

# The Essential Guide to

## CREATIVE INDUSTRY DAY

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Creative Industry Day is geared to RIT College of Imaging Arts and Sciences students (and a few other creative majors). It is your opportunity to get feedback and advice on your portfolio from experts; investigate career paths and positions for your major; meet representatives from companies for whom you are interested in working for some day; and develop your network of contacts.

Creative industry professionals (many of them alumni) come to the event because they want to see student work, source out fresh talent, and inform students about their agency or industry.

Even if you don't feel your portfolio is perfect, or you don't know how to put yourself out there yet, rethink that. This event is really worthwhile -- so take advantage of all or part of it.

For more info (like the list of companies/professionals), check out the Creative Industry page [rit.edu/creativity](http://rit.edu/creativity). The event is on Handshake under 'Career Fairs'. It is sponsored by the RIT Office of Career Services and supported by College of Imaging Arts and Sciences.

If you need an interpreter, request one through: <https://myaccess.rit.edu>.

There are several things you can do to make the most out of the day. What follows is a series of strategies to use before, during, and after Creative Industry Day.

### BEFORE THE EVENT – GETTING READY

#### Update Your Portfolio, Resume, and Promotional Pieces

Whether you are a designer, illustrator, photographer, or artist it is essential for you to have an effective way to show your work that reflects your current skills and experiences. Use this event to get advice that will help you make your portfolio the best it can be! A strong portfolio is what is going to get you hired.

#### Portfolio Site

Give the creative industry folks a preview of what RIT students can do by uploading your work, a small graphic, and selecting your areas of specialization the Creative Industry Day Portfolio Site.

Register here: <http://creativity.cias.rit.edu/>. It is also another great way to promote yourself (and it remains up for a year). Companies/agencies unable to come to campus, scout talent from there. This site gets A LOT of traffic.

#### Update Your Resume

You may be asked for a copy of your resume – so make sure it is current and error-free. Your coordinator in the Career Services Office can review it for you or you can go to the Office's drop-in hours for a quick review.

#### Research Companies and Creative Professionals

Check out who is coming and find out what they do and how that matches your interests. A list of participants can be found on the Creative Industry Day page ([rit.edu/creativity](http://rit.edu/creativity)). Login to Handshake/Upcoming Events/Career Fairs. And there's an app! Download Career Fair Plus from the Apple Store or Google Play (do delete last year's, there is a brand new one). You'll also be emailed detailed info prior to the event from your Career Services Coordinator. Don't narrow your scope when deciding who to see because this is your opportunity to learn something from as many creative industry people as possible.

Finding out general info ahead of time will allow you to ask intelligent questions, and learn how to speak about your work.

As any marketing professional will tell you, packaging counts. And that's especially true when it comes to your portfolio. Although creating a strong portfolio may seem like a daunting process, it doesn't have to be.

## Selecting Samples

The first step is deciding which pieces to include - the goal is to select items that best represent your core strengths and industry experience while showcasing your creativity, technical ability and range.

- Use feedback from faculty or creative industry professionals to select your best work.
- Samples should be of high quality.
- Show your range, but do not include everything you have ever done. Quality not quantity!
- Select pieces that are relevant to the industry or profession.
- Include a sample of work in different stages to show your progression of ideas and how you solved design problems. Alternate solutions to demonstrate creative versatility (optional) are good to include.
- Include eye-catching items that highlight your ability to think strategically, communicate complex concepts, utilize multiple software applications and solve real-world problems within the framework of a client's objectives.
- Replace outdated samples with more recent items, especially if they showcase new skills.

## Organizing Items

If properly organized, your portfolio will demonstrate your skills and how marketable you are.

- Use consistent graphic theme – color, type, size
- Create a title page with your personal contact information:
  - Who are you? “ex: Jane Doe”
  - What do you do or want? “ex: Graphic Designer or Developer or Illustrator”
  - Where do you have experience? (resume, printer-friendly)
  - How do I get in touch with you? (contact info)
- Review, assemble examples, and develop a sequence for your work. Start with your strongest and most favorite work.
- Include a caption with each piece.
  - Keep it short and simple
  - Include project title, your role, technology/process
  - Can add a 2-3 sentence description
- Don't forget the final image leaves a lasting impression – but don't leave your best for last.

## Leave Behind and Resume

Some creatives put together a package of self-promotional materials that are well-designed and reflect their personality and style. Your resume is important, make sure that others have proofed it; your career services coordinator in the Office of Career Services and Co-op is available to develop it with you and check it over (call 585.475.2301 for an appointment or schedule one in Handshake). A “leave behind” or business card is something you may want to develop and bring with you. These materials show your professionalism and enhance your brand.

## Format

You will see at the event that students are showing their work using tablets, laptops, and a few, traditional printed portfolios. Use whatever makes sense for you and shows off your work the best way. If you use a tablet or laptop make sure they are fully charged -- the ability to scroll through work is the way to go.

## Have Your Conversation Starter Ready

You'll only have a few minutes to introduce yourself and your work. Have in mind your goals and be able to express your skills, accomplishments, and what you want to do in the future in a clear, concise manner.

Examples:

“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I will be graduating in May with a degree in \_\_\_\_\_, and am interested in the area of \_\_\_\_\_ . I would like your opinion on how I am presenting my work and if there are any ways to improve it?”

“I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ major and I am hoping to get a summer internship/co-op. Do you think my work is ready to send out to potential employers? Do you have any advice for how to increase my odds of getting hired?”

## Sample Questions

Show your interest in the company by asking relevant questions. Some suggestions are below; use these ideas to formulate your own. (Tip: do not ask basic questions like, what does your company do? You could have found that out on your own!)

- What do you think of my work, my selections, how I've presented it?
- What is the most effective way to find out about openings at your company? What is the best way to let your company know I am interested in being a candidate for future openings?
- How would someone with my background in \_\_\_\_\_ get started in your company?
- How does a (designer/photographer/artist) fit into your organization?
- What other advice would you give someone interested in pursuing \_\_\_\_\_ field?
- What personal qualities are valued in their work place?
- What skills/knowledge is sought after in the industry or your company?
- Help me understand career paths in your field. What are some hidden opportunities for someone with my interests/background?
- What would a typical day be like at \_\_\_\_\_?
- Where do you see the industry headed in the near future and beyond?
- What have you or your company accomplished that you are especially proud of?

## Pre-event Company Presentations

A few companies may set something up just before the event. Come and see company representatives, their work, and what they look for -- a great way to get to know them before heading over to the Creative Industry Day event.

## HOW THE DAY UNFOLDS

### Career Speakers

Appropriate for everyone – all majors, freshman to seniors. Industry professionals, many of them RIT alumni, share their experience and advice on a specific career-related or job search topics. (Faculty is alerted to this event, it is possible they may allow/encourage you to attend if you have class).

### Portfolio Reviews

Show your work and get feedback, talk with company representatives or individual artists, designers or photographers. Learn more about the industry and career paths, and network. Mainly appropriate for sophomores through seniors (freshman, you will get your chance next year). 5-10 minute reviews.

## What to Expect

- Check in at the student registration tables with your student ID before you enter. *This event is open to RIT students and alumni only.*
- Field House floor, with stage and seats for the speakers/panelists. Separate area for portfolio reviews – one with company tables and one with individual reviewers.
- Speakers are scheduled first – and then the portfolio reviews start after that.
- Lots of advice and insight from the career speakers that applies to all majors. Take notes and be prepared to ask questions.
- Portfolio review area is very active, with long lines at some tables. Be prepared to wait for some companies/ reps.
- Sure, some representatives may be interested in seeing work from particular majors, but there is someone for everyone!

## What to Bring

- Your portfolio.
- Your resume.
- Promotional pieces: leave behinds, business cards (optional).
- A pad of paper and pen, to take notes.
- Something to carry your resumes and notes, and to store business cards and company literature.

## Plan Your Strategy

- Arrive early and stay late if you can -- this will enable you to meet with as many people as you can.
- After you check in, survey the layout of the event on the map in the Career Fair Plus app, and prioritize what you want to do and who you want to see.
- Get warmed up by approaching people that are less intimidating to you and gain some confidence before your “must sees”.
- Be open and show your work to as many people as you can.

- If there are long lines, revise your strategy. You may want reach out after the event to anyone you weren't able to connect with (see your Career Services Coordinator for contact info).

### **Make a Good First Impression**

- Dress for success – how you look plays a part in what someone thinks of you. You want to be viewed as professional and memorable in a good way. So step it up a notch (no need for suits).
- Approach the employer, shake hands, smile, and introduce yourself. Remember to maintain eye contact. Be enthusiastic!
- Avoid distracting behaviors such as checking your phone, gum chewing, eating or drinking while with employers.
- Be polite – don't interrupt and don't monopolize.

### **Market Yourself**

- Be memorable – conversations may seem casual, but you are actually being evaluated.
- Use your “conversation starter” to introduce yourself (see above).
- You only have a few minutes to market yourself and show your work, so make the most of your time.
- Be articulate, and show confidence in your work.

### **Other Tips**

- Good to ask for people's business card if they are open to that. Connect with them via LinkedIn afterwards.
- Take time to make notes of your discussion after you finish speaking with them, before you move on. Without notes, you may become confused or forget suggestions for your work or how to stay in touch.
- Explore all your options – speak with reps you may not have considered before.
- Smile, relax and be yourself.

### **Manage Expectations**

- Don't be disappointed if you don't learn about a job – it is your chance to get your work looked at, get ideas and make connections that may pay off later for you.
- Representatives may show more interest in particular majors – often that reflects their personal interests and goals for connecting with students with particular skills sets that day. But there is someone for everyone.

## **AFTER THE EVENT**

Follow-up is a very important, yet often neglected step in a making the most of this type of event. This is your chance to practice the skills necessary to be successful in the creative field – it is often all about a strong portfolio, making personal connections and networking.

Send a thank you to all the representatives you connected with. Thank them for their time and valuable feedback. If they mentioned future opportunities – restate your interest. See if they are open to a personalized connection request in LinkedIn.

Put into action what you have learned – make changes to your portfolio based on the advice you received. After all, that is what this event is all about!