

Career Portfolios - Part 4

Continued from Vol.1 No.27

Last week we spoke of Martin Kimeldorf's ideas about the portfolio becoming a metaphor for a shift away job titles and towards skills and training as you move from job to job, or from school to work - and back again. This week we will continue on the same lines and examine more closely one of the most important trends in today's society, which is the focus major businesses are placing on certification and credentials. This emphasis holds a great deal of influence over your portfolio presentation. Many people are aware of their skill level, however being able to showcase those skills to an employer costs time and money in investing in acquiring those certifications. What happens when the price of certification and training is too high? Well, other means of certifying your skills are developed to accommodate the needs of the people. For example, most basic desktop publishing courses with a certificate of completion run in the range of \$200 and up. Many only last for a few hours and if your level of experience is high then it can be not only boring, but clearly a waste of valuable time. So what is the solution? Brainbench.com !!! This unique web based assessment and certification system offers you the best in certification, and is expanding their tests to over 450 categories in areas like information technology, finance, sales, administration, health and other categories. And the best thing of all it is **FREE** !! This is the new trend, and this will be the approach taken by all businesses in the future. Why? Let me quickly explain the process. You sign up for free with Brainbench.com, you take an exam as many times as you want for free (most exams are only 20-30 minutes long). An online transcript is created for you so that employers can see the results. Your information is entered into a database that employers can search, and you receive a certificate of completion (if you pass) in the mail. Oh yes, there is a verification system to make sure it was you who took the exam, so you cannot cheat. Who thinks this is the wave of the future? Myself, as well as other Brainbench.com corporate customers like PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Sprint, EDS, Ernst & Young, and many more. Need a certificate for your portfolio? Go to <http://www.brainbench.com>

Tip #4:

Want another unique selling proposition in your portfolio that will get employers looking at you in a more positive way? Try the "Qualities Feedback Exercise". A quick way to do this is to use some small file folder labels (Avery RF2-06) and a blank sheet of 8½ x 11 paper. Whether you are currently employed or unemployed this feedback exercise is a great way to assess the qualities you think you possess and the ones that other people see in you. With a ruler divide the page in half by drawing a line down the center. Now write two titles at the top of each column. On the left write "Qualities I see in myself", and on the right "Qualities others see in me". In the left column write a list of all the key qualities that would properly represent yourself to an employer. Now distribute the small labels to friends, or former/current colleagues and have them list the most prominent characteristics they see in you. Before asking them make sure that they understand the value of this exercise. That way their answers will reflect a more honest appraisal of your qualities and stop attempts to write joke qualities. Once they have finished simply paste their labels into the right hand column. Most times you will be pleasantly surprised as to the qualities that you were blind to or de-emphasized when assessing yourself. People may see you as possessing a whole different set of characteristics !! Also, this exercise can be easily modified for the upcoming Christmas holidays. What better way to spend time with family and friends but by presenting them with an opportunity to acknowledge and praise those special things they see in others. What greater gift is there than this? And as an added bonus you can always include the results in your career portfolio.



Jake Sheridan has a great deal of expertise in the fields of career development, employment counselling and info technology. He is working as an Internet Career Development Specialist with the Phoenix Empowerment Program, integrating traditional job search methods with innovative and cutting edge computer assisted job search techniques. Sign up for our FREE services online at <http://www.pepjob.com>