

# Presenting your Body of Work!

## Portfolio

Career Foundations: Item 3

Your portfolio is often the only thing a person sees before deciding whether or not to contact you, and in many cases you may not be present to explain it. There are fundamental qualities that all outstanding portfolios share, and a variety of principles and techniques that can help take your portfolio from average to excellent. If at all possible, your portfolio should be appropriate to the situation and reviewer, and all portfolios should show skills, range, and ambition.

You may want to start by deconstructing past experiences into skill sets. For all your past experiences – work, volunteering, and educational – develop a list of skills you’ve mastered and enjoy. Don’t just focus on technical skills, but look beyond them for softer skills, such as communications, leadership, and management.

### Range

Your portfolio should celebrate your ability to work on different types of projects. This lets the reviewer know that you are flexible and can work in a variety of situations.

### Ambition

An employee that can take initiative; resolve a wide range of problems, and manage projects from beginning-to-end is a valuable addition to every team. Your portfolio, combined with a written resume, should illustrate these traits. Self-driven projects are an indication that you can work with limited supervision. Make an effort to fill gaps in your employment history with an interesting variety of projects and activities.

### An Appropriate Portfolio

There is no single “right” way to prepare a portfolio. A different presentation is appropriate for each person, each situation and each interview. You need to understand what kind of portfolio you are creating. Is it to get into school, to get an internship, to get a first job, a second job? Spend some time thinking about what you will show in each of these cases and prepare accordingly.

The following is a list of sections you may want to include in your portfolio:

- ◆ Introduction-This tells whoever is reviewing the portfolio your philosophy as it relates to yourself and the field you hope to enter.
- ◆ Your career goals-Your plan for the next two to five years.
- ◆ Your resume-The key skills areas that are related to your career. This should include anything that substantiates your skills (i.e., samples of written work, letters of recommendation related to specific skills, evaluations etc.).
- ◆ Current projects-A list of projects or activities in progress.
- ◆ Certifications, degrees, and awards.
- ◆ Community activities-Letters of appreciation, certificates, and brochures related to volunteer efforts
- ◆ Professional memberships-Any memberships in professional organizations.
- ◆ Academic plan of study-Relevant academic qualifications, including classes, projects, etc.
- ◆ Faculty and employer biographies-Brief background on influential faculty and people who have mentored your growth professionally
- ◆ References



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