

Career Portfolio Development - Part 6

Continued from Vol. 1 No.29

Last week we talked about online career portfolio websites. This week I will share an interesting interview I conducted with David Crowe, a 21-year-old youth from Surrey who attended several of my Career Portfolio Development workshops. I wanted to evaluate from a job seekers perspective the influence and impact that Career Portfolio Development had on the scope and effectiveness of a job and career search. Here is part one of that interview:

Q: Why did you want to create a career portfolio?

A: It was a neat way to lay out all of your skills and show all of your qualifications. If you wanted a better job or a raise, or a promotion, then you could show what you've got.

Q: At what point did you decide you were going to do this?

A: There were actually two points. One was after seeing your portfolio (Jake's). I thought: "*This is really nice*". It showed that you were a professional, what you could do, what you were worth, and what you could contribute. The second point was after doing my resume. I thought: "*Wouldn't it look good in a career portfolio, in a complete package?*".

Q: Was the process easy?

A: For me no. I'm sure for someone older with more work experience it would be even harder, because the process of collecting artifacts from the past is difficult. I kept thinking: "*Oh, I should have kept this thing or that thing...*". Once I got into the swing of it, and the mindset of where I wanted to go with it I was ok. I had to develop that clear vision of where I wanted to take it. It's always that first step that is hard. Without that clear vision I probably wouldn't have gotten it off the ground.

Q: How did you develop that vision in the beginning? Where did you get it?

A: It was a combination of looking at the portfolio examples Jake showed me, and the explanation during the workshops on Career Portfolios. It was kind of like putting Lego® together. You see the pieces and then figure out your own way of putting something together. Having a portfolio to examine allowed me to see what the finished product looked like, and the workshops gave me the knowledge and understanding on how to put one together.

Q: Now that it is done, do you think you have a better chance at landing a job over other job seekers?

A: I can never say it is finished. It is something that I will add to at every job and at every opportunity I get. It definitely gives me an "edge" over other applicants by allowing the employer to see me more three dimensionally as a whole person, rather than two dimensionally like a resume, which is more black and white. There is no middle ground on a resume.

Q: How has the career portfolio affected you self-esteem?

A: After being laid-off and not having money, especially around Christmas time, things were uncomfortable for me. I thought that I didn't have the skills to land a job or find a job. Now holding the portfolio I am always amazed when flipping through it. I say to myself: "*Look at me, look at all the skills and knowledge I have*". The portfolio has really helped me through this difficult time.

Q: Do you feel more confident about speaking with employers about your skills now?

A: I feel more confident because I'm like a kid in elementary school. I get to play "show and tell" with the employer about the things I can do and the experience I have. It is a lot easier to show a certificate or a picture of an accomplishment than tell somebody about it. It is much more persuasive and shows more proof of the experience or skill.

Q: Do you feel a sense of pride?

A: Oh, for sure, I feel a lot of pride. It is like driving your first car, or riding your first bike. It's like saying to the world: "*Look at what I can do, look at what I have done, look at what I have that you don't*".

Q: Has the employee-employer relationship been clarified for you during this time?

A: Yes, my understanding of the employer was a very "1984 - Big Brother" type of relationship. With this tool (the portfolio) the relationship is more fair.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: It puts the employer and employee on the same level. It's like playing a game of rummy and picking up the deck and putting down all your cards. The cards are your skills and experiences and you score points with an employer based on the kind and number of skills (cards) that you play.

Q: What words of wisdom do you have for the thousands of other job seekers out there in BC?

A: Whether you can afford to, time-wise, financially, or not, stop what you are doing, and start working on putting a portfolio together now. The sooner you start the better your job search will be.

Next week we will finish up with part two of the interview, as well as discuss some conclusions drawn from the experiences David had. We will also talk about the main elements of a Career Portfolio workshop, and how to put one on. If you have any suggestions or feedback in regards to these articles I write please don't hesitate to contact me at jakes@pepjob.com.