

HOW TO GET A
UX DESIGN JOB

The Series

UX Portfolios

Lisa Murnan

The background of the slide is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a forest path. The path is a bright yellow color, winding through a dense thicket of green foliage. The leaves are rendered in various shades of green, from light lime to deep forest green, with some darker, almost black, shadows. The overall style is reminiscent of a digital illustration or a graphic design background.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



Programs You Can Use

Presentation Software:

- Google Slides
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Keynote (Mac)

Publishing Software:

- Adobe InDesign
- QuarkXPress
- etc.

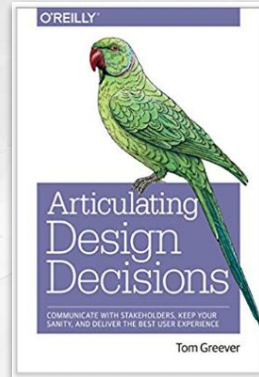
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WHO'S YOUR "USER"?



“ What’s ironic to me is that UXers are so good at putting the user first, at garnering empathy for and attempting to see the interface from the perspective of the user. Yet, we often fail to do the same thing for the people who hold the keys to our success. We think carefully about the users of our applications but less so about the stakeholders on our projects.

Tom Greever, author of *Articulating Design Decisions*





Persona: Kate the Recruiter

"Being able to play matchmaker and connect a great company with top talent is what truly motivates me as a recruiter!"

Overview

- May be in-house or part of an external recruiting firm
- Annually reviews thousands of portfolios and interviews hundreds of candidates
- Works for the employer, not you

Goal

- To match talented professionals with opportunities from employers





Persona: Kate the Recruiter

Portfolio Expectations

- That it looks like you know what you're doing
- Wants to see keywords that match up with job description
- Professional look & layout
- She's not going to read it in detail, she just wants to know if you're a good candidate to pass along to the hiring manager



Persona: Andrew the Hiring Manager

"It's pretty straightforward - do they have the skills, and do they have the right personality and cultural fit?"

Overview

- Reviews anywhere between 12-50 portfolios for one position
- Sometimes reviews portfolios from his phone
- Wants you to succeed - if you're the perfect fit, he can hire you and get back to his "real" work

Goal

- To hire a UX designer that has the necessary skills to do the job and is a great culture fit



Persona: Andrew the Hiring Manager

Portfolio Expectations

- That it looks like you know what you're doing
- Professional look & layout
- He wants to understand your design process and how you make decisions
- He wants to see the evolution of a design - from research to sketching/wireframes to finished product
- He also wants to see that you're humble - that you give credit to others that work on the project and are a good team player



Persona: Melanie the Senior UX Designer

"I wouldn't want to hire a UX Designer without seeing them do design work."

Overview

- Usually not involved in high-level screening of candidates
- May or may not have final say over whether someone is hired, but definitely has influence
- Would prefer to hire someone she's already worked with or knows personally

Goal

- To hire a UX designer who will fit in well with the rest of the team
- To add someone to the team who can contribute something valuable, either through knowledge/skills or collaboration



Persona: Melanie the Senior UX Designer

Portfolio Expectations

- She's looking for all the things a hiring manager is looking for, plus:
 - Do you really know what you're talking about or are you just throwing jargon around
 - Do your deliverables make sense
 - Why did you make the design decisions that you did

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FORMATS - PDF vs WEBSITE



PDF vs Website

PDFs

- PDFs are easier for recruiters/hiring managers to read and print
- PDF case studies are easy to present during an interview
- You can customize a PDF for each job

Website

- Provides a URL that you can include on resume, LinkedIn, etc.
- Allows recruiters/hiring managers to check you out beforehand
- Shows off web skills



The Truth is, Both Are Best

I actually believe you should have **both**, because there are clear benefits to having both.

However, I don't think you need to put up detailed case studies on your website.

Here's an alternative idea...

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THERE IS NO “RIGHT” DESIGN



Design Tips

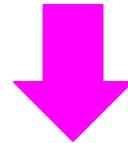
- Stick to 2 or 3 fonts max
 - Google Fonts are free and easy to add
- Don't make the font size too small!
- Get color inspiration from the web or out in the world

LISA MURNAN

User Experience Designer

UX Portfolio
2019

Look for my PDF
template down in the
Projects section



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PORTFOLIO STRUCTURE & FORMAT



Formatting Tips

- Choose the 4:3 aspect ratio vs widescreen (16:9) for slides
- Get one page “perfect” - your header, margins, columns, fonts, colors, captions, footer. Print it to make sure it’s perfect. Then use that page as a template for the other pages.
- Be consistent with the borders and drop shadows you use on images
- Save your images out at a larger size/higher resolution than you need in your slide so that people can zoom in and read them.



Formatting Tips

- Include page numbers on every content slide (but not the Title and Thank You slides)
- Add a page count to each case study - i.e. 1 of 2, 2 of 2.
- Put your name and contact information at the bottom of every content slide
- Don't use dark colored backgrounds on any slide!
- Save it as a PDF and print it to test it.

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INFORMATIONAL PAGES



My Portfolio's Table of Contents

1. Cover page
2. A little bit about myself... (1 page)
3. About this portfolio and my design process (1 page)
4. Case studies (five case studies that vary based on the job description – 10-12 pages)
5. What people say about me (testimonials) (1 page)
6. “Thank You” page with contact info

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CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



Case Study Criteria

- Include 2-3 solid project case studies
- Pick case studies that highlight your best work and/or a well-executed design process
- Choose case studies that you can tell a good story about (i.e. how did the project evolve from start to finish)
- Show project diversity if you have it (website, mobile app, web app, different industries)



Case Study Tips

- If your case study is a student project or a conceptual design project that you made up, you need to make that clear
- Recruiters and hiring managers are looking for examples of “real” projects (i.e. something you were paid to do by a client) - these are perceived much better than student projects
- Don't be afraid to include personal projects that show off your creativity and thought process
- Show the evolution of the design, not just pixel perfect screenshots of the end product

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ANATOMY OF A CASE STUDY



Anatomy of a Case Study

- Company/Client Name
- Project
- Date of Project
- Project Objective
- Project Background
- Role
- Design Process
- Results

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NDA WORK



NDA Tips

- If your portfolio is strong enough without the NDA case study, don't even worry about it
- If you've signed a hardcore non-disclosure agreement, be very cautious about revealing anything about that project
- You can scrub your designs (blurring out or removing logos and other proprietary information)
- You can add a password to your PDF portfolios



NDA Tips

- If the project is public, it's generally no longer considered to be “confidential” and you should be okay including it

From my latest beast of an NDA:

“The term “Confidential Information” does not include information which: **(a) is or becomes generally available to the public other than as a result of disclosure by the Receiving Party (or any person to whom the Receiving Party disclosed such information);** (b) was known by the Receiving Party prior to its disclosure by the Disclosing Party; (c) was independently developed by Receiving Party without use of the Confidential Information; or (d) becomes available to the Receiving Party on a non-confidential basis from a source other than the Disclosing Party, provided that such source is not bound by a confidentiality agreement, confidentiality obligation or fiduciary duty which prohibits disclosure and the Receiving Party has no reason to believe that such source may be restricted from making such disclosure.”

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CUSTOMIZE FOR EACH JOB



Tips for Customizing

- Mix and match your case studies to suit the role
- Change terminology (job titles, names of deliverables, etc.) to match what's in the job description
- You may need to remove your contact information if you're applying for a job through a recruiter
- If you make it to the interview stage you can add pages (like if you did a take-home design exercise) or personalize your title slide to include the company's logo on it

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GETTING YOUR PDF ONLINE



How to Get Your PDF Online

- FTP it to a folder on your website
- Upload it to Dropbox
- Get a Share link from Google Slides
- If the URL is unwieldy you can use Bit.ly to generate a small link
- You may want to create a unique link for each version of your portfolio (if you are customizing for different employers/roles)

Feel free to get in touch!

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How to Get a UX Design Job book