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## Be Prepared

Keeping your résumé, cover letter and career portfolio up-to-date is sound advice for a number of reasons, according to director of career services at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls.

**Matt Krumrie**, Star Tribune Sales and Marketing

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Keeping your résumé, cover letter and career portfolio up-to-date is sound advice for a number of reasons, says Carmen Croonquist, director of career services at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls.



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One reason? Job security is pretty much nonexistent these days.

"In this rapidly changing job market, a layoff can occur at any time," says Croonquist. "And, you never know when a great new opportunity will come your way."

Studies show new college graduates typically stay in their first professional position for just under a year and are likely to have more career and job changes than any previous generation.

"Since the process of preparing résumés, cover letters and portfolios is time-consuming, I highly recommend keeping these materials up-to-date," says Croonquist. "This puts the onus on each individual to take ultimate responsibility for managing his or her own career."

Case in point: Croonquist recently had a friend who came to her asking for help updating a résumé. It needed a lot of work, and she suggested a phone meeting to go over details. About two weeks passed and Croonquist did not hear anything. Then she got an urgent e-mail from the friend asking her to help get the résumé done within a day because a dream opportunity opened up.

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"It would have been extremely beneficial to have more time to work with him," says Croonquist. "I'm convinced that the outcome would have been much better than the rush job we hastily threw together to meet his deadline."

Even if you have a job you like or are happy with, keep a record of your accomplishments, including complimentary e-mails and letters, performance reviews and references. Career portfolios can help you organize your material and keep it in one place. You never know - you might need it sooner rather than later.

"You could be caught off guard when you are let go from your company, or the perfect opportunity could come along when you least expect it," says Susan Hagstrom, senior employment counselor with HIRED (www.hired.org), a Twin Cities company that helps disadvantaged people and other job seekers prepare for and obtain employment.

*This is a weekly column devoted to career betterment. Matt Krumrie is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, and has eight years of experience reporting on the employment industry. The first Sunday of each month this column will answer readers' questions. E-mail questions or subject ideas to askmatt@startribune.com.*

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