

Wooing Job Recruiters With Video Résumés

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Are video résumés the next best thing to being there?

Companies are offering multimedia capabilities that go way beyond the old one-page paper résumé. Job seekers can upload videos, portfolios and even PowerPoint presentations all in an effort to impress employers before actually meeting them.

In a 2008 survey, only 24% of senior executives from the country's largest 1,000 companies said they accept video résumés, according to staffing firm Robert Half International Inc. But despite this reluctance from some human-resources departments, multimedia offerings are expanding. Video résumé sites, including BriteTab.com, OptimalResume.com, InterviewStudio.com and ResumeBook.tv, have all launched in the past few years.



Tim Bower

Proponents say a video component helps to present a clearer picture of a candidate, especially if it's a role that requires people skills. "This is for people who need to sell their personality in their job," says Katherine Yoder, business manager at Chicago-based BriteTab.com Inc., which launched in January.

We tried four such sites and then asked a job recruiter to evaluate our video résumés. Even with these sites, putting together our presentations was time consuming. We had to register at each, and two of them required us to manually type in all of the information included in a traditional résumé. Then, we used our computer's Web cam to record our video segments—a process that required several rehearsals. The

multimedia résumé was uploaded to the sites, and links to them could be forwarded to potential employers.

The results were sophisticated—our completed presentations didn't resemble an amateurish YouTube clip—but we had a few gripes. In one instance, our recruiter spent 15 minutes trying to view our résumé, which would have put us out of the running.

After registering for BriteTab.com, we were given step-by-step instructions about how to build our profile. It didn't take long, though we were a little annoyed once we realized résumé information needed to be entered manually into customizable fields. (A feature that allows users to upload résumés is coming, Ms. Yoder says). We customized the background of our written résumé and placed videos and images throughout the résumé by dragging them to an area of our résumé. For example, the site suggests placing a short video next to a specific company to introduce the work that you've done there or adding a head shot. Users pay \$8 a month to publish résumés to the Web and send out the links to employers (a free option offers résumés profiles without the video component). Donna Farrugia, executive director of The Creative Group, a division of Robert Half International Inc., says our intro was easy to view and the layout worked well to highlight the places where we worked. "It really made those brands pop off the page," she says.

At InterviewStudio Inc. job seekers build their profile to mimic a recruiting interview. Once we signed up we were asked to take an optional 45-minute skills, motivation and personality assessment, a feature that helps recruiters pre-screen candidates, says Colleen Aylward, the company's chief executive who is also a recruiter. Next we chose eight questions (from a longer list) to answer on video. The video-recording process was extremely clear; the site shows users how to position themselves in front of the camera and provides sample videos. Job seekers pay \$50 for a 60-day subscription to give access to recruiters, who could click to see our answer to a specific question instead of viewing the entire video. There were two glitches: We got an error message every time we tried to fill out the "skills-assessment" section. And once our profile was complete, the recruiter couldn't log in to view it. While the support team provided correct log-in information and apologized for the inconvenience, it would have caused our résumé to be passed over, Ms. Farrugia says, although eventually she was able to view our portfolio. (Ms. Aylward says both technical glitches have been fixed.)

At OptimalResume Inc. also allowed us to create separate videos for different portions of our résumé (a viewer could choose to see the "experience" section while skipping the job-seeker's introduction). We were pleased to see a word-prompter for our recorded video—it helped smooth our delivery. The site also allows users to upload a traditional résumé, create portfolios and share skill assessments with hiring managers. Each résumé type creates a unique link to send employers (an \$8 fee keeps the links active for 30 days). But in order to send both our traditional and video résumé to the recruiter, we had to provide two links. Ms. Farrugia says she liked our video interview but was distracted by some of the formatting we chose.

Resumebook.tv Inc., provided the simplest tools for sending our video résumé, but it provided little in the way of tutorials. After preparing our introductory video on our own, we quickly uploaded it to the Web site, with the option of including documents as well. However, we had to enter our résumé information manually in order for it to appear on our profile. In the end, we liked the simple look of our profile, and users can send out their résumé at no cost. As an added bonus, the site tracks how many times our résumé link is viewed, along with which email addresses received the link. Ms. Farrugia said she could see our enthusiasm on the video but pointed out that the formatting of our résumé was distorted on her computer screen. (A company spokesman said users must be careful when entering information to ensure the formatting will display correctly.)

Some hiring managers caution that a poorly recorded video résumé can do more harm than good. For example, we used the low-quality video and microphone capabilities of our computer, and finding proper lighting (along with a plain interview background) was difficult. More important, time-starved recruiters like

Ms. Farrugia think watching some video résumés can be too complicated. "If I have a stack of résumés and a good highlighter, I can do that much faster," she says.

Testing Video Résumés

We try four websites that let job-hunters post video résumés.

COMPANY	PRICE	FEATURES	COMMENT
Resumebook.tv	Free	Simple tools for uploading videos, but résumé information had to be entered manually. Site tracks how many times the résumé link is viewed.	Simple interface, but no video tutorial. Résumé was plain, but informative. Recruiter said the video conveyed our enthusiasm but did not display correctly on her screen.
Optimalresume.com	\$8 for 30 days	Work with employers and career services, extensive career advice. Able to create separate videos for different portions of the résumé.	Doesn't integrate résumé types, thorough video tutorials. Recruiter liked our video but found some elements distracting.
InterviewStudio.com	\$50 for 60 days	Results of skills, motivation and personality assessment test are shared with recruiters. Helpful tutorials on making video résumés. Recruiters able to see segments without viewing an entire video.	No flexibility in interview video format, and creating profile was time consuming. Recruiter had trouble viewing the résumé., but customer service was quick. The company says glitches have been fixed.
Britetab.com	\$8 for 30 days	Completely customizable design. Videos and text résumés are integrated, so recruiter needs only one link.	No video tutorials, but sample videos were provided. Résumé information had to be entered manually. Recruiter liked the layout that made highlights 'pop off the page.'

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