



Job Search Portfolios

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What is a Job Search Portfolio?

Broadly, a portfolio is a collection of works used to show one's capabilities to others. Thus, from the perspective of the applicant, the portfolio is a tool one can use to market oneself. However, from the perspective of the prospective employer, a portfolio serves as an evaluation tool for identifying the best candidate for a given position.

When should a Job Search Portfolio be used?

Such variables as your industry or profession, the employer's hiring processes, the job market at a given time, etc. will dictate whether a portfolio will be useful in the job search. It is safe to say that usually, unless specifically requested by an employer, a portfolio will not be a part of the initial application and screening process. More conventional materials like the resume, cover letter, and/or job application are most often used in the initial selection process. However, when interviewing, attending a career fair, networking, or simply keeping yourself current about your own qualifications and accomplishments, having a portfolio and the process of assembling and maintaining it can be of immense value.

What formats are available for a Job Search Portfolio?

Traditionally, portfolios have been a collection of paper materials organized in a professional binder with page protectors and labeled tabs. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) or digital portfolios. You may choose to employ one or both of these options

Paper Portfolios

Basics

- Resume
- Official transcript
- Letters of recommendation

Table of Contents: Clearly outlines sections for easy finding

- Depending on your major and career field, sections may be organized by skill clusters:
 - **Communications** may include, but is not limited to:
 - Writing
 - Layout
 - Broadcasting
 - Computer Graphics
 - Design
 - Public Relations
 - **Education** may include, but is not limited to:
 - Lesson Plans by Unit
 - Evaluations
 - Classroom Management Philosophy

Artifacts Pertaining to Formal and Informal Education and Training

- **Communications** may include:
 - Brochures describing training events, retreats, workshops, clinics, lecture series
 - Certificate of mastery or completion, lists of competencies mastered, and/or licenses
 - Grants, loans, scholarships secured for schooling
 - Samples from classes (papers, projects, reports, displays, video/computer samples)
 - Samples from personal studies (notes, binders, products)
 - Syllabi or course descriptions for classes and workshops
 - Transcripts, report cards

- **Education** may include:
 - Philosophy of education
 - Sample lesson plans
 - List of classroom management strategies
 - Videotape of classroom teaching (made available)
 - Any education-related research project
 - Individual case study
 - Teaching unit (photos of projects, bulletin boards, and kids [with permission] can be applicable here if tied in with unit)
 - Samples of other classroom work

Artifacts Demonstrating General Work Performance

- Community service projects
- Descriptive material about the organization (annual report, brochure, newsletters, articles)
 - Job descriptions
 - Military records, awards, badges
 - Employer evaluations or reviews
 - Examples of problem solving
 - Resume and letters of references
 - Products showing your leadership qualities (mission statements, agendas, networks)
 - Records showing how your students, clients, or patients did after receiving your services
 - Evidence showing your impact on the lives and performance of others
 - Samples from participation in professional organizations, committees, work teams.

Artifacts About Skills Using Data

- Communication pieces (memos, reports, or documents, a public service announcement.
- Writing abilities, demonstrated in actual samples of your writing (articles, proposals)
- Evidence of public speaking (membership in Toastmasters, photograph of you at podium, speech outline, brochure for your presentation, speaker's badge or brochure, blurb from the conference.) Also posters, photos, reviews of actual performances (dance, drama, music, story telling)
- Display or Performance materials (actual objects, or illustrations, or posters from displays)
- Computer related (data base designed, desktop publishing documents, samples from using the Internet, computer video screen pictures or manuals covers illustrating programs you use)
- Formal and technical documents as in grant or loan applications (include proposal cover sheet or award letter), technical manual

Artifacts Pertaining To People Skills

- People and leadership skills (projects or committees you share, projects you initiated, photos of you with important people, mentoring programs, proposals, strategies related to negotiation)
- Planning Samples (summary of steps, instruments used such as surveys or focus groups)
- Problem solving illustrated with various artifacts. Use figures or pictures showing improvements in products, services, profits, safety, quality, time. Include forms used to solve problems

Artifacts About Skills, Things, Tools, Equipment

- Any artifact which shows technical skills, equipment, or specialized procedures used in your work: Paper documents or replicas of actual items including: forms, charts, print outs (such as medical chart, financial statement or budgets, reports, emergency preparedness plan, marketing plan, customer satisfaction plan, inspection or evaluation sheet, financial or budget plans, spreadsheets, charts, official documents)

- Performance records (keyboard timing scores, safety records, phone logs, complaint logs, pay stub with hours worked highlighted, any record showing volume, amount, total time, response time, turn-around time, dollars or sales figures, size of customer database, organization chart showing people supervised)
- Technical directions, manuals, procedure sheets for specialized work, use of equipment, and detailed processes. This could include: sample pages from manuals, illustrations, technical drawings, blueprints or schematics, photos from workplace, schematics or directions for operation or procedure sheet
- Photos, video, slide show, or multi-media presentation showing process or equipment.
- Actual item which can be handled in various ways: displayed in person one at a time or part of a display you set up

Electronic Portfolios

Electronic portfolios include the information typically found in a paper portfolio, but allow for a more dynamic presentation style.

CD-Rom: A CD-Rom is a good way to preserve the components of your paper portfolio, keep all of the documents organized together, and can be easily copied to leave with or send to prospective employers. Items you possess that are not in digital format should be scanned into the computer. This type of electronic portfolio is useful because it demonstrates a degree of computer-savvy and allows for added features such as graphics, video clip, presentation slides, and animation.

Web-Based: Web-based electronic portfolios are the most accessible to employers and can be shared by simply adding the website URL to your resume and/or cover letter. It is an excellent way to demonstrate sophisticated computer skills and employers will never lose it! It is extremely important that this type of portfolio has a professional appearance, is easy to navigate, and is updated regularly (including checking links). To get started, consider:

- Web Hosting Sites
 - Coroflot (<http://www.coroflot.com/>)
 - Angelfire (<http://angelfire.lycos.com/>)
 - Tripod (<http://www.tripod.lycos.com/>)
 - Yahoo! Geocities (<http://geocities.yahoo.com/>)
- Research website design strategies
- Include a “mailto” link on every page
- Remember, your website is public and anyone can access it. DO NOT include your phone number or address—if an employer is interested they can e-mail you.

Select information adapted from several of the following websites. Please follow these links for more information:

- Ball State University, Career Center: [Professional Employment Portfolio](http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/documents/portfoli/) (<http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/documents/portfoli/>)
- Buena Vista University, Career Services: [Create a Job Search Portfolio](http://www.bvu.edu/studentservices/careerservices/students/portfolio/) (<http://www.bvu.edu/studentservices/careerservices/students/portfolio/>)
- Missouri State University, Career Center: [Portfolios](http://careercenter.missouristate.edu/Handbook/Portfolio.pdf) (<http://careercenter.missouristate.edu/Handbook/Portfolio.pdf>)
- Dartmouth College, Career Services: [Developing an Electronic Portfolio](http://engineering.dartmouth.edu/career/handouts/electronic_portfolio.html) (http://engineering.dartmouth.edu/career/handouts/electronic_portfolio.html)