How to Create a Portfolio

A portfolio is a job searching tool that will give a potential employer a well rounded perspective of your experience, education, accomplishments, and skills as well as what you have the potential to become. You can use your career portfolio in job interviews to showcase a point, to illustrate the depth of your skills and experience, or to use as a tool to get a second interview.

Most experts agree that the portfolio should be kept in a professional three-ring binder (zipper closure optional) or accordion file. You should include a table of contents and use some kind of system, such as tabs or dividers to separate the various parts of the portfolio. Various supplies can be purchased at Staples, Home Office Depot, Opus and Loomis Art Supplies.

So, what types of things go in a portfolio? Here are the basic categories. Don’t feel you need to use these exact ones for your portfolio. The key to remember as you contemplate these items is that you want to give reasons for the employer to hire you – you want to showcase your education and work experience by showing examples and evidence of your work, skills, and accomplishments.

1. **Career Summary and Goals:** A description of what you stand for (such as work ethic, organizational interests, management philosophy, etc.) and where you see yourself in two to five years.
2. **Professional Philosophy/Mission Statement:** A short description of the guiding principles that drive you and give you purpose.
3. **Traditional Resume:** A summary of your education, achievements, and work experience, using a chronological or functional format.
4. **Skills, Abilities and Marketable Qualities:** A detailed examination of your skills and experience. This section should include the name of the skill area; the performance or behavior, knowledge, or personal traits that contribute to your success in that skill area; your background and specific experiences that demonstrate your application of the skill.
5. **List of Accomplishments:** A detailed listing that highlights the major accomplishments in your career to date. Accomplishments are one of the most important elements of any good job search.
6. **Samples of Your Work:** A sampling of your best work, including reports, papers, studies, brochures, projects, presentations, etc. Besides print samples, you can also include CD-ROMs, videos, and other multimedia formats.
7. **Research, Publications, Reports:** A way to showcase multiple skills, including your written communications abilities. Include any published papers and conference proceedings.
8. **Testimonials and Letters of Recommendation:** A collection of any kudos you have received from customers, clients, colleagues, past employers, professors, etc. Some experts even suggest including copies of favorable employer evaluations and reviews.
9. **Awards and Honors:** A collection of any certificates of awards, honors, and scholarships.
10. **Volunteering/Community Service:** A description of any community service activities, volunteer work you have completed, especially as it relates to your career.
11. **Conferences and Workshops:** A list of conferences, seminars, and workshops you’ve participated in and/or attended.
12. **Transcripts, Degrees, Licenses, and Certifications:** A description of relevant courses, copies of degrees, licenses, and certifications.
13. **Professional Development Activities:** A listing of professional associations and conferences attended – and any other professional development activities.

**References List:** A list of three to five people, (including full names, titles, addresses, and phone/email) who are willing to speak about your strengths, abilities, and experience. One or more of your references should be a former or current manager.

All portfolios submitted to Arts Co-op will be returned to the student once reviewed by a coordinator.

*Your Job Skills Portfolio: Giving You an Edge in the Market Place by Randell S. Hansen, Ph.D.*