Applying User-Centred Design Thinking to your CV and Portfolio

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I work for
ZEBRA PEOPLE
Putting creativity to work

Who are the users of your CV? What are their needs and goals?
The target users of your CV and portfolio are Recruitment Agents, HR Managers and UX Professionals that hire staff for their teams. Zebra People has done some research on their needs for you and come up with these recommendations:

CV Design Tips

✓ Make things easy for your users by following a standard CV layout & structure. Communicate your personality through style and content – not through unusual information design. Remember your job is about making things simple and digestible to its audience, therefore your CV is the first chance you've got to show off your skills.

✓ Some of your users look at many CVs each day so put your name in big letters on top.

✓ Include an engaging profile of yourself at the beginning. Be clear what part of the UCD lifecycle in which you work. Make sure you highlight big brand names, complex and/or interesting projects and any impressive metrics you have.

✓ Enable users to scan your CV quickly. Use clear headings and write in bullet points instead or succinct sentences. Use pro-active language that illustrates what you did.

✓ It's important to list WHAT you have done. You can also write HOW you did it for selected projects.

✓ It's OK to have a CV with up to 4 pages but be generous with spacing between sections and paragraphs. Don't list every user with whom you've worked unless it adds value to your CV.

✓ Send your CV in Word or PDF format (or check with the recipient what's better for them)

✓ Use spell checker AND let a human proof read the whole thing word-by-word.

✓ 'User-test' your CV with colleagues/friends/your old boss or a family friend who works in HR.

✓ Iterate your CV according to feedback – just like you would if it was a website you design.

Portfolio Design Tips

✓ Including a portfolio when applying for a job is crucial. It supports your CV in demonstrating your skills. It also shows that you have thought about what the people who are recruiting (your users) want to find out about you.

✓ Demonstrate your thinking. Polished deliverables are important but you need to show how you arrived there, from the initial concept stage sketching, photos of post-its in workshops through to those polished annotated wireframes. Create a narrative. Clients are looking for the quality of your thinking.

✓ Online portfolios are preferred as it's the medium in which you'll be delivering your work.

✓ What should be in a portfolio? Pick three projects YOU have worked on. For each write a short summary of the project brief, state your role in the project and add a few screenshots of deliverables. These can be high level concepts (sketches), wireframes, sitemaps or the finished product but you can also be a list of your research questions for user-testing or a photo of you running a workshop.

✓ Now you've got a portfolio to die for, make sure you use it during the interview. Don't wait to be asked. You work in a visual industry, you sell visual solutions, make sure you sell yourself visually too! Take the user (employer) on a journey, give them an experience.

Upcoming events

01 July: Research Thing London | **meetup.com/researchthing**
Turning the mountain into a molehill – Analysing research data

18 July: UXPA London | **uxpa-uk.org/events**
This month's event will be covering content strategy

19 July: UX Bristol | **uxbristol.org.uk**
This one day conference will offer a mix of workshops, panels and talks and aims to bring UXers together to share their knowledge and expertise. It is aimed at all levels from aspiring students to experienced consultants.

26 – 28 September: EuroIA Edinburgh | **euroia.org**
Three days of inspiring talks on all things UX. Each day covers a different topic. Learn / Share / Network.

November: UX People London | **uxpeople.co.uk**
Hosted by Zebra People, this event brings together an exciting programme of speakers and workshops to reflect the current demands and expectations of the UX industry.

The UX community is very active so check out Meetup.com and Lanyrd.com for local UX/Digital related meet ups and events.

Useful links

- **Zebra People** | **zebrapeople.com**
- **Jason Mesut** | **slideshare.net/jasonmesut/sell-yourself-better-10**
- **Good Interview Questions** | **uxdesign.smashingmagazine.com/2012/02/16/how-to-recruit-ux-designer**
- **The Information Architecture Institute** | **iainstitute.org**
- **Usability News: Interaction Specialist Group** | **usabilitynews.bcs.org**
- **UX People** | **uxpeople.co.uk**

UX job boards

- **Zebra People** | **zebrapeople.com/jobs**
- **The Information Architecture Institute** | **iainstitute.org/jobboard/post**
- **Usability News** | **forms.bcs.org/usability-news/jobs**
- **The User Experience professionals Association** | **uxpa-uk.org/private/uk-upa-create-job-post**
- **UX Jobs Board** | **uxjobsboard.com**
- **UCD Jobs** | **ucdjobs.co.uk**
- **Sign up to London IA Yahoo group** | **tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/london-ia**

Also check out Linkedin groups!

- **Zebra People Recruitment**
- **User Experience (UX) Discussion / Jobs**
- **User Experience Jobs**
- **User Experience Jobs Europe**
- **UX Freelancers**
- **UX Job Board**