

PORTFOLIO- Tip Sheet

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS:

Portfolios have traditionally been used in fields such as education and graphic design to demonstrate a candidate's skills to employers. However, the use of portfolios in the job search process has expanded to include many fields and industries. The use of a professional portfolio gives candidates an edge by providing the employer with tangible evidence of credentials, skills and abilities.

GETTING STARTED

SUGGESTED MATERIALS:

- 3 Ring Binder
 - Use a solid, neutral color binder made of leather or quality vinyl with 1 ½" - 2" rings. A zippered binder is recommended for a more professional look.
- Sheet Protectors
 - They will prevent punching holes in documents and work samples.
 - Try to avoid the non-glare variety because they make samples harder to read.
- Extra-Wide Three Ring Tabs with Labels
 - Extra-wide tabs are wider to match the size of page protectors.
- Paper
 - Use high quality paper.
 - Be sure to use the same quality paper throughout the portfolio.
 - Use colored paper sparingly on special pages such as the title page.
- Description Cards
 - Type descriptions of samples on blank sheets of business cards.
 - Let the description card float over the work sample. (Position the description card on top of the sheet protector that covers the sample.) Include the title, purpose, date developed and demonstrated skills on the card.
- Photo Sheet Holders
 - The sheets are divided for holding photographs and will reinforce the professional look.

COLLECT AND ORGANIZE WORK SAMPLES:

- First, you will need to decide what skill areas you want to demonstrate.
 - Tailor the contents to the specific employer and job description.
 - Use the experiences, qualifications and skills listed on your resume as a guide for the content of your portfolio.
- Sources of samples include:
 - Classroom projects
 - Materials you created through a job, internship, freelance position or community service project
Tip: Consider freelancing or volunteering as a way to create pieces for your portfolio.
- Start collecting samples immediately; you can make the final decision on what to include later.
 - Do not use samples that include a grade or professor's comments.
 - Select clean, wrinkle-free samples.
 - Do not include any samples that contain grammatical or typographical errors.
 - Leave out any samples that may be sensitive, offensive or contain confidential information. Check with current or previous employers/clients to determine if you have legal permission to include work samples in your portfolio.

CONTENT

The content of your portfolio will demonstrate your skills. You should tailor your content to the specific employer or market, highlighting the skills necessary for the field. Work samples should be properly identified with a description and the context in which they were created. Use samples that are of high quality and accurately reflect your abilities.

Please note: If you would like to include a sample of your work that was created/developed for an employer or client, check with the organization to determine if you have legal permission to include the material in your portfolio.

The content will vary according to your specific major but a general description includes:

- Introductory title page
 - Begin by introducing yourself, your work philosophy and your career goals.
- Resume
- Transcripts, degrees, licenses and certifications
- Work samples that demonstrate specific skills such as:
 - Computer
 - Creativity
 - Leadership
 - Organization
 - Planning
 - Research
 - Teamwork
 - Writing
- Samples can include a variety of works such as:
 - Computer programs
 - Database projects
 - Design work
 - Desktop publishing pieces
 - Lab reports
 - Lesson plans
 - Marketing plans
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Project proposals
 - Strategic plans
 - Website pages
 - Writing samples/research papers
- List of accomplishments
- Research, publications and reports
- Awards and honors
- Professional development activities, conferences and workshops
- Military records and awards, if applicable
- Volunteer and community service activities
- Reference list
- Letters of recommendation

TIPS FOR ONLINE PORTFOLIOS

An online portfolio makes it easier for potential employers to access and view samples of your work. When creating an online portfolio, consider these tips:

- Start with a hardcopy career portfolio.
- Choose a style and keep it consistent.
- Keep your materials and photographs professional, not personal.
- Make it easy to navigate.
 - The main menu page should include links to the areas of interest.
 - Each area of interest should be further divided with a menu.
 - Make sure every page includes a link back to the main page.
- Make sure your pages load quickly.
- Keep pages small enough to be viewed without scrolling.
- Carefully consider the content of your social media accounts before linking them to your portfolio. Provide links only if the accounts are used for professional purposes, not personal.

There are different types of online portfolios:

Blog portfolios are typically easy to set up and use. They may be a good option if you need a simple portfolio. Most make it easy to organize content and allow you to embed elements. Some blog sites are free, but many have subscription options with advanced features.

Hosted portfolio sites can be free or subscription based. They tend to permit larger files and more types of files, which are uploaded directly to the host site. These types of sites are typically better if you want to feature visual content and images rather than just text.

Custom portfolio sites provide the most options in terms of the look of the site. However, because you create the site yourself, they also require the most time to develop. You will need to register the domain name for your site and determine where to host it.

Portfolio websites can be helpful in creating and/or displaying your portfolio. (A partial list of sites is included at the end of this tip sheet.) Some sites require fees. Free sites typically allow you to develop your portfolio quickly with little technical or design skills. However, free sites do have some disadvantages. They may limit the amount and type of files you can upload, limit customization and show ads on your pages. It is important to research your options to find the solution that is best for you depending on your needs, time, budget and technical/design skills.

USING YOUR PORTFOLIO IN AN INTERVIEW

Once you have finished creating your portfolio, it is time to test it out. Set up a practice interview with your Success Coach or a close friend. Role-playing with someone will give you a chance to become comfortable discussing your portfolio and discover ways to bring it into the conversation.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- On your resume and cover letter, make note of your portfolio with a statement such as, “Portfolio Available upon Request.”
- If using an online portfolio, you may include the link on your resume. However, be sure to keep your portfolio current since resumes are often filed or stored in applicant tracking systems. Check periodically to make sure everything is working properly and that there are no problems such as broken links, outdated information, etc.
- Mention at the beginning of the interview that you have brought your portfolio or have an online portfolio.
- Observe the interviewer’s interest level to decide how much time you should spend presenting your portfolio.
- Do not be afraid to point out examples in your portfolio that help demonstrate and answer questions.
- If you have an online portfolio, employers will easily be able to refer back to it for additional details after your interview. If you are using a hard copy portfolio, employers may ask you if they can keep your portfolio for closer review. If you decide to leave your portfolio with the employer, make sure to schedule an appointment for a later date to pick it up.

USING YOUR PORTFOLIO TO RESPOND TO COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- “*Tell me about your internship.*”
 - Show pictures and examples of things you created on the job.
- “*What class did you like best?*”
 - Show a work sample from the class.
- “*Tell me about a project you completed at work or in school.*”
 - Show the project while you explain the process.
- “*Describe how you work in a group project.*”
 - Show a group project you have included and make note of what parts you were responsible for and the specific duties you performed.
- “*How proficient are you with computers?*”
 - Show samples that were created using a database, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.

ONLINE INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

Articles:

- College Students: How to Create Your Professional Online Portfolio – www.instructables.com/id/College-Students-How-to-Create-Your-Professional-/
(Weebly used as sample)
- Digital Trends: The Best Photography Portfolio Websites for Showing off Your Work – www.digitaltrends.com/photography/best-photography-portfolio-websites
- Notes on Design: Top 10 Portfolio Sites for Designers – www.sessions.edu/notes-on-design/top-10-portfolio-sites-for-designers
- Portfolios: A Secret Weapon for Your Internship Search – www.internweb.com/portfolios.asp
- Your Job Skills Portfolio: Giving You an Edge in the Marketplace – www.livecareer.com/career/advice/jobs/job-search-portfolio

Blog Sites:

- TypePad – www.typepad.com
- WordPress – www.wordpress.com

Hosted Portfolio Sites:

- Behance – www.behance.net
- Carbonmade – <https://carbonmade.com>
- Coroflot – <http://www.coroflot.com>
- Dunked – www.dunked.com
- Krop – www.krop.com
- PortfolioLounge – <https://portfoliolounge.com>
- Viewbook – www.viewbook.com (used mostly for photography)
- Weebly – www.weebly.com