



Portfolios

Usually the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. With this in mind, employers seek a candidate's portfolio during interviews as a "show and tell" tool to demonstrate what a candidate has learned and accomplished.

What does a portfolio look like?

- Portfolios can be either hard-copy or electronic
- Hard-copy – should be quality leather (or similar) binder; clear plastic sleeves; to fit 8.5" x 11" documents, but may be larger; matched backing pages
- E-portfolio – should have a unified design theme with colors, fonts, and design elements that are not overwhelming

The essential package:

- Table of contents/menu for easy navigation
- Only your best work; quality is always preferred to quantity
- Well organized with dividers (hard copy) or icons (E-portfolio) to quickly find materials
- Has a style all its own – the more creative the field/job target, the more thought should go into developing novel approach to form and content

Types of materials to consider:

- PSAs: actual release, radio spots, with publication or air dates
- Press releases and resulting coverage – newspaper articles, press conferences, number of attendees, etc.
- Flyers, brochures, newsletters: front and back, folded and/or laid out flat
- Newspaper or web page articles: cut neatly, with name of paper or site and date, pasted on backing sheet
- PR campaign, audit, or integrated marketing campaign - bind separately and include table of contents
- College/course samples – no grades
- Radio or TV tapes/ video/disk/video streams
- Essays, poems, writing samples
- Speeches, Power Point presentations
- Special projects, especially in capstone courses
- Commercials, story boards
- Photos/videos of yourself working at an internship, organizing a volunteer project or conducting a campus organizational meeting
- Copies of letters of recommendation/references

What if you do not have materials to put in a portfolio?

- 1) Recreate actual ads, flyers, brochures, newspaper stories, etc.; show the original and your revision
- 2) Seek opportunities to showcase your skill-sets: volunteer to assist a local nonprofit organization who otherwise may not have access to the resources you can provide

Additional tips:

- When including a team project, highlight your work by indicating your contributions with an asterisk (*) or similar symbol
- Consider adding reflective commentary to convey the impact of the experiences, including the development of "soft skills" (i.e., teamwork, initiative, leadership, work ethic, communication, etc.)
- When using an e-portfolio, reference the web address in your cover letter and résumé; consider controlling access/making it password protected
- When using social networks to showcase a portfolio (i.e., LinkedIn, Pinterest) make sure to keep the entire account professional
- When using Pinterest, confirm links on re-pinned pictures are legitimate/are not website scams

While at the interview:

- Do not be offended if the interviewers are not interested in viewing your portfolio. Perhaps they are not the right person to see it, they may not be ready to view the materials, or simply may not have time. If this arises, request leaving samples of your work. Have extra copies available.
- Keep two hard-copies of your work. Do not leave your only hard-copy portfolio copy with the interviewer, or you may not get it back (even if they assure you it will be returned).

Like a résumé, a portfolio grows as you grow professionally. Review your portfolio often. Add and remove materials as you fine-tune your skills and move into different positions and opportunities. Consider keeping previous work for reference and to see how your skills and abilities have improved.

References:

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