

Video resumes: getting that job with a click of a button

by Amy_Winter

Lights! Camera! Action! The interview process has started, and you are the star.

Get ready to list your qualifications and interests on camera. The concept of video resumes is becoming mainstream with the help of the YouTube generation.

VIDEO RESUMES - Job applicant Heike Froeschke shows just how easy it is to create a video resume, a concept becoming mainstream with the help of the YouTube generation. CNS Photo courtesy of HighTechMARKET Inc. Not just an applicant reading his or her written resume to a camera, video resumes serve as a "short promo enticing the employer to take a look at your 'real' resume online," according to Joe Turner, a career expert from CareerBuilder.com. "Think of it as a short trailer for a new movie."

It can have quite an impact. Just ask Aleksey Vayner. The Yale University graduate could have never predicted that his over-the-top resume would end up being the laughingstock of the Internet. His infamous video resume, titled "Impossible is nothing," features him dancing, lifting weights at the gym and playing tennis.

The new medium is supposed to act as an additional element during the interview process, meaning it goes along with the written resume and cover letter. Mark Oldman, co-president and co-founder of Vault, a media company focused on careers, says a video resume helps employers gain a new perspective of each applicant, serving as the living and breathing part of the written resume.

You can communicate your ability to speak as well as your passion for the job. And it steps in when distance prevents you from coming in for an interview.

"It gives a window into an applicant's personality," says Rod Kurtz, senior editor at Inc.com. "A dynamic

personality can't be conveyed in a creative application on paper."

BEWARE OF DRAWBACKS

One drawback to the new resume is that some employers hesitate when introduced to the new concept. Going through the videos could serve as a time-waster for managers, especially when they aren't familiar with the video format. And if a job-seeker isn't interested or passionate about the job, it is more obvious in a video due to a stiff delivery: terrible body language and poor facial expressions.

There's no guarantee in any of this.

"Just because you have a wonderful video resume doesn't mean it will be effective for your employer," says Oldman.

Some employers are concerned they'll be accused of discrimination. Because the employer can see the candidate, there is a possibility he or she can judge based on the person's skin color, ethnicity or disability.

Brian Kruger, president of CollegeGrad.com, dismisses that. He says there is no bigger risk to discriminate in a video versus a live interview. He says a greater disadvantage is the inability to adapt your responses on the video to fit each employer's needs.

No established rules exist to explain the proper outline for a video resume. Todd Raphael, editor-in-chief of ere.net, an online source for recruiters and human resources professionals, believes many employers have reservations regarding the fairly new interview method. Because employers aren't sure what classifies a good or bad video resume, most don't require job applicants to submit one with their written resume and cover

letter.

Oldman says, although most employers aren't specifically asking for job-seekers to turn in a video resume, it doesn't mean managers aren't open to the idea. Eighty-nine percent of employers say they would look at the video resumes, according to a Vault survey.

"Because video resumes are such a new phenomenon, there aren't yet universal guidelines for their creation," says Oldman. "We conducted this survey to give job-seekers a better idea of what works best in video resumes."

SOFTWARE SITES

HighTechMARKET Inc. is a career company based in San Diego that provides video resume software for Internet users. Peggy Fleming, the company's president, says video resumes are more common in Europe and Asia, and they are making their way to the United States. She claims her company's 2-year-old program is the most innovative video resume software available.

"We make sure job-seekers use the software in the right way and companies don't misuse it," says Fleming.

Once the user has purchased a Webcam, he or she is ready to start the process. Using a personal e-mail address and the option of password protection, users can create their video resume by using a Web-based version or a downloaded version.

The software at www.gocvone.com provides different sections in order to help structure the video. Allowing users to go back and review the recorded sections gives applicants the opportunity to edit it until satisfied with

the results. And there is even a teleprompter function.

"It isn't just about taking any camera, recording yourself and sending the video clip," says Fleming.

Job-seekers can return to their video resume account for 12 months in order to make changes. Fleming admits it takes awhile to become familiar with the process of creating video resumes. It may take up to a few weeks the first time, and it helps to send the video in for critiquing by company consultants.

Almost 100 job-seekers entered Vault's first video resume makeover contest this year. Four winners received a salon makeover, a consultation on their paper resume and a Vault-produced video resume.

"Video resumes are a new tool for job-seekers," says Tatiana Ridley, junior publicist at Vault. "And we want to do our best at Vault to make sure people know all the important tips for making a successful one."

TIPS FOR A PROFESSIONAL LOOK

Sixty-five percent of employees feel the suit is the best option for wardrobe in the video, according to the Vault survey. Thirty-one percent of respondents favor business casual and only 4 percent prefer everyday casual wear.

"It's pretty much an interview, so why not dress the part," said one respondent. "You are selling your image, too."

Fleming agrees that dressing professionally is an important part of the video. Job-seekers need to present themselves as they would in a live interview. Plus, Fleming says a person's voice and attitude changes when he or she is dressed for the job. To go along with the professional look, Inc.com recommends choosing an appropriate backdrop with no background noise in a well-lit room to set the mood.

Twenty-eight percent of employees believe keeping the video short and concise is key to producing an effective video. Kurtz says viewers have a lower attention span when watching videos on computer screens. Limit the video to no more than three to five minutes and avoid rambling. CareerBuilder.com recommends the ideal length as one to three minutes.

"Time flies by when you are taping it, but not when an employer is watching," according to CareerBuilder.com.

Twenty percent of the survey respondents feel a well-rehearsed speech is most important. Think of the video resume as a casual conversation with a prospective employer, Kurtz says. Keep eye contact with the camera. Don't wing the speech; practice what you are going to say. Write out some main points if you feel more comfortable. Don't repeat all the information from the written resume. Remain enthusiastic and keep the viewer engaged. Speak clearly and smile. Be creative to a certain point, according to Inc.com.

Vault.com mentions the advantages of adapting your video to the specific job field in which you are applying. Filming several takes to review is also important to help choose the best one. The site suggests a format for the speech:

- Say your first and last name.

- State your educational background.

- Explain why you are interested in the company and/or the position.

- Indicate your top three qualifications.

- Discuss abilities that relate to the job.

- Thank the viewer for his or her time.

You don't have to be a computer pro to master the art of video resume making. In addition to software, you only need a Webcam that costs around \$20 to \$30, according to Fleming. You might also choose to video using a digital camera or video camera. Applicants can upload their video and send it through software available at certain job/career sites. Job-seekers may e-mail it or even burn it onto a DVD.

"Employers can view a video resume with a click of a button," says Oldman. "The ability to create and submit a video resume has gotten dramatically easier."

Some fields seem to be more willing to accept video resumes than others. The job markets in IT and telecommunications are most comfortable in receiving video resumes from applicants, according to Fleming. Marketing and public relations come in second, followed by journalism and acting.

This cutting-edge technological tool is still in its beginning stages, but may be embraced by more companies

in the future.

"It is the first inning of what promises to be a very long ballgame," says Oldman.

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