

Creating a Dynamic Portfolio

What is a career portfolio?

- ❖ A visual representation of your skills and experiences
- ❖ A work in progress to be continually updated
- ❖ Purpose: To demonstrate your experiences, skills and talents to an employer in a tangible manner

Why do you need one?

- ❖ to assess your own learning history and career development
- ❖ to set learning objectives
- ❖ to help you develop your resume
- ❖ to prepare for job interviews
- ❖ to help build your confidence regarding what you have to offer an employer

Getting started:

- ❖ Compile all materials that showcase your talents, skills and accomplishments
- ❖ Purchase a professional portfolio presentation binder
- ❖ Decide on the style and visual presentation of your portfolio
- ❖ Create a Table of Contents and make sure each section is easy to get to quickly

Visual organization and assembly:

- ❖ Use lots of white space
- ❖ Don't use more than 2 typefaces
- ❖ Use good quality paper
- ❖ Insert separators identifying each section of your portfolio
- ❖ Photos can be glued directly on your layout sheets or scanned and inserted in word documents
- ❖ Proofread, Proofread, Proofread (and then have someone else proofread)!

What to include:

- ❖ Personal mission statement
- ❖ What is a mission statement?

“It is a guiding principle for your entire career. Essentially it defines who you are, what you do, your purpose, and why you do it. A good mission statement should require little or no explanation and its length is less important than its power.”

(Filion, 2002, Career Portfolio Production Workshop)

What to include continued:

- ❖ Resume
- ❖ Certificates
- ❖ Copies of degrees
- ❖ Reference letters
- ❖ Professional development/training certificates
- ❖ Newspaper articles or photos that show you as a leader, team player, organizer or role model in the community
- ❖ Personal Interests
- ❖ Achievements/Awards (photos, letters of recognition, certificates etc.)
- ❖ Professional memberships

Using your portfolio

- ❖ Before using your portfolio, have a friend, family member or colleague review and proofread it. Record any suggestions for improvement.
- ❖ Know the content of your portfolio well.
- ❖ Prepare a brief, 10-second story about each item in your portfolio and practice it.
- ❖ You may want to create a digital portfolio web page including only the best of your portfolio.

During the job search:

- ❖ At the bottom of your resume, and in your cover letter, add “Professional Portfolio available upon request”.
- ❖ If you have prepared a digital portfolio, indicate the website where it may be viewed.

During an interview:

- ❖ At the beginning of the interview, mention that you have your portfolio with you.
- ❖ Refer to appropriate sections of your portfolio when answering related questions during the interview.

After the interview:

If the interviewer asks to keep your portfolio:

- ❖ have an inexpensive duplicate of your portfolio on hand to give them, or
- ❖ gracefully say no as you have other interviews to attend, or
- ❖ leave it with them and make an appointment to pick it up within 48 hours, asking that it not be copied.

To manage your career:

- ❖ Review the contents every few months and update it regularly.
- ❖ Once you are employed, consider using it during performance reviews.
- ❖ Think of your career as a portfolio of work, with yourself as a portable skill set, and not just a job title.