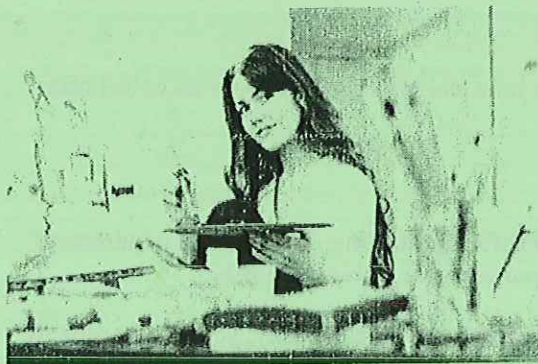


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6 Job Search Strategies For Graduates With Art Degrees

March 24, 2014 by Mike Hanski

One of the most valuable lessons art students master isn't technically taught in any classroom. What is their most valuable skill? Resilience.

Whether you were staring at a blank piece of paper, wondering how to start your next composition, or poised in front of a blank canvas, wondering how to express your next masterpiece, you've honed the art of perseverance and resilience. And those traits will serve you well in your job search.

The Outlook Isn't As Bleak As You'd Expect

Many career experts tout the success and expansion of job opportunities in the fields of science and technology. While that may be true, **students who study the arts have just as much employability as their technical counterparts.**

You just need to take a different **approach to the job search.** Here are six things that will make the job search process of art majors more fruitful:

1. Focus On Yourself

As graduation looms near, one of the most frustrating things to encounter is the success of your friends. It seems like *everyone* around you is landing their dream job – or at least *a* job.

Don't get caught up in what everyone else is doing. Focus on your own job search. For all you know, those friends who blindly leap into the career pool will be miserable in a few years. Follow your own path. **You chose this major for a reason. All will work out in the end.**

2. Supplement Your Core Classes

If you are reading this article while still in school, there is one very valuable opportunity available to you. Take some supplemental classes.

Take a look at courses outside the arts. No matter what job you undertake in the future, there is value in certain skills. For example, all bosses would appreciate an employee who can find ways to trim the budget. The things you learned in your graphic design course would be enhanced by computer programming skills. And as a budding writer, you might have the most eloquent written communication skills – but what about your oral communication skills?

Even if you've already graduated, it would probably be worth the time and effort to sign up for an online class or two.

3. Take Learning Outside The Classroom

At most universities, you'll be required to complete an internship before graduating. If this isn't a requirement for your diploma, make sure you take the extra step to enhance your learning with an internship. *

Don't look for an internship that will simply meet the minimum requirements. Technically, you could probably do just about anything and get the credit you need. However, really look for ways to enhance your career potential.

Again, think outside your major. It might be beneficial to find an internship that is only tangentially related to what you are studying. Learn new skills and you'll be even more valuable to your future employer someday.

4. Don't Give It Away

While an internship is an extremely valuable tool for your job search, it can also be detrimental.

Unpaid internships can actually do more harm than good. Often times, a fresh graduate will assume an unpaid internship is better than nothing – you'll get more experience and there is a chance the company you intern for will offer you a long-term job.

In reality, the vast majority of bosses *won't* offer you a permanent job with their company. And if you work for free for too long, it will look like your skills aren't valued.

Try as hard as you can to find a paid internship – even if they are only offering peanuts. Future potential employers will see you were worth *something* to someone.

5. Go Online

You are a creative person – or so says your college degree. Therefore, it is essential you highlight that aspect of your personality. And there is no better way to do that than with an online portfolio.

It doesn't matter what your area of expertise is – painting, writing, graphic design, architecture. You *must* have your own website. Use it to highlight your skills and completed projects.

While you are online, take a minute to evaluate your social media profiles. More and more hiring managers are turning to social media to qualify a job candidate.

All your social media accounts need to portray a professional image. Use a quality headshot for your profile pictures. Make sure there aren't any photos of you doing a keg stand – or anything else equally damning. And check your grammar, punctuation and spelling – especially on LinkedIn.

6. Showcase Your Soft Skills

When it comes to job searching, applicants need to showcase two different skill sets: hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills are achieved with training – learning a second language, developing a website, and so on. Soft skills are sometimes referred to interpersonal skills – communicating effectively, being a team player, and so on.

Most job searchers tend to focus on hard skills. However, **soft skills are just as important – sometimes more important.**

As an art major, you definitely need to play up your soft skills. You can't say things like, "Increased sales by \$8,000 in the fourth quarter." However, you can say, **"Effectively lead a team of eight co-workers to complete an elaborate project within the allotted timeframe."**

Landing the ideal job might be a bit challenging for graduates with an art degree. But it certainly isn't impossible. And as you sit down to compose your resume, you already have two highly sought-after traits – perseverance and resilience!

Mike Hanski

Mike is an essay writing expert at Bid4papers and a blogger who writes on the topics of education technology, career strategies and college life. Feel free to contact him on