



Your 4-Step Professional Branding Toolkit





It's easy to be intimidated by the process of cultivating a unique professional brand. That's understandable, as there's a lot to consider.

What will your professional portfolio look like?

How will you leverage the power of social media?

What sorts of personal style will you add to your online presence to stand out to potential employers, and how much flair is actually too much?

And don't forget: what is your plan to update and manage the tools you choose to use?

Professional brand management can be perfectly simple and straightforward — it's just a matter of deciding what tools and approaches suit your job search and putting them to work. Let's go through four of the most common tools you should know about that can help you establish your personal brand.



STEP #1: Your resume or CV

Every component of your resume or Curriculum Vitæ (CV) is an opportunity to express your personal brand and stand out as an excellent candidate to employers. Your main considerations should be showcasing the successful results of your past work with brevity and style.

Contact info, educational qualifications, and work history are a must. Beyond that, you have several optional categories to show off your credentials, such as awards, publications, and volunteer work.

Aside from the obvious benefits of an up-to-date record of your achievements, resumes also convey your aesthetic style and digital literacy. Now that the majority of resumes and CVs are delivered online, you can take advantage by linking to your online portfolio and LinkedIn page as well.

Every industry uses some form of [resume or CV](#), so it can be hard to know which is right for you. CVs tend to be slightly longer and more focused on educational background than resumes. In the U.S., resumes are standard in all fields with a few exceptions. When applying for a job in education, for example, a CV is the way to go.



Keep it simple
A simple resume format is usually the best approach





STEP #2: Your portfolio

Your portfolio is where you display the work listed on your resume in a way that can really hook your desired employer. Use your creativity to figure out how to best frame your achievements. If you're a creative or marketer, your portfolio will be a curated selection of the work you're most proud of.

Online portfolios are a must for anyone wanting to stay competitive in their job search. But don't forget to create a physical version as well to bring to job interviews. A simple leather bound binder with just enough content for an employer to easily digest in a few minutes often works best.

Professional portfolios are more common in creative careers like design, copywriting, architecture, or videography. But it doesn't just have to be a compendium of creative output. People in sales, business, and management can include customer reviews or letters of recommendation as well as detailed project and outcome descriptions.



STEP #3: Your professional website

For some professionals, there isn't a clear distinction between a portfolio and a personal website. But even if the purpose of your site is to get potential employers to peruse your work, it also serves as a can't-miss opportunity to take your self-branding up a level.

A professional website is your personal brand management mothership: The place you get to tell your career narrative and knock the socks off whomever happens by your site.

Think of the "about me" section of your website as a concise platform for your personal brand manifesto. This is where you can really let your uniqueness shine. Your bio might include descriptions of your work style and ideal work environment, as well as the reasons why you are uniquely qualified to rock at your next position.

Resumes and portfolios can feel impersonal to hiring managers. Your website lets them know what you're really like.

What you include on your site will be determined by the type of role you're seeking. Look at the websites of people who have jobs similar to what you want, as well as those of employees at companies you admire.

Some basics to touch on are your bio, online portfolio, contact information, and a list of your specializations and competencies. One great way to take your personal brand even further is to [create a professional blog on your site or LinkedIn profile](#).



STEP #4: Your social media presence

Job seekers have a wealth of opportunities for personal branding through their social media profiles. Having a robust LinkedIn profile complete with projects, endorsements, blog posts, and beaming recommendations is key. But as polished as your LinkedIn profile is, it won't do you any favors if your Facebook and Instagram profiles tell a different story.

Make sure you take down any photos that contrast with your brand as a vibrant, capable team player. Once you've purged your profiles of any pictures or statuses that need to go, build up a newer, stronger presence with the sorts of content that will draw exactly the type of attention you'd like to get from employers.



Woo employers online
Check out our free course
on social media job hunts.

Some industries, like PR and entertainment, rely more heavily on social media than others to vet potential candidates. Now that social media is so pervasive, though, hiring managers in most fields invest plenty of time in scouring profiles to get a feel for whether or not you'll be a great culture fit at their organization.

With these four components in your toolkit, the hard work of promoting your brand is sure to pay off.



About Mac Prichard

Mac Prichard, founder and publisher of [Mac's List](#), has been connecting people to rewarding work for decades. As a transplant to Portland, Oregon in the early 1990s, Mac learned the secrets to finding work in a competitive market. He has since become a recognized expert on job hunting and career management. Mac writes for [Mac's List](#), hosts a weekly podcast, [Find Your Dream Job](#), and is the author of [Land Your Dream Job in Portland \(and Beyond\)](#) and [Land Your Dream Job Anywhere](#).

About Mac's List

Since 2001, Mac's List has been Oregon's premier job search resource, an online community connecting thousands of passionate and talented people to meaningful work opportunities in the Pacific Northwest. A registered [B Corporation](#), Mac's List is an organization with a social mission: to give people the tools and knowledge they need to conduct effective job searches. We do this through our [job board](#), a [blog](#), a [podcast](#), and [on-line courses](#) all dedicated to the nuts and bolts of job hunting and career management.

Contact us anytime

mac@macslist.org
www.macslist.org





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