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Subject: Portfolio Research
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Overview:

As I start to think about planning my portfolio, I become overwhelmed. What colors should I use? What fonts? What sizes? How should I layout all my work? What images and designs should I use? All of these elements must be utilized properly to create a successful and professional portfolio. Each feature of the portfolio must be carefully thought of before being finalized. Just a simple error in font color or style can ruin the portfolio, causing a stressful and complicated decision making process.

However, some of the stress can be relieved if I know what sort of direction I need to take while making my portfolio and what companies specifically look for in a portfolio when hiring. In order to understand how I should layout and begin drafting my portfolio, I contacted a Professional Writing Alumni about her portfolio and any advice she could give me. However, after several attempts, I wasn't able to schedule an interview. So instead of interviewing a Professional Writing Alum, I interviewed my dad, Jeff Poole. He is the Vice President of Fusion Academy, a company that runs private schools, and helps hire all of the staff for the schools and the company. I thought he'd be an efficient substitute for an alumni because he could tell me the view of the hirer and what he looks for in a portfolio during the interview process.

Interview Summary:

- **Describe how you typically interview a potential candidate.**

First, my dad looks at the candidate's resume and portfolio. If he is interested in hiring them he schedules a Skype interview. This interview is not formal and during this stage of the interview process he is just trying to get to know the candidate and their personality. He wants to know about their interests and see what they're like outside of a business setting. If the Skype interview goes well he will fly the candidate into Grand Rapids for a formal interview (most of his employees are from California or the East Coast because that's where the schools are located). During this formal interview he pays more attention to the candidate's resume and portfolio and asks them about their job experience and skills. Finally, if the interview goes well he will hire them.

- **During the hiring process how do you look at people's interests and personalities along with their professional experience, and what is the best way to display these qualities?**

My dad stressed the importance of not trying too hard to be professional. He doesn't like it when people brag about themselves on their resumes and likes to see the candidate's personality in their portfolio. He really likes it when people talk about their interests and what they like to do. He says that he won't hire someone that is stiff because he wants to work with fun people and have fun while working with them. The best way to show who you are while remaining professional is through design, color, images, and style. He suggested having a part of my portfolio be an "About Me" section that shows who I am.

- **What types of work do you look for in a portfolio?**

He looks for variety. It's important to see all the different types of work that someone can do. However, he only wants to see one piece of work from each different category. One work to represent one type of writing or category of work is all that is needed to be shown.

- **What is the importance of having a portfolio?**

A resume shows what grades you're capable of getting and where you've worked. However, "a portfolio shows how you work and what you're truly capable of." Anyone can boast about themselves and talk about how great of a candidate they are, but they can't prove it unless they have a solid portfolio.

- **What are some tips that you would give to someone just starting to put their portfolio together?**

Above all he said to be truthful. He says many people either exaggerate or lie about their work, especially in resumes. He also stressed the importance of showing who you are as a person. Don't try to make yourself look perfect. Another major problem with portfolios that he often deals with is their size. He'll get pages and pages of work and when a portfolio is too big, he gets discouraged and won't even finish looking at it.

Conclusion:

After the interview with my dad a few key things stuck out. First, the interview process is long and difficult. I used to think that if they liked your resume then you'd get called in for an interview and if that went well the job was yours. However, the process consists of more than two simple steps. A lot of things are taken into consideration and a decent resume won't get you the job. I also learned the importance of a portfolio. Your portfolio is the primary focus and is the deciding factor in whether they give you an interview. Design truly matters and so does adding a personal touch.

I now know the expectations that an employer has. I have picked the mind of someone who is constantly hiring people. As I move forward and start planning my portfolio, I know what I need to do to make me stand out as a strong job candidate and land the job.