume, which is meant to get her a job as a producer, there are several shots of her sitting at a desk, talking to someone on her cell phone. While the conversation gives a small amount of insight into Brooke’s aspirations, the quality of the segment is far below the quality of the other samples she provides. This disparity could lead employers to believe that the inclusion was an artistic choice; if they do not agree with a choice, it decreases Brooke’s chance of being hired.

One resume that was very difficult to understand was Rebecca’s. This was due to a thick accent, very loud background music, and significant amount of ambient noise. Though accents can not necessarily be changed simply for a video resume, applicants should make a point to speak as clearly as possible. As for the ambient noise, if the microphone being used picks up lots of noise, it is advisable to move to a room that is as quiet as possible. The music, while adding interest to a very dry video, stood out in competition with Rebecca’s voice, making her words even more difficult to understand.

A video resume that did a particularly good job of being clear and concise was that of Patricia Schuldenfrei. Coming in at under a minute, it was the shortest video resume I viewed. Ms. Schuldenfrei gave a brief summary of her resume, speaking in a clear voice. She was dressed professionally. In addition to her words, small captions were shown on the screen; these offered the most vital parts of the information she provided, including the correct spelling of her name.

Ms. Schuldenfrei’s video was obviously professionally made. The lighting highlighted her face, and colors around her blended well with her warm skin tone. Benjamin Hampton’s video, on the other hand, was grainy and poorly lit. However, Ben earned a mention in Time magazine for his resume. This just goes to show that video quality is not necessarily the deciding factor when it comes to choosing candidates. Except in cases where the desired job requires video editing skills, applicants should make sure that their content comes across well before trying to do anything too fancy with their video resume.

Out of the ten videos that I viewed, eight of them were much too long to be truly effective. Ranging in length from two to seven minutes, each video contained a large amount of unnecessary information. Some people included stories or examples of unrelated experience, such as service projects. Others included many more examples of their work than was really necessary.

In creating a paper resume, job seekers usually limit themselves to one full page. This is usually plenty of space to provide all information regarding education, skills, and experience, as well as possibly one or two lines about extra-curricular activities. Ashley’s video resume proves that simply reading off your resume can be extremely dry, even boring. She spends almost five minutes looking at the camera, simply telling the viewer the details of her resume. However, the lack of a standardized format for video resumes has led people to believe that they can make their video as long and, in some cases, irrelevant as they want.

Benjamin Hampton’s video resume is a prime example of this: it includes a long scene where he simply plays the piano for the camera, and details much of his volunteer work. The piano scene takes place early in the video, directly after Ben states his objective of attaining a marketing or public relations job. He spends a majority of the video talking about past charity and event planning experience, while ignoring his skills and education. Those are left to the final moments of the video, when Benjamin wanders around his house and a list of his qualifications scrolls Star Wars style across the screen. A more effective strategy for Ben’s video might have been for him to record a piano piece to serve as background music and spend more time going over the information that would actually be on his resume.

Lil’ Nate’s resume, on the other hand, was a good example of someone taking advantage of the freedom of expression offered by the film medium, while also providing information relevant to the position he was seeking. He parodied the series of commercials that HP produced, where people give out information about themselves by manipulating words and pictures with their hands. This section of the resume was both informative and visually stimulating, and thus I found it to be very effective.

Based on the ten video resumes that I viewed, I have concluded that a successful video resume is clear, concise, and interesting. I have also concluded that video quality is not necessarily as much of a factor as most people seem to think. This discovery has changed my approach to my own video resume. While I will still strive to create as high a quality video as possible, my main priority will be to ensure that I organize and present my information well, and that my video can grab prospective employers’ attention and draw them in.

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