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Building your brand: The integration of infographic resume as student self-analysis tools and self-branding resources



Jason W. Lee*, Terence Cavanaugh

Department of Leadership, School Counseling, and Sport Management, University of North Florida, 57/3200 1 UNF Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32224, United States

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the significance of infographic resumes as valuable tools for individual self-promotion, student reflection, and purposeful course curriculum integration. Infographic resumes benefit students in a variety of forms as they serve as a medium for transmitting personal information or data through a visually attractive and engaging format. The incorporation of infographic elements provides reflective educational strategies for students to better understand their personal strengths and areas for improvement. The provided pedagogical approach delivers various academic benefits including providing a groundwork for the self-analysis and self-branding.

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1. Introduction

This manuscript describes a technology-integrated pedagogical approach utilized for students' self-branding development by implementing infographic resumes into a sport management curriculum. This article presents instructional outcomes of technological implementation, self-marketing skills, communications strategies, and critical thinking and reflection among undergraduate sport management students. While this project is connected to the field of sport management, the principles presented in this article can be applied to related academic fields of study (i.e., Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality).

2. Emerging technology in sport management education

Technology is constantly advancing, as are the needs for learners' preparation concerning new workforce demands. Educators should provide mediums that are advantageous for cultivating students' learning while enhancing professional development. Implementing new technological resources and instructional strategies into course curriculum allows learners to better be able to benefit from a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere, while engaging in strategies that may enhance their professional futures.

Entrance into the sport management workforce necessitates the ability to differentiate one's self from their counterparts (Fetchko, Roy, & Clow, 2013; Lee & Cavanaugh, 2014; Parkhouse & Turner, 2012). Differentiation can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including through actions such as expanding one's network. Infographic resume characteristics such as the concepts of *infographics*, *resumes*, and *infographic resumes* will be addressed in greater detail in the forthcoming sections.

* Corresponding author.

3. Resumes + Infographics → Infographics resumes

3.1. Resumes

Resumes are summaries of individuals' personal and professional experiences, which present an applicant to a prospective employer (Ross, 2010). Accordingly, resumes commonly serve as the source of information that shapes job screeners' initial impression of the individual through elements such as: contact information, education, experience, and skills. While resumes are typically required documentation for professional applications, "the job seeker has to do more than submit a piece of paper in order to stand out and win the job" (Morgan, 2014, p. 2). Resumes can be constructed in a variety of methods and should be formatted in a manner that is geared toward specific jobs positions, while sufficiently demonstrating the candidates' accomplishments, abilities, and strengths (Ross, 2010).

3.2. Infographics

Infographics use a combination of visuals and words, which often communicate complex qualitative and/or quantitative information quickly for viewers (Toth, 2013). Blevins (2013) theory involving infographics identifies that analysis can transpire in two forms: (1) where individuals "can analyze their data using data visualizations that typically occupy the infographics; and [(2)], the composition process for creating the infographic can itself be a form of analysis" (¶ 3). The latter focus can encourage students' ability to reflect on themselves and their abilities as they create their infographic resumes. This reflection includes thinking about their abilities and experiences toward their personal goals. Infographics have proliferated in the digital age where they can be used on a seemingly boundless number of subjects (Toth, 2013). The application of infographics has also commonly been utilized in popular social networking services including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest (Toth, 2013).

3.3. Infographic resumes

Lee and Cavanaugh (2014) detailed the unification of resumes and personal infographics as apparatuses that convey career preparatory into curriculum using tools such as Re.vu, Piktochart, Kinzaa, and Vizualize.me, which are free for users. Infographic resumes can serve as a professional resource, which differentiates individuals in an effective visually informative manner, aimed at assisting young sport management students in their efforts to enter today's competitive marketplace.

3.4. Academic visual identity (self-branding and personal visual identity)

The authors utilized infographic resumes as a component of a sport marketing course, a core class in a sport management program. The pedagogical practice of developing resumes served as a means for reinforcing the course concept of visual identity and branding. Visual identity (or VI) is a concept referring to a strategically planned, purposeful presentation used in order to differentiate and gain a positive image (Alessandri, 2009).

The relationship to visual identity and personal branding has application to marketing through the use of technology and focusing on identity and image. Individuals are able to enhance their visibility by developing a personal brand (Cooper, 2014; Lee & Cavanaugh, 2014; Llopis, 2013; Poepelman & Blacksmith, 2014). Cooper (2014) explained that developing one's brand is not to be the result of a quick fix, but rather the process of strategic efforts aimed at establishing favorable impressions. Personal branding can help individuals through the advancement of one's own "personal growth, career movement, and self-awareness" (Poepelman & Blacksmith, 2014, p. 113). A person's brand should be grounded in the individuals' values, personality, beliefs, and interests (Poepelman et al., 2014). The examination of such characteristics is grounded in self-discovery, which is one of the key elements associated with an assignment such as developing one's infographic resume.

Infographic resumes can draw a great balance between rhetorical and aesthetic effectiveness (Toth, 2013). They can be embedded in websites and shared in various social media outlets. Infographic resumes can also be complemented by traditional resumes for those who may prefer that type of content, either in conjunction with the infographic resume or as a standalone item. For applicants seeking jobs with creative positions and industries such as communications, marketing, advertising, and public relations, some reviewers respond really well to infographic resumes (Bruce, 2014; Krum, 2013; Skillings, 2013).

Infographic resumes were initially viewed as being more important for positions such as graphic designer, social media, and web designer, as well as other technology-based roles (Krum, 2013; Skillings, 2013). Since its emergence in technology related roles, the use of infographic resumes has expanded to other job positions as more positions are involved in data analytics, which then use infographics as summary and communication tools (Krum 2013). This ease of sharing and functionality provides a great benefit for help with the continuance of one's networking expertise and the promotion of one's abilities, aptitudes, and other characteristics tied to their personal brand. Social media networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter (among others) can be quite valuable resource for individuals seeking to benefits such as building their professional network and other advantageous career progression endeavors. Particularly, individuals should be mindful of the potential impact of the information they are presenting, making sure that the content that they provide is congruent with the messages they desire to communicate.

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