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Video Resumés for Jobs

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STARTING OUT

When Mona Lattouf's initial job-hunting efforts didn't pay off, the recent college grad got creative.

Using a digital camera, the Orange County, Calif., resident created a two-minute "video resumé" that included highlights from her paper resumé and answers to common interview questions.

"It was weird to figure out what to say," says Ms. Lattouf, 25 years old. But ultimately, "I let my personality show through."

Within two to three weeks of sending hiring managers a link to her video, she received several calls back. "It was truly painless," says Ms. Lattouf, who landed a job as a junior accountant in October.

Video resumés are taking off, spurred by the combination of widespread broadband Internet usage, higher-quality video technology and increased enthusiasm for online video sharing. And young job seekers -- who may be long on enthusiasm but short on experience -- can use this technique to get an edge up on the competition.

"Depending on the industry and a particular position you're applying for, it can be a very effective tool," says Pamela Mitchell, a life coach in Miami.

But watch out: There is a fine line between a successful video resumé and one that might be better left on the cutting-room floor.

A Cautionary Tale

Aleksey Vayner, a Yale University senior who recently applied to investment-banking powerhouse UBS via a video resumé, found that out.

His video ran more than six minutes and featured him lifting weights, playing tennis and ballroom dancing with a scantily clad young woman. It quickly made its way from Wall Street to video-sharing site YouTube to the "Today" show as an example of what not to do in a video resumé. (To see it at YouTube.com¹, search on "Aleksey Vayner CV.")

A UBS spokesman says the firm is currently investigating how Mr. Vayner's resumé, which offered a link to his video, got out.

Says Mr. Vayner, who is considering legal action against the firm: "If I had to apply to UBS again, I would not give them any confidential information, because they do not have a secure system." The Yale student hasn't yet found a job.

Cultivate Your Message

Video resumé's involve unique perils and require a fine balance. They have to be "compelling right out of the gate," says Steve Dempsey, vice president of recruiting with Aquent, a marketing staffing firm in Boston. That's because "interviewers make judgments very quickly." But you want to be memorable for the right reasons.

The aim is to come across as professional but not boring. Have an idea of what you want to say, but "don't sound canned," says Ms. Mitchell. Avoid wild hand gestures, grammatical errors, slang and lots of uhs and ahs. Keep jewelry to a minimum and wear a suit. Aim for a length of two to three minutes.

Web Resources

You can film a video resumé yourself or get help from professional services that might charge around \$100 to record a basic resumé. You can then upload the video to your own Web site or to a free video-resumé site to which you can send a link. One such online site: ResumeBook.tv².

JobMatchPro.com³, which is expected to go live in January, will also allow job seekers to upload video resumé's for free. Employers that register will be able to search the videos.

If privacy is a concern, don't upload your video to video-sharing sites such as YouTube or Google Video, although there's no guarantee it won't end up on those sites.

Also consider your target field. "Video resumé's show that you are innovative" and are a natural fit for those in sales and creative fields, says Ms. Mitchell, who recommends using video as a complement to paper resumé's rather than as a replacement. But she suggests applicants in traditional fields such as law and finance stick with paper, at least for now.

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