
Portfolio

What is a portfolio?

What is its purpose/job?

How does the presenting your work change from a non-personal experience to a personal one?

What is the difference between a portfolio and a presentation?

How do you talk about your projects?

How do you make them smarter, more compelling, more complete?*

How do you show process? Professionals love to see it!

Will you have just a website and digital presentation? Or will you have a website and a printed book?

What are the pros and cons of different formats? Types of portfolios?

At the end of this class you will/must have...

An on-line portfolio

A portfolio to take to interviews

A personal brand system and the applications; resume, business card,...

There are examples on the server.

Your portfolio is a communication tool. It highlights what you have down on your resume. It makes your resume come to life. It is proof of your design education and a document of your work.

It is a display of exercises, talent, thinking and solutions to visual communication problems. The physical form of the portfolio is completely up to you.

It should not be too precious or complicated.

You must create and maintain an on-line portfolio. This can be on any platform, or use any service, and its form can even be somewhat generic. The most important thing is to make it easy for a potential employer to get a sense of your work in 10 seconds, and proof of what you can do in five minutes. (from AIGA)

Organize and Back-Up

Start organizing all of your projects. Package them. Back them all up. Even the old stuff. Get a NEW hard drive or pay for Google Drive or pay for DropBox. 1/3 of you will loose all your files this year or within your first year out of school. Just do it. NOW.

Deliverables {to pass the class, D- is passing}

The semester will end with a **Portfolio Review** on Stop Day, **December 8**. It is required to participate. Get off work now!

Professionals will evaluate and give you feedback on your presentation skills, your business system, your portfolio and on-line presence.

To complete this class you need to hand in all the following...(put all digital work in a folder yourname and put it on the server)

Hand in as a pdf

- __ SelfBrandProcess.pdf
- __ Resume.pdf
- __ Cover letters (3)
- __ BusinessCard.pdf
- __ SampleSheet.pdf (viscom only)
- __ Portfolio.pdf (6 - 9 strong, ready to present projects)

Hand PRINTED OUT

- __ Resume (6 copies)
- __ Sample Sheet (6 copies)
- __ Business Card (6 copies)
- __ Thank You
- __ Portfolio printed out (with a min of 6 projects)
- __ Print entire portfolio as thumbnails on ONE 11 x 17 or 13 x 19 sheet (6 times)

Links to On-line presence

- __ Website. Ready for the public, perfect, branded, 6 projects that are perfect.
- __ Behance (optional but recommended)
- __ LinkedIn up-to-date and ready for recruiters
- __ Issuu (optional)

Things upload to ISSUU (all optional but strongly recommended):

- __ Portfolio
- __ Brandbook
- __ Style Guide from Magazine
- __ Magazine project
- __ any other multi-page documents

Creative Hotlist

Communication Arts Magazine uses this really terrible website to choose the best students in the country. We have had 2 KU Students in Communication Arts for the last 3 years. It is free to enter. Yes it is a terrible website, you need to figure how how to make your work look great. **DUE Sept 27**. Required.

Project Assessment

Make a list of all your projects you have done in school, internships, blitzes, workshops...

What are your top 3 projects. Make sure you can articulate why.

What is missing to help tell the story of the project?

DUE Wed Aug 23.

Top 3

1

2

3

The next 3 projects you think should go into your portfolio. What makes them not in the top 3?

Which project has all the research done (you like the idea) or visual language (you like the look) set but just needs to be re-looked at or expanded?

Which project did you love but know it isn't just isn't good enough? — which one do you want to completely redo?

Next 3

4

5

6

Which project do you love but know it isn't good enough? — which one(s) do you want to redo?

Project redo

7

How will you show process? Professionals love to see it?

How will you show you can work in a team? What project(s)?

How will you talk about workshops, blitzes, internships, study abroad,...

Project Redo

Project Redo. Re-look at your projects with your “senior eyes”.

Why do you like it? Why should it be in your portfolio? Why is an important part of your story? You need only 6 - 10 projects in your final portfolio and every project has to be a great one. **Take advantage of this time and redo or build out a project that shows a potential employer what you can do. What are you missing? What do you love to do?**

- [Brekkie-House](#)
- [Chatterbox](#)
- [Peculiar-Pickings](#)
- [Meridian](#)
- [Plip](#)

DUE Wed Sept 27

What project do you like the concept but isn't as refined as it should be, that you felt always was missing something, that you ran out of time...

[Creative Hotlist](#) up load at least 3 - 6 projects by Sept 28. It is required as part of this class. Part of your grade.

Round 1

__ What project are you going to redo? Why? What is it going to add to your portfolio. What story is it going to tell? Why is it important? How are you going to start the redesign? new research? mood boards? audience? typographic studies? Do round 1, you determine what that is, you figure out the design process you are going to follow...how many directions you are going to explore, etc.

Round 2

__ Based on feedback what is your next round? Did you need to explore more options? Have a stronger concept? Should be designing lots of stuff in round 2.

Round 3

__ Refined / options to choose from to get feedback in order to finish this project.

Resumé

A designer can tell a lot from your resume. It is probably the first time they hear of you and therefore an introduction to you as a person and as a professional designer. It's your one-page portfolio. It's the virtual you. The resume itself is definitely information which should demand my undivided attention. It needs to be designed. Your choice of typefaces and typography, the layout and the organization of information, the paper stock, etc., all contribute to the way I perceive you as a potential designer working for us. It also shows me what you can do on a single piece of paper.

Tips

Do not list where you went to High School.

Study Abroad and Workshops: list date/or duration, where, and a short description

All jobs good to show a balance include any freelance jobs and internships

Describe responsibilities but do not describe jobs such as server, lifeguard they are obvious. Look at examples for good ways to write job descriptions. Provide meaningful descriptions of your experiences. When detailing your job history, use short sentences or fragments to demonstrate your relevant experience. Use strong action words. "developed and implemented a new filing system"; "created two new membership programs."

Use formatting to help you out. Capitalize and use boldface, italics or underlining to help organize the information.

Proofread. Use spellcheck, double check your contact information and make sure your formatting is consistent. Ask a friend or family member to proofread it as well. Check for errors that spellcheck programs miss (i.e. there vs. their; to, too or two).

References are on their own sheet not on the resume.

Make sure you ask your references before you add them to your references and ask them the best way someone should get in contact with them. Sometimes its email others cell number.

Do not give out your references until asked.

CONTACT INFO

your name

cell number

email address (do not use your KU email address, get a real address, yourname)

web address

EDUCATION

The University of Kansas, Lawrence Kansas

BFA in Design, Visual Communication Design (or Illustration & Animation)

Expected Graduation May 2018

Include GPA if it is 3.5 or higher

—
Include: Minors, Certificates, (Service Learning, ENTR)
Study Abroad, Workshops, Blitz ...

EXPERIENCE

List for **RECENT** to PAST

Date/Duration, Name of Company, City, (no street address or contact information

—
Short description of responsibilities

SKILLS

Name platform if you are familiar with both mac and windows

Adobe Creative Suite, (any others), Microsoft Office, Include things like Letterpress, Serigraphy, (any printmaking class), Book Binding... photography...

Foreign Language

AWARDS (awards, scholarships, marks of achievement)

Date, Name

Date, Dean's list

Date, Any other awards, 3x3, Dallas, ad club, omni's, freshman scholarship

ACTIVITIES

ProtoType: AIGA student group, member since... date

Any Club or Organization, date

Any activity, have a date associated with it if possible

Community Service, location, date

Center for Service Learning, project, date

Conferences Attended, date, location

REFERENCES (do not go on the resume)

Can be your instructors, professionals, activity advisor...

Name

Company, Title

Mailing Address

Phone Number

Email

Blurbs/Project Descriptions

Titles and Project Descriptions/blurbs:

Titles and blurbs are very important that they are descriptive, clear, well written and consistent. How do you title your projects. Make them consistent. Edit/rewrite your project descriptions so they are in the same voice. Are descriptive but not obvious.

no "this is a poster"

no "This project",

no "We or I was asked to"

... use the active voice.

Think about ... Challenge, Concept, Solution,

Think about ... Audience, Mood/Tone, Keywords

Think about ... Typeface, Color palette

Heifer International

Heifer International is a non-profit group that turns small monetary donations into big opportunities. Created a series of posters under the concept of simple math: through a donation of a cow with Heifer International, families living in third countries can put food on the table, money in their pockets, and independently achieve dignified success and stability. The illustrative style, photography approach, and bright color palette are woven throughout the collateral; aiming to target a younger audience as well as intrigue older adults.

Porter

Mobile App

Porter is a mobile application that helps travelers document, navigate, and share their experiences with friends and family while they are abroad. Integration of location, journaling, data-free maps, reviews, and helpful hints allows users to document their daily travel experiences without the stress of documenting everything by hand.

Flor: Farm to Table Tortilla Packaging

fresh, authentic, sophisticated, fun, playful, modern.

Flor is a farm-to-table tortilla brand geared toward the modern mother who takes pride in the quality foods she feeds her family. Taking inspiration from the intricate patterns found on antique Mexican tiles and tapestries, Flor tortillas are sophisticated, yet playful enough to appeal to her kids. Available in three flavors: Original, Chipotle Chili, and Honey Wheat.

Plip

Rethinking social interaction through augmented reality

Concept

A new social media concept that links users through the physical space they share, instead of hashtags or followers. Users write and launch "plips": small, text-based posts that can only be read and discovered once other users walk into range of the location from which they were originally posted. Designed to build a sense of local community, Plip encourages connections between you and the people around you.

Approach

Cool, contemporary colors help position this app within existing social media worlds. New inter-face and interaction methods give Plip a unique appeal, while more traditional feed-style screens present users a sense of familiarity.

Action Verbs (use them)

achieved	authored	solicited	determined	involved	instigated	incorporated	trained
benchmarked	clarified	specified	developed	listened	instituted	inspected	transmitted
completed	collaborated	spoke	estimated	mediated	instructed	logged	tutored
expanded	communicated	suggested	managed	mentored	integrated	maintained	
exceeded	composed	summarized	marketed	moderated	introduced	monitored	adapted
improved	condensed	synthesized	measured	negotiated	launched	obtained	advised
pioneered	conferred	translated	planned	partnered	led	operated	analyzed
reduced	consulted	wrote	prepared	teamed	lowered	ordered	applied
resolved	contacted		programmed		managed	organized	assembled
restored	conveyed	acted	projected	accomplished	merged	planned	automated
reversed	convinced	adapted	purchased	acted	modified	prepared	built
spearheaded	corresponded	began	reconciled	administered	motivated	processed	calculated
succeeded	debated	combined	reduced	advanced	organized	provided	coded
surpassed	defined	composed	researched	advised	originated	purchased	computed
transformed	demonstrated	conceptualized	retrieved	analyzed	overhauled	recorded	computerized
won	described	condensed	tabulated	appointed	oversaw	registered	conserved
	developed	created	trimmed	approved	pioneered	reserved	constructed
analyzed	directed	customized	tracked	assigned	planned	responded	controlled
assessed	discussed	designed	quantified	attained	presided	restructured	converted
calibrated	dissuaded	devised	Helping	authorized	prioritized	reviewed	debugged
clarified	documented	developed	adapted	chaired	produced	routed	designed
collected	drafted	directed	advocated	completed	proposed	scheduled	determined
compared	edited	displayed	aided	considered	recommended	screened	developed
conducted	educated	drew	answered	consolidated	recruited	set up	diagnosed
critiqued	elicited	entertained	arranged	contracted	reorganized	standardized	drafted
detected	enlisted	established	assessed	controlled	replaced	submitted	engineered
determined	established	fashioned	assisted	converted	represented	supplied	fabricated
diagnosed	explained	formulated	cared for	coordinated	restored	updated	fortified
evaluated	expressed	founded	clarified	counseled	reviewed	used	identified
examined	formulated	illustrated	coached	decided	saved	validated	implemented
experimented	furnished	initiated	contributed	decreased	scheduled	verified	inspected
explored	illustrated	instituted	cooperated	delegated	secured		installed
extracted	incorporated	integrated	counseled	determined	selected	adapted	located
formulated	influenced	introduced	demonstrated	developed	shaped	advised	maintained
gathered	informed	invented	diagnosed	directed	solidified	appraised	monitored
identified	interacted	modeled	educated	dispatched	stimulated	clarified	networked
inspected	interpreted	modified	encouraged	disseminated	streamlined	coached	operated
interpreted	interviewed	originated	ensured	diversified	strengthened	communicated	overhauled
interviewed	involved	performed	expedited	eliminated	supervised	conducted	prevented
invented	joined	photographed	facilitated	emphasized	terminated	coordinated	printed
investigated	judged	planned	guided	enforced	trimmed	critiqued	programmed
located	lectured	revised	helped	enhanced	verified	demonstrated	proposed
measured	marketed	revitalized	insured	enlisted		developed	recorded
observed	mediated	shaped	intervened	ensured	approved	educated	rectified
organized	moderated	solved	motivated	established	arranged	enabled	regulated
proved	negotiated		prevented	examined	cataloged	encouraged	remodeled
researched	observed	administered	provided	executed	categorized	evaluated	repaired
reviewed	outlined	adjusted	referred	explained	charted	explained	replaced
searched	participated	allocated	rehabilitated	founded	classified	facilitated	restored
screened	persuaded	analyzed	represented	generated	coded	focused	retrieved
solved	presented	appraised	resolved	governed	collected	guided	solved
specified	promoted	assessed	simplified	guided	compiled	influenced	specialized
summarized	proposed	audited	supplied	headed	contained	informed	specified
surveyed	publicized	balanced	supported	hired	coordinated	instilled	standardized
tested	published	budgeted	volunteered	hosted	corrected	instructed	studied
validated	reconciled	calculated		improved	corresponded	motivated	supported
	recruited	computed	advised	incorporated	distributed	persuaded	trained
addressed	referred	conserved	collaborated	increased	executed	set	troubleshoot
advertised	reinforced	controlled	enabled	influenced	expedited	simulated	upgraded
arbitrated	reported	corrected	focused	initiated	filed	stimulated	
arranged	resolved	cut	initiated	inspected	generated	taught	
articulated	responded	decreased	interacted	inspired	implemented	tested	

LinkedIn Tips

In recent years LinkedIn has incorporated many features that makes it a perfect platform for designers and creative professionals. The ability to add visual polish to your LinkedIn profile and incorporate various types of media formats to showcase your work gives you an unparalleled opportunity to market your skillsets directly to prospective clients.

1) Choose The Right Profile Pic

According to LinkedIn, adding a profile pic makes your profile 14 times more likely to be viewed by prospective clients, recruiters and employers.

Your profile pic needs to show you in the best possible professional yet creative light. Without a doubt, LinkedIn is business oriented; in a heartbeat you have to establish credibility and trust if you expect people to click on your profile. Profile photos figure heavily into this since a thumbnail of your photo is probably the first thing people see when they come across your profile. Eye tracking studies show that the majority of people devote approximately 20% of their time spent viewing a person's profile looking at the person's photo. Avoid any photos that are unprofessional in tone.

Photo should be a 1200 x 1200 pixel jpeg or png. Keep it under 10 MB.

2) Craft the Perfect Headline

Next up in importance is your "Professional Headline". 80% of people on LinkedIn skip over profiles after reading the headline. If your headline is simply your job title and company name (default) then you might be missing out on an amazing opportunity to position and market yourself and articulate within 120 characters how you help your clients.

When writing your LinkedIn headline, be sure to speak directly to the audience you want to hire you. If you are a junior designer looking to work at a firm or agency, your audience is most likely a senior art director, creative director and/or firm principal.

3) Embed Samples of Your Work

This recent feature is what I consider a turning point for LinkedIn with graphic designers. Prior to LinkedIn rolling out the ability to embed media into your profile, designers could only integrate 3rd party apps like **Behance** to display their portfolio on LinkedIn. For most designers, the rigmarole required to do so meant that the overwhelming majority of designers only had a text based profile to showcase their personal brand.

Now you can easily showcase work samples on your Summary, Experience and Education sections of your profile.

If you work in motion graphics, you can embed your demo reel and samples of your work here.

4) Solicit and Give Recommendations

Although not crucial to your LinkedIn profile, recommendations are a great way to bolster your profile and provide potential clients and recruiters a positive third party assessment of your skills, capabilities and character. They function as modern day job references now.

The other thing to consider, writing recommendations for others, in most cases are as good as receiving them. If a colleague or vendor has gone out of their way to make your project or business a success, pay it back by writing a sincere LinkedIn recommendation praising their work.

5) Personalize Your Connection Invites

A pet peeve with many people on LinkedIn is receiving automated invites with the default message. No one likes to be shotgunned, take the time and customize the invitation to state why it is you want to connect with someone on LinkedIn, a reminder of how you know them.

Also, cut to the chase. If you're wanting to set up a meeting with a specific person or need an introduction to someone, say so in your invite.

7) Never Lie

This one should go without saying, but even slight exaggerations and/or taking credit for creative projects you were not involved in can come back to haunt you.

In 2015, everything you post can be easily searched, reverse image searched, and if authorship ever comes into question, people are pretty easy to get a hold of.

Long term, your professional reputation is invaluable. Don't take shortcuts to go where you want to be.

8) Associate an Alternate Personal Email Address to Your LinkedIn Account

Occasionally I'll get a LinkedIn invite from someone I'm already connected to, just that they somehow created another duplicate account. I like to keep my network relevant and tidy so when I ask them about it, in 99% of the cases it turns out the person is between jobs and their previous LinkedIn account was tied to an old employer email address they no longer have access to.

To avoid the above scenario, associate a secondary personal email address that will still allow you to access and control your LinkedIn profile when you need it most. You want your profile well established when you need it, not the other way around.

9) Celebrate Anniversaries, Promotions, and New Jobs

LinkedIn makes it exceedingly easy to stay informed of career changes taking place within your network and to also send notes to congratulate them on a new gig or work anniversary.

It only takes a few minutes and keeps the professional relationship positive, keeps you top of mind, and generates goodwill.

Cover Letters

If you're applying by email, the email is the cover letter. This should be as short as possible, but specific to the recipient beyond just changing the name. Include the job title and where you saw the listing, as well as a statement about who you are and what you're currently doing. Tell the recipient why the work of the studio or company interests you, and what you would expect from the experience. Then tell them about your experience and skills and how they can see them in the portfolio PDF or link that you've provided. End by inviting them to meet with you to hear more.

Introductory paragraph

Identify yourself, in any way except my name is and I go to KU. Start off strong, interesting... You can say you are a young designer but you don't need to say I am graduating in May. They will see all this on your resume, so be creative.

Something about yourself / how do you know of the company/ did someone tell you about them / refer you to them / see a job listing / did you see them speak / see them in an article online / in a magazine / state your objective (to get a job or internship, etc.) ...

Paragraph

Don't reiterate your resume. Make a stronger impression by limiting your focus to one or two experiences/projects. If you talk about a project and how it relates to them then they are likely to click on your link and look at the project (hook them into your portfolio). The more specific you can be, the better. * the project(s)/ experience you choose should change based on what the company you are applying to: if they are branding choose a branding project and maybe a project with a lot of research or a lot of text....

Paragraph

Something about them – be specific – a project you found interesting, a quote from the website... and why it speaks to you. Does it relate to anything you have done or would like to do.

Conclusion:

In the final paragraph, restate your interest in the company and take an active roll say "I will contact you in next week to see if there is a time we can meet..." and then you have to CALL. Do not expect anyone to call you. You must call and follow up with them.

Sincerely,

Your Name
website address
attach resume

Due Finals week

__ cover letters (3)

Write a coverletters to 3 different firms you want to apply to. You need to find out who to address the letter/email to. no info@! and you need to research the company. Each cover letter should be personalized (content) to the firm. It is not a cut and paste exercise.

Online Resources

- __ [a-word-to-the-unwise](#)
- __ [what-makes-a-great-cover-letter...](#)

TIPS

- __ be formal
- __ address it Dear Mr or Ms First Name Last Name (get it correct)
- __ avoid being generic, be specific 1 – 2 things about the company or the work they have done.
- __ be specific about a project or experience you have
- __ do not be assuming "I know I have the qualifications, qualify me for the position..."
- __ in the letter: do no list phone number or say this is how you can reach me. Contact them.
- __ DO NOT list software you know in the letter
- __ NO typos whatsoever

Before you apply to a job

Maintain an on-line portfolio. This can be on any platform, or use any service, and its form can even be somewhat generic. The most important thing is to make it easy for a potential employer to get a sense of your work in 10 seconds, and proof of what you can do in five minutes.

Have a greater-than-zero web presence. When your name crosses the desktop of your dream employer, the first thing they're going to do is look you up on-line. If you haven't already, search for yourself. What shows up? If the answer is nothing, and another candidate is habitually sharing thoughtful and relevant links and images, they're suddenly a more attractive option, and all before the employer has even read your painstakingly created resume.

Tips

Clean up your FB page, remove tags

Start using your Instagram to promote your good style, sense and interests. (make a prof instagram)

Twitter brand it to match your personal branding, use it to follow, retweet...

[A Designer's guide to LinkedIn](#)

Practice talking to people about what you do. Meeting strangers one-on-one can be daunting. The more you practice, the better you'll get at it. While you're in school, visit other faculty on campus or professionals off-campus to discuss your projects. Ask for informational interviews. Pay attention. What are some of the questions people ask? How long can you talk before someone's attention flags?

The application process

Read the job description. Is it clearly written and realistic? Does it sound like the company or department shares your values? If so, do you have the skills and experience listed under the qualifications? Do you know what you'll show to demonstrate that you fit those qualifications? Finally, do you meet the non-design qualifications, such as immigration or visa status?

Read the instructions. This is a test. If the listing says to send a cover letter, resume, and portfolio link to an email address, do exactly that. There's someone at the other end who's managing this process, and who'll appreciate your effort to make their job easier. **If there's an online application, use it and follow the instructions.** When they meet to assess candidates, they'll be looking at the list it generates, and if you're not on that list, you won't be considered. No random email or care package you've sent along will change that.

Create a PDF portfolio. If they've asked for one, create a PDF portfolio that demonstrates that you have the skills and qualifications asked for in the job description. This should be specifically tailored to the company with a maximum of five projects, while your website can appeal to a broader number of people and demonstrate a wider range of skills.

Wait. Unless they need someone tomorrow, companies will wait until they have around five applications in hand before responding or scheduling interviews. If multiple people are reviewing the candidates, it may take even longer to find a time when they're all available. You should follow up no more than twice by email (a week later and a month later) to ask where they are in the process, but only if you already have direct access to someone and you're still interested. The bigger the company, the more likely it is that you won't get a response unless it's a definite yes.

Before and during the interview

Be courteous over email. Most companies expect employees to be good communicators both via email and in person. If someone asks you about setting up a meeting, be specific about when you're available. If they suggest a time or a range of times, confirm what's best for you and what you can do if that time is no longer available. If you can't make it then, suggest three times (or time spans) in the future when you're available. Ask if they'd like you to prepare anything before meeting.

Anticipate questions. The night before the interview, write down five questions you think you may be asked and answer them. Don't bring these notes with you—this is just to help you prepare.

Tips

— [*six-ways-to-bomb-an-interview*](#)

— [*three-steps-to-a-successful-job-interview*](#)

Be on time. If you can, be early. Yes, this is about being courteous, but it's also a good way to guarantee that you won't be anxious. You don't want to start or end the meeting with an apology.

If you're offered a glass of water, accept it. Generosity offered and accepted puts the giver at ease. Once you're calm, focus on how your interviewer is feeling.

Relax. All the interviewer wants is for you to be the one. They're rooting for you. Nervousness and agitation is contagious. Practice techniques to calm yourself down.

Let the interviewer lead. If you're showing work, ask if they'd like you to move through it, or if they'd prefer to "drive." If you're showing work digitally, show it on a tablet if you can, rather than a laptop.

Ask questions. Whether or not you can do a job is usually answered by your resume and your portfolio. The interview is about whether or not you want the job and whether or not you'll fit into the company's culture. Having no questions about the company may signal that you don't really care whether you work there or not, especially if there's already been media coverage about their projects or operations.

Follow up with a thank you. Do this the next day at the latest. Be courteous, brief, name everyone you met with, and say something that shows that you appreciated the meeting. Even if you're no longer interested, or it was clear from the meeting that you're not what the company is looking for, you want the individuals you met to remember you for your courtesy and professionalism when they move on to other companies.

Wait. Again, it's customary to follow up twice over email and ask where they are in the process if you don't hear back, but no more. If they reply by saying they've hired someone else, respond with courtesy. Leaving a good impression is a very small gesture that can lead to greater returns in the future.

Accepting the job.

Always be excited then always be HONEST Always tell the person -- on the phone when possible -- how excited you are about the job! You are allowed to have a few days to think about it, the weekend, to the end of the week. If you have another offer you can let them know that some of the things you need to sort out is that you have another offer to think about. If you have multiple offers you must tell the other firm that you have another offer. It is nice to be wanted but you have to try to put yourself in their shoes. If they have made you an offer they have thought long and hard about it -- it wasn't a whim they want you. So you have to be professional.

If the firm you really want to work for hasn't gotten back to you -- you need to let them know you have an offer but that they are the firm you want to work for. This will make them make a decision on you. Yes or No. Then you will know. A lot of times the answer is yes they want you so you have to let them know!

Ask yourself some hard questions. Do you like the people who interviewed you? Did you meet the person you would report to? What would you learn from this position? Going back to the very first step of this process, ask yourself: will I gain experience and skills in this position that will help qualify me for the next one, and the one after that, and the one after that?

Compare. You may not have a choice to make, but if you're lucky enough to have one, judge wisely. Don't stop at compensation. You won't be happy unless you're working with people you like on something that matters, and learning enough to keep growing as a designer.

Negotiate. Look at what other people are making in similar positions. (I have an idea or will find out for you.) Before turning down an offer, ask for what you think is fair, and be flexible. You may be able to raise the compensation for a job you would prefer, or, if money is tight, get more time off than what's initially offered, or more flexibility in the workweek.

It is difficult to ask for more money. They most likely have made you a fair offer but you should try to ask for a little bit more so that when it is time to negotiate later in life you have a bit of experience. One thing to ask for could be a signing bonus to help you with your first months rent.

Tips

— <http://designsalaries.aiga.org/>

Will taking a less glamorous first job (i.e car flyers, PowerPoints) ruin my chances to find better work later on? —@ KatieMazikins

Getting your first job in the industry is far more important than where it is. Having experience somewhere is better than having none at all. No matter who the client (big or small), it's your chance to put your ideas and know-how into action. Your design thinking and crafting must be transferable even if it's a car flyer or PowerPoint presentation.

When starting out, your main objective should be to learn as much as possible on the job with real briefs, real deadlines, real pressures (and a real paycheck never hurts). Getting 'on the job' experience is what matters. Whether it's a brochure for Audi's new A5 Quattro or a flyer for Andy's Black Friday Used Car Blowout Sale isn't important at this point. Both require strategic problem solving with exceptional design execution.

This is also a good time to hone in on your technical ability and speed on the Adobe programs. You should also consider the benefits of networking. All people are potential leads to new opportunities. You'd be surprised how the seemingly irrelevant contacts you make now can payoff later on. So you're never going to "ruin your chances" to find better work in the future. If anything, it shows that you're hungry to get your foot in the door, and there's certainly nothing stopping you from quietly job hunting on the weekend.