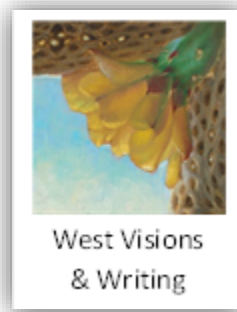


Proposal:  
A Researched Portfolio Resource to Assist New Graduates in Application of  
Marketing Concepts to Obtain Employment



2017

Deirdre West



West Visions  
& Writing

## Abstract

New college graduates often struggle to break into the professional writing industry due to lack of specific industry knowledge, connections, and practical experience. I propose to research contemporary management hiring practices as well as professional writing design practices to create an online portfolio resource, which will incorporate different types of professional writing examples discussing marketing writing techniques, content, and rhetorical appeal while demonstrating continuity of brand and design. This proposed resource will build on existing online portfolios but with a narrower focus of creating marketing related professional writing examples. I will use research to back up design and content choices to explore the skills contemporary managers are seeking in professional writing job applicants.

Proposal:  
A Researched Portfolio Resource to Assist New Graduates in  
Application of Marketing Concepts to Obtain Employment



West Visions  
& Writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

College graduates can find it difficult to break into their chosen field due to a lack of practical experience. Today, employers have more applicants to choose from, to fill a limited number of job openings, and many new graduates don't make it past the online application (Goodman 2015). Contemporary Managers are looking for applicants who can work well with a team as well as take initiative and work independently, to think creatively and create relationships between varied elements, evaluate the context of facts and events, adapt concepts to problem-solving, and demonstrate flexibility to new ways of thinking (Grama 2011) (Hirschi 2012) (Majer 2011).

Being competitive in the job market requires literacy in a variety of discourse communities and the ability to communicate using different digital platforms (Costea 2007). Employers value applicants who are versatile, adaptable, and can communicate fluently in more than one industry. They also realize digital literacy involves more than mastering digital tool technique; it is about using those tools for effective communication socially (Jones 2012). One way to break into the professional writing field is to demonstrate practical competence through a digital portfolio, which exhibits problem-solving, digital literacies, practical application of relevant knowledge, and understanding of varied industry cultures. Because technology changes fast and with it organizational cultures, digital portfolios need to continue to evolve and demonstrate the job applicant's ability to be part of dynamic knowledge creation (Costea 2007).

As a Professional Writing Masters student, I know firsthand the importance of translating a college education into practical application. Graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2016 from Northern Arizona University with a Bachelor of Science in Humanities, required the ability to analyze assignment requirements and conduct research using credible sources to create structurally sound projects. Using these skills, I propose researching current management and organizational culture trends and digital literacy practices in order to understand how contemporary organizational values and expectations should influence the way new graduates design portfolios. Although there are existing academic writing resources like Purdue Owl, I propose an online resource with a narrower professional writing focus, which will demonstrate types of marketing writing and explore issues of rhetoric and visual design.

## II. PROJECT CONTEXT

Advances in technology and diversity in the workforce have led to a change in the nature of careers and the way organizations are structured. (Hirschi 2012) At the height of the industrial era, Toyota set a world example in how organizations could achieve goals of productivity and waste elimination. (Majer 2011) Productivity meant extracting more for an hour of time and standardization of process, training and job performance, as well as breaking complex tasks down to simple tasks, which cheap unskilled labor could perform repetitively (DeMarco 1999). However currently, to remain competitive in an



West Visions  
& Writing

attention economy, organizations need to stay at the forefront of innovation, which requires 'knowledge workers' (Parker 2001). Work is less about producing things and more focused on coordinating with others to create knowledge (Majer 2011).

Contemporary managerial ideology suggests employees are part of dynamic knowledge creation and in order to encourage creative thinking, corporations have had to move away from rigid bureaucratic structures leftover from the industrial era and instead, encourage fluid work practices where employees adapt to fill a variety of roles within an organizational structure. (Hirschi 2012) (Majer 2011) Ideally, applicants should demonstrate the ability to work well with a team, enhancing team ability. Employers expect workers to be flexible to new ideas and adapt knowledge to problem-solving, to take initiative and work independently, think creatively and create relationships between varied elements, and evaluate the context of facts and events (Grama 2011).

From large academic writing resources like owl.english.purdue.edu to independent writing technique blogs, I have not found a resource focusing specifically on templates for marketing resources, using research to explain methodology. My research will expand upon theories and practices for each type of professional writing project through interviewing established professionals to analyze differences between academic theory and Marketing practices. My research will strive to answer the problem of how a new graduate can design a portfolio to respond and appeal to contemporary western management culture and goals, demonstrating the qualities of a knowledge worker through innovation, digital literacy, project versatility, and practical marketing communication knowledge.

### III. **PROJECT METHODOLOGY**

I will use qualitative methods to collect and analyze information to create a digital portfolio that will provide suggestions for specific types of marketing writing a writer should include in a portfolio with design, content, and format tips in order to respond to the needs of contemporary organizations. I will research desired skill sets of job applicants to create templates for a: project proposal, brochure, newsletter, podcast, a multimedia presentation, and a research report. The content of each type of template will focus on what type of content is most appropriate for that format and how to structure and design its message in a way to enhance rhetorical appeal.

I will focus on issues of: management trends, digital literacy, rhetoric and credibility, the need to cite sources and how to follow a style guide. I will provide a links page linking to online job resources for freelance writers, a blog page to continue the conversation about professional writing, and a contact page for site visitors to connect with me. I will link the site to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn accounts and my personal art portfolio website to improve SEO ratings, site visibility, enhance Social Media presence, and demonstrate communication versatility. For Facebook and Twitter I will create accounts, which will extend the portfolio site's design, brand, and message.



West Visions  
& Writing

#### A. **Materials and Procedures**

I will create my portfolio online, which will allow me to address a wide audience and demonstrate digital literacy. I will research online job postings for professional writers, focusing on companies shaped by contemporary management practices, make a list of what kind of experience/qualifications their desired applicants need to have, and translate that into what a portfolio should demonstrate. I will look at websites advertising the services of freelance writers to see what they provide as work samples. I will use the textbooks and academic articles from my Master's Courses on Digital Literacy and Management to review contemporary organizational trends and corresponding professional writing practices. I will use academic articles from the Cline Library to take a closer look at changing management/organizational culture and values and how that ties into hiring practices. I will tie those findings into existing online templates/examples of professional writing to examine which elements are consistent, and which are not.

#### B. **Participants**

I will consult established writing professionals to see how professional writing theory translates into practical use. I will do a semi-structured in-person interview with the writer in my marketing department to find out how she formats company newsletters, brochures, and other written promotional material and why. I will also informally connect with the members of the Professional Writers Forum on LinkedIn that I am a member of and post questions asking if professional portfolios are helpful, how I should format one, and why. The members of the forum are both established professional writers and employers of writers and will have first-hand knowledge of the topic. I will go to a Meetup of the Phoenix chapter of the Society of Technical Communicators, network and set up semi-structured interviews with some of the members to get their perspectives on current employer expectations, corporate culture, and portfolio practices.

#### C. **Data Analysis**

I will first compare the theories from my Master's coursework with research from the Cline Library for increased clarification. Next I will compare those results with existing online templates and writing portfolios to identify practical examples of academic theories. I will create an outline for each portfolio example based on this research and then will address ensuing questions with both online and textual research and consulting industry professionals. (Outlined in section B: Participants)

#### D. **Proposed Timeline**

The proposed project timeline will begin 8/28/2017 and be completed by 12/15/17. For details see Appendix A.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

My goal is to put into practical use the knowledge I have gained from my college coursework, not only to increase my ability to compete for jobs in the workforce but also to create a resource for new graduates who look to create or improve their own portfolios. I think the benefit of a digital portfolio is it has the capability to remain dynamic and change with industry changes and continue a conversation about how to write professionally and why.



West Visions  
& Writing

## Appendix A: Timeline

### Proposed Timeline

My project timeline is broken down into three separate stages. At the end of each stage, I will submit a draft of the work completed and a summary of my progress to Dr Rothfork.

**Stage 1:** (Figure 1) The first stage encompasses the first 5 weeks from 8/28/17 to 10/2/17. The first task involves research of current professional writing practices for the portfolio examples: proposal, brochure, newsletter, podcast, multimedia presentation, original marketing images, and a Research Paper. Week 2, I will identify a site theme, create a brand, and design a logo using Photoshop. I will use these to ensure a consistent theme in the tone, subject, and visual presentation of all portfolio content examples. Week 3, I will create an example of a project proposal whose topic is how to create, design, and format a proposal, with a brief discussion of what constitutes strong and weak content. Week 4, I will create a brochure example whose subject is how to create, design, and format a strong brochure, with a discussion of how much information is too much. Week 5 I will create one of two newsletter examples. The first newsletter's topic will be deciding between e-newsletters and print, format, design, and types of content. At the end of stage 1, on 10/2/17, I will submit the work I have completed to date.

Figure 1



**Stage 2:** (Figure 2) The second stage encompasses the next 5 weeks from 10/2-11/6/17 and allows a week for each task. Week 6, I will continue work on task 5 creating a newsletter example on a specific topic that explores current research within a specific field. Week 7 will involve the creation of a podcast discussing some of my background in visual design as a marketing example of communication versatility. Week 8, I will create a 8-10 slide PowerPoint with some limited animations discussing multimedia presentations and best practices. Week 9 I will work on task 8 taking photographs to illustrate both the website and the different portfolio examples. I will use Photoshop to enhance the images and add text to communicate and reinforce site themes. Week 10 I will edit portfolio content, incorporate images and begin to incorporate images and content into a website format. for On 11/6/17 I will submit to Dr. Rothfork the completed work to date.

Figure 2



West Visions  
& Writing



**Stage 3:** (Figure 3) The third week encompasses the last 5 weeks from 11/6-12/12/17. Task 10 will be a 5-6 page research paper example, which will discuss format, design, illustrations, citations, and the importance of tone to enhance credibility. I will include a references page and because this project may require additional research I have allowed an extra week for its completion. Task 11, I will create a Twitter account and Facebook page, which continue the portfolio site's theme, brand, and design. Task 12, I will link the Facebook and Twitter pages to the portfolio site, as well as link to my LinkedIn profile and to my existing art website, which shows a broader range of my art background. I will also create a links page, which will link to credible professional writing sites, to provide additional resources for site visitors but also to increase the site's SEO rating. Task 13, I will test each page and link in my site and look for errors. I will also give it an informal trial with other users to see if they catch anything I might have missed. I will submit the capstone project by no later than 12/12/17.

Figure 3





## Appendix B: References

- 1) Costea, B., Crump, N., & Amiridis, K. (2007). "Managerialism and 'Infinite Human Resourcefulness': a Commentary on the 'Therapeutic Habitus', 'Derecognition of Finitude' and the Modern Sense of Self." *Journal For Cultural Research*, 11(3), 245-264.  
doi:10.1080/14797580701763855
- 2) DeMarco, Tom and Lister, Timothy. (1999) *Peopeware: Productive Projects and Teams 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Dorset House Publishing Company. Print.
- 3) Goodman, Leah McGrath (2015). "U.S. Millennial College Graduates: Young, Educated, Jobless." *Newsweek*. Web. <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/06/05/millennial-college-graduates-young-educated-jobless-335821.html>
- 4) Grama, C., & Sorin, G. (2011). "Promotion of Human Resources in Modern Organizations." *Revista Academiei Fortelor Terestre*, 16(2), 175-181.
- 5) Hackos, JoAnn. (1994). *Managing Your Documentation Projects*. Wiley. Print.
- 6) Hirschi, A. (2012). "The Career Resources Model: An Integrative Framework for Career Counsellors." *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 40(4), 369-383.  
doi:10.1080/03069885.2012.700506
- 7) Kanungo, R. N. (1990). "Culture and Work Alienation Western Models and Eastern Realities." *International Journal of Psychology*, 25(3-6), 795-812. doi:10.1080/00207599008247928
- 8) Majer, C., & Bell, C. (2011). The Silent Killers of Productivity and Profit. *T+D*, 65(2), 62-67.
- 9) Olree, B. (2004). "86 Employee Shop...Really Serious About Manufacturing." *MAN: Modern Applications News*, 38(10), 38-41.
- 10) Parker, S. K., Wall, T. D., & Cordery, J. L. (2001). "Future Work Design Research and Practice: Towards an Elaborated Model of Work Design." *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 74(4), 413.