

# TIPS AND TRICKS TO LANDING A JOB WITHIN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

IAN SHERLOCK - May 6, 2024

Hours keep ticking by, your eyes bloodshot from staring at a computer screen, your fingers starting to cramp from endlessly scrolling on job boards.

It seems like everyone is complaining about not having enough people to work these days, yet for creatives, the job hunt can still be an overwhelming process that doesn't have an end in sight.

Finding a job in the creative industry can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the United States workforce consisted of 2.76 million artists and creatives in 2022.

BLS considers 11 occupational categories as artists, including architects, art directors, fine artists, animators, designers, actors, producers/directors/choreographers, musicians, announcers, writers and photographers. The unemployment rate for these career fields was just 3.9% in 2022.

You might be saying to yourself, "That all sounds great, but how in the world do I get one of the 2.76 million jobs out there?" Don't fret.

If you want to work in the creative industry, here are four tips and tricks for landing a job.

## The Power of Your Portfolio

Creatives pride themselves on their storytelling abilities. When applying for a job, your story may be the only way to show your work and set you apart from other potential applicants.

Colette Barry, a freelance graphic designer, content writer and web designer, discusses some statistics in her 2023 newsletter, *The Power of a Spectacular Portfolio: Winning Freelancing Jobs*. The article pays more attention to freelance work in creative industries but is also applicable when looking for full-time employment.

According to Barry's newsletter, a well-polished portfolio increases your chances of landing a job by 70%.

Numbers are great, but take it from a professional artist and educator at Shippensburg University, Steven Dolbin. "Unless you have a reputation, that portfolio is what speaks for you," Dolbin says about the significance of being able to show work samples.

"It's a primary thing; it's the thing that's going to get you the interview," says Dolbin. "The portfolio for young beginning people is more important than the reputation because you haven't got a reputation yet."

Understanding the significance of your portfolio is half the battle. What's the other half? Putting the portfolio together.

"Create a website that is a digital portfolio," says Alix Rouby, the director of internships and experiential learning at the Shippensburg University Career Center.

Rouby recommends curating your work samples on a portfolio site that you can easily change depending on the kind of job you are applying to. She recommends using Wix.

"Wix.com, it's easy for even the most computer and web design illiterate person," says Rouby.

Rouby recommends taking advantage of Wix's feature, which allows you to build multiple sites with your account to further target your samples at the company or organization you are applying to.

## **The Ability to Pivot**

No matter how many applications you fill out and no matter how strong your portfolio is, you might not always get a call back for your dream job. However, that shouldn't deter you from trying to get your foot in the door with an organization you want to work for.

Jonathan Gutekunst is working in his ideal position as a news photographer for CBS 21 out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Despite this being the creative work he wanted to do, he started out in a less ideal role, doing master control for the station.

"I knew it wasn't really what I wanted to do, but I took the job because I really just wanted to get my foot in somewhere," says Gutekunst on starting at CBS 21 in a different position than he wanted to work.

Gutekunst took advantage of the opportunity to work master control at the station, allowing him to transition into the job he wanted to do in just a few months at CBS 21.

## **Networking Nights**

In the ultra-competitive creative world, it takes putting yourself out there to meet the right people to find work opportunities.

Dolbin is a nationally recognized artist whose work has been displayed at the OK Harris Gallery in New York City, owned by world-famous art agent Ivan Karp.

At the time, Dolbin was a graduate student at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. On a whim, he decided to go into the OK Harris Gallery and ask Karp to look at some of his work samples.

“I can’t sell this stuff, but I think it’s important and I want to show it,” said Karp when Dolbin presented his work.

Karp went on to feature various pieces of Dolbin’s work at galleries and acted as a reference for Dolbin to win an art grant.

The moral of the story is you never know what opportunities await if you just ask. Dolbin was a simple college student, yet he didn’t let that deter him from expanding his network with someone most would say he had no business talking to.

## **Dress for the Job You Want**

Wearing the “perfect outfit” for an interview in the creative world can be difficult, as so many careers fall into this category. There are a few factors and considerations you should make when finding the right clothes for your next interview.

The first thing you need to do is research the company and determine the work culture to know how to dress for the job you want. You can go about this in a number of ways.

Start with a simple Google search of the company or specific role you are interested in. This can be a great way to establish the personal brand necessary for the role and learn more about the company while you're at it.

If you still don’t know what to wear, don’t be afraid to bring a little networking into the equation. Look up current or previous employees working the job you are interested in and private message them some questions about the role and workplace culture.

When you have an idea of what you should wear to the interview, it's time actually to put the outfit together.

"It's better to overdress than underdress," says Rouby. Dress for the job you want, not the job you have."

Rouby went on to discuss the ethical considerations associated with clothing and the job hunt.