

How to **CREATE** a wildly-effective portfolio (and land the job of your dreams)

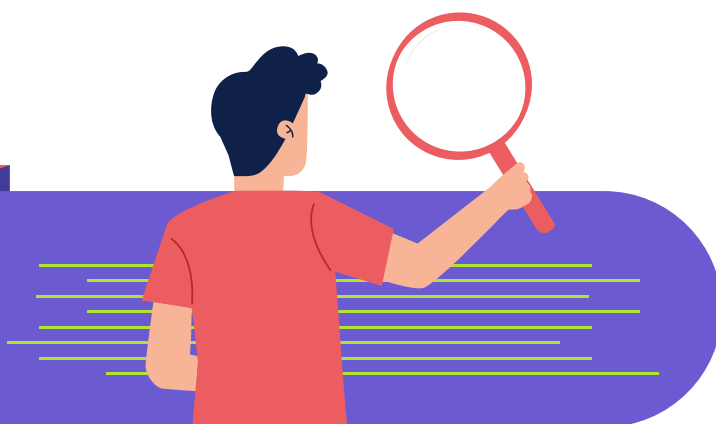
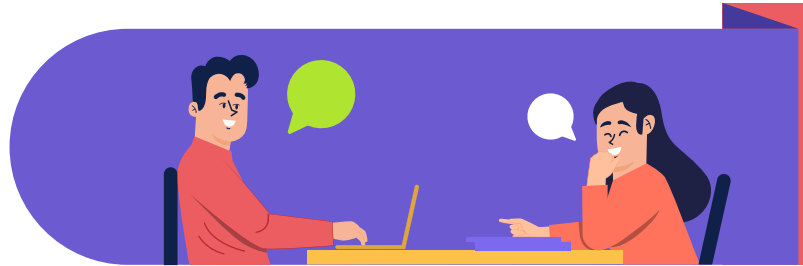


Previously, only a few career fields like graphic design and education expected job applicants to bring in portfolios of work samples to job interviews. But in a world of online resumes and profiles, physical portfolios are making a resurgence.

Career Portfolios make a comeback

- 1.** One of the most common job interview tips is “be ready to briefly describe your experience.”

What better way for a job candidate to do so than with a physical document from their portfolio?



- 2.** The job search lasts for weeks and months, even longer if the seeker doesn't have properly prepared career documents (resume, cover letter, etc.)

A well-organized portfolio can help a job seeker show that they're prepared once they finally make it to the interview stage.

What is Career Portfolio?

Portfolios, like resumes, are meant to summarize a job applicants employment history and abilities, but in a more comprehensive way.

They are a collection of documents that:

Contain proof of the job seekers professional development.

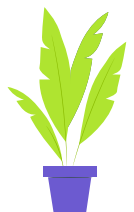
Show interviewers that the applicant is well-prepared.

Include samples of the interviewee's past work.

Demonstrate that the applicant's previous employment experience qualifies them for the job in question.

Prove that the interviewee has the necessary skills to succeed in the position.

Reflect on the job seeker as a professional.



Note: a properly constructed portfolio should be able to speak for itself. When creating it, ask yourself this question:

"If I had to leave this portfolio with an interviewer, would they be able to understand it without me explaining things?"

BENEFITS to having a Career Portfolio



More than just a resume, bringing a career portfolio to a job interview gives the applicant a number of advantages, such as:



Better preparation

In the process of organizing the portfolio for the interview, applicants will have gone over relevant information sure to come up during the interview itself.



Demonstration of skill

Depending on the job in question, a portfolio will contain work created by the applicant, demonstrating what they're able to create on behalf of the company before they're even hired.



Stand out of the crowd

Almost every advice column on "How to ace an interview" says to:

- Smile
- Speak warmly
- Come with a resume

- *It's important to do all of those things, but so will everyone else.*
- *Bringing a portfolio and allowing it to speak for the applicant demonstrates confidence on the job seeker's part, and helps them stand out in the interviewer's mind.*



Memory Aid

The average job interview lasts 40 minutes.

By having a tangible collection of their work, job seekers with portfolios will have something to look through to spark their memory during an interview.



More Persuasive

While not quite the same, a job interview is a bit like a presentation.

Presentations with visual aids are more persuasive than those without them.

Being able to show an interviewer samples of past work should prove more effective than simply talking about them.

What to include in your portfolio

While every portfolio will be a little different, most range from 5-20 pages and contain most (if not all of) the following:

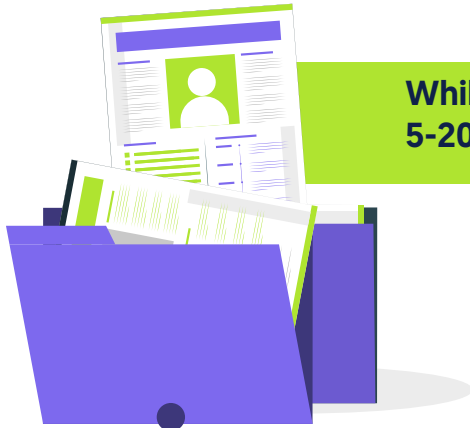


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A portfolio full of great information that's badly organized won't represent you well.



RESUME

Describe your essential professional self – what is it that you do?
Talk about where you see yourself in five years.

CAREER SUMMARY GOALS



PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT



SKILLS AND ABILITIES

List:
What your marketable skills are.
What it is about you that allows you to succeed in those years.
Situations in which you were able to apply those abilities.

Part of a job interview is demonstrating the value you can provide to the business.

Include in your portfolio information about how you can help solve the company's problems.

HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT THE COMPANY



SAMPLES OF YOUR WORK

These might include reports drafted articles written, graphs constructed, presentations given, etc.
Be sure to select samples relevant to the position you're applying for.

While you might have given a very informative presentation for a market position you have held, if you're interviewing for an engineering job, it might not be as helpful.



LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Show that you're licensed to use a certain machine or certified to work with a specific method, so long as it's related to the job in question.

These can include promotions earned, teams directed, employees trained, awards won, and more.

LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

This information reflects on your personality and willingness to help others
If the volunteer work partially or totally involved the use of job skills, so much the better.

VOLUNTEERING COMMUNITY SERVICE



REFERENCES

This should be three to five people, with their names, titles, and contact information.

At least one of them should be a former manager.

In addition to using others as references, ask them to write letters of recommendation for you as well.

This way, interviews can simply read the document to gain an understanding of how others see you.

You can also include positive employee reviews in this section

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION



Presentation is everything

When making a first impression, 55% of how we affect others is based on how we dress, act, and behave [as opposed to what we say]. The physical appearance of your portfolio is just as vital.

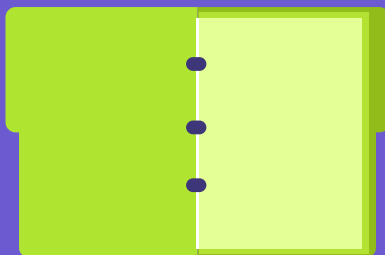
Here are some tips on how to make sure it looks top-notch:

USE A NEW, SOLID-COLOR THREE-RING BINDER.

This type of binder allows you to rearrange the portfolio as necessary, adding or removing items over time.

A three-ring binder can hold documents of varying sizes.

Keep in mind your options when selecting a binder:
A custom-designed binder can help reflect who you are as a professional
A clean and simple design style won't attract attention away from its contents



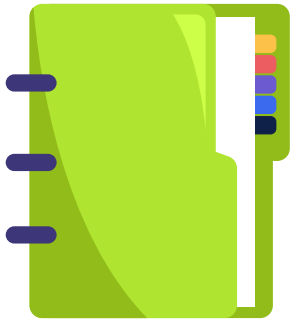
USE PLASTIC SHEET-PROTECTORS.

The kind without holes in the page itself will allow you to slide in documents you don't want to hole-punch.



NUMBER

each page so that readers can find documents easily.



ORGANIZE THE PORTFOLIO IN VARIOUS SECTIONS

Consider some of the following (not necessarily in this order):

- Personal information
- Marketable skills
- Qualifications
- Accomplishments
- Work Samples

Use title pages or index tabs to separate sections.

Keep In mind that the way you organize your portfolio is a demonstration of your organizational skills in general.

PROOFREAD FOR ERRORS

The pages might be numbered properly, and all the sections organized well, but if you misspelled the company name on the first page, that will reflect poorly on you.



KEEP IMAGES CLEAR

Use high-quality images, graphics, or photographs. Laminate or place them in protective sleeves to protect them from damage.

EMPLOY CONSISTENT FORMATTING

Page headers should be in the same place on each page. Use the same font throughout the portfolio. Organize each page the same as the others.



USE COPIES

Should you lose a specific section of your portfolio, the entire portfolio, or if an interviewer asks to keep a portion of it, you won't have lost an original document.





HOW TO USE THE PORTFOLIO

A well-structured portfolio is a valuable resource for any job seeker, but knowing how and when to use it during the interview can be a source of anxiety.

Here are **some opportunities to use your portfolio** that your interviewer might give you:

“WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?”

“TELL ME A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF”

“CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF A PROJECT YOU COMPLETED THAT WOULD BE SIMILAR TO WHAT WE DO HERE?”

OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND ABOUT YOUR PORTFOLIO:



1.

Don't give it to the interviewer at the beginning of your time.

They will most likely want to read through it then and there, and you won't be able to select the most relevant items to bring up when they're needed.



2.

Don't wait until the end of the interview to use the portfolio.

Interviewers most likely won't have time to read through it before interviewing their next applicant.

While a good portfolio should be able to stand alone without you, it serves you best when you can use it as part of your interview.

The best way to use it is to provide concrete examples that back up your responses to an interviewer's questions.