

10 top tips for landing a creative job

The creative industries are booming and there are more jobs than ever, but competition is fierce. Give yourself the best chance of landing that dream job with these top ten tips from Pip Jamieson, founder of professional networking platform for the creative industries The Dots.



Although so much work is online, more traditional employers will still want to see a physical portfolio. (Image: Alex Rumford).

1. Get prepared

It's best to get all your ducks in a row before applying for jobs. Make sure your portfolio, cover letter template, website and profile are all up-to-date and looking great. This will set you up and allow you to focus fully on your job search.

2. Work on personal projects

Your portfolio is essentially your calling card – the better it is, the juicier the role you could land.

One of my all time favourite quotes is from Micah Walker, creative partner at [The Monkeys](#): “If your portfolio reflects nothing personal, it might as well be someone else’s.”

Employers have to review hundreds of portfolios, so stand out with self-initiated personal projects – it shows you're proactive and passionate. This can be anything from your own personal brand identity through to your work created on internship placements or submitted to industry competitions.

3. Get your portfolio shipshape

Your portfolio is essentially your calling card – the better it is, the juicier the role you could land! As you won't always be in the room to talk first-hand, make sure your project descriptions are clear and engaging, and you've credited relevant contributors on projects.

Professional photographs are also a great way to enhance your work and make your portfolio stand out. And as the first person to review portfolios will most likely be an HR manager, always include a CV outlining your education and previous work experience.

4. Promote yourself

Once you've got a killer portfolio together it's time to get busy promoting yourself both online and offline. Even though so much work is now online, more traditional employers will still want to see a physical portfolio at interviews.

From there, you can then set about promoting yourself online with submissions to blogs and publications, your own website (our favourite web building sites are [Squarespace](#) and [CargoCollective](#)) and of course set up a profile on [The Dots](#) and connect with potential employers and creative collaborators.

5. Network your socks off

Attend events, gallery openings, workshops, talks, networking events and go armed with business cards.

Also make the most out of your grad shows and network with potential employers and industry contacts. They could turn out to be your future boss!

6. A killer cover letter

Cover letters are a pain but can make all the difference. Make your life easier by creating a template that's easy to customise and design up what is normally a boring word document to really stand out from the crowd.

The crux of a cover letter is to express why you're perfect for the job, so make sure you give specific reasons for wanting to work for the company, while still keeping it short and snappy – there's no time to waffle or repeat what's on your CV.

7. Applying for roles

Use all the tools at your disposal to land that amazing job. Research companies you'd love to work for and contact them directly for future job opportunities. For a better response rate, never address your applications to Sir or Madam, and instead find a specific name – you can always call the company to check.

Internships are also a great way to keep your skills fresh while searching and could lead to more permanent roles. And of course, set up job alerts on websites such as [The Dots](#) to get notified of the latest jobs at your favourite companies.

8. Prepare for interviews

Spending time preparing for interviews will not only improve your chances of landing the job, but will also reduce the nervous energy that builds up before an interview. Make sure you swot up on the company: who are their clients, what are their areas of expertise?

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When you are offered the chance to ask questions back, always have some up your sleeve. A blank response when asked simply shows you're not interested.

It might sound trivial, but also know your audience and plan your dress accordingly. There's nothing worse than turning up in a suit when your employer is in jeans.

9. Interview time

I recently presented alongside the amazing Chris Doyle from [Interbrand](#) and he said something that really stuck with me: "I meet lots of great designers, but not that many great people."

In the end companies are looking for creatives who will work well in their organisation, so your interview is a chance to let your personality shine and communicate your passion. Just remember to stay humble though.

10. Get your portfolio reviewed

Getting industry eyes on your portfolio is invaluable, so try and find a way of getting feedback from people that already work in the sector you're trying to break into. Have a think about who you might be able to approach for help, from friends and family to university contacts and past colleagues.

The Dots are running monthly [Portfolio Masterclasses](#) where you can get your portfolio reviewed by industry leaders. The first series covers advertising, photography, graphic design, digital & UX/UI, illustration and directing & videography.