



## **6 STEPS TO BUILDING A STAND OUT PORTFOLIO**

### **1. Collect**

- a. Gather as many samples of your work as you can find (see examples below!).

### **2. Select**

- a. Purchase storage medium (i.e. folder, binder, flex case, hard case, CD, DVD) and interior materials (i.e. sheet protectors, section separators, mounting paper, stick glue, index cards, etc.) based on preference/size of samples.

### **3. Prepare**

- a. Check quality of material, you may need to reprint and/or mount.
- b. Slip items into sheet protectors (where applicable), back to back is acceptable.
- c. Insert section separators and create portfolio cover (optional).

### **4. Prioritize**

- a. Place samples in order of relevance and importance to pursuing opportunity.

### **5. Practice**

- a. Develop talking points for each piece (who, what, when, where, why and how).
- b. Develop list of possible interview questions (use resume/job postings as guides).
- c. Deliver flip-through pitch using talking points and questions you created.
- d. Conduct a 'real' mock interview or network meeting with colleague.

### **6. Maintain**

- a. Save all work from here on out. At least every three months, gather new materials and place in portfolio case or other storage medium.
- b. Re-visit portfolio when new opportunity arises and update following above steps.

### **Examples of works to include in your portfolio:**

- School assignments, essays and papers
- Presentation deck (from school, office, client meeting, sales event, etc.)
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Budget outlines
- Project timelines, protocols, templates, etc.
- Charts, graphs, spreadsheets, etc.
- Drawings, designs, blueprints, drafts, sketches, etc.
- Pictures of events you coordinated, participated in or attended
- Magazine/newspaper article clippings or internal/external newsletters that include you, your company or department's name, or information on your project involvements
- Catalogs, brochures, collateral material, web pages, etc.
- Files you created, updated or maintained (i.e. client database, customer profiles, etc.)
- Letters of recognition/appreciation (i.e. printed or hand written letters, notes and cards) from employers, clients, customers, co-workers, associates, professors, etc.
- Professional correspondence, internal and external (i.e. letters, emails, etc. between co-workers, vendors, clients, associates, etc.)
- Educational credentials (i.e. degrees, certificates, licenses, seminar brochures, etc.)
- Awards (i.e. employee of the month, #2 sales rep, best customer service, etc.)

*The possibilities are endless!*

Look to your resume for clues—every sentence has a story with potential for visual proof.

## KEY POINTS FOR SELECTING AND PREPARING MATERIAL

Keep in mind that your job may not be the only place to gather sample materials. Consider professional or community organizations that you belong to or volunteer with, as well personal situations. You may be surprised at what you've done, such as: created flyers for a neighborhood bake sale, prepared fundraising attendee list, designed party invitation, created home budget, etc. ***If it shows relevant skills, functions and experience, use it!***

The main point is to be able to talk out your experience through visuals. So in addition to items that you created independently, consider:

- What you created in part (i.e. maybe you came up with an idea or added to one).
- What was created by another, but used by you (i.e. spreadsheet, database).

Remove or block out all confidential data from your samples, such as client names and addresses or company financials that are restricted to disclosure.

2. Respect the contributions of others—always give credit where credit is due. If you accurately describe your level of involvement of each piece, you will show your ability to work independently and in a team environment.

## CHOOSING A STORAGE MEDIUM

### Paper (Binder) Portfolios

*Advantages:*

- Easy to make, reorder and add/remove
- Little or no computer skills required
- Highest resolution

*Disadvantages:*

- To leave behind, multiple copies need to be made
- Mistakes are harder to fix

### Web Portfolios

*Advantages:*

- Easily accessible and changeable
- Compact, requires small storage space
- Cross-linking capabilities (audio/video)
- Multiple copies can be made/distributed
- Allows for computer skills development

*Disadvantages:*

- Software learning curve
- Software, training and storage costs
- May cause focus on form/design over content
- Bandwidth and technical issues may arise

### CDs and DVDs

*Advantages:*

- Similar to web
- No bandwidth problems

*Disadvantages:*

- May cause focus on form/design over content
- High hardware costs (i.e. CD/DVD burners)
- Must burn new CD/DVD to update or add to files

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

- [Princetondisc.com](http://Princetondisc.com)
- [Essdack.org/port](http://Essdack.org/port) (electronic portfolios)
- [Electricteacher.com/onlineportfolio](http://Electricteacher.com/onlineportfolio)

## MATERIAL RESOURCES

- Pearl Paint (High \$)
- Staples & Office Depot (Moderate \$)
- Drug Stores i.e. Duane Reade (Low \$)



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