

# Portfolio Development



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# How to Build Your Work Portfolio

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A portfolio is an excellent way to present your work to potential employers and display the skills that qualify you for a position. While not every employer and position requires a portfolio, a strong demonstration of your work can help distinguish you from other candidates depending on your industry.

Your portfolio can contain proof of your skills, samples of your work and letters of recommendation along with your resume. You can have a physical portfolio or create one online.

Creating a portfolio can help you prepare for the interview process. You can review your portfolio before an interview in order to recall specific examples of your accomplishments. Portfolios are also helpful in the interview because you can reference it while answering questions to answer and present employers with direct evidence of your skillset. For example, if an employer asks for your greatest strengths, you can refer to your skills section in your portfolio to guide your response.

## How to make a professional work portfolio

Use these four steps to build your work portfolio:

1. Collect all your materials
2. Organize
3. Make it visually appealing
4. Customize

### 1. Collect all your materials

Collect all the materials that you want to use in your portfolio. Use the information and examples that are most current and relevant. Make copies of each of the documents, so you can provide the employer with any of the materials they may require.

You should include:

- **Table of Content** – listing page numbers and what is found on each page
- **Your resume.** Try to tailor your resume to specific employers or job positions

- **List of your skills.** Review the job description and select the skills that align with your own, along with any others you feel make you a strong candidate
- **Biographical information.** You can include an ["about me" section](#) in your portfolio. Interviewers frequently begin by asking you to tell them about yourself. Preparing this section of your portfolio will help you answer this question
- **Proof of any degrees, licenses or certifications.** Educational transcripts, copies of licenses or certificates or professional development seminars you attended are all examples you may include.  
Also incorporate relevant classes you are currently are taking, even though you have not earned a certificate, license, or degree (yet).
- **Letters of recommendation, references, testimonials or reviews about yourself.** You can include a reference contact page and testimonials from clients that demonstrate your professional qualities, skills and abilities.
- **Work samples.** Use samples that showcase your range of skills. Depending on your profession, your portfolio should include a wide variety of writing samples, photographs, images, project summaries or reports. If you don't have professional experience, consider using work from school, club or volunteer projects. Provide any available feedback with your samples if available. For example, add a short summary if you received an exemplary grade or were promoted after finishing an assignment.
- **Awards and accomplishments.** List additional information about accomplishments from your resume. Academic honors, scholarships, and other forms of recognition. Employee of the month awards are achievements you can also expand on in this section

## 2. Organize your materials

You should arrange your portfolio so employers can find information easily. It is a good idea to put your resume, bio and skills list near the beginning, and then arrange other items according to what you think is most important. Divide all your information into categories and arrange them in a logical, easy-to-follow order. For example, you can categorize your work samples from most recent to oldest so employers can follow your progress. Create a title and a table of contents page for easy navigation and add page numbers.

## 3. Make it visually appealing

Making your portfolio visually appealing is especially important for any candidates in the arts or design fields. You should organize and design your portfolio in a consistent way that displays your aesthetic, personality and work style.

For physical copies of your work portfolio, use a binder, folder or portfolio case to make the pages easy to flip through. You can use section dividers, tabs and color-coding options to make finding information as easy as possible. Protect the pages with clear page covers.

You should make copies of all the important materials an employer might want to keep from your portfolios, such as your resume and reference sheet. Alternatively, make multiple physical copies of your portfolio so that you could leave it with the interview upon request.

There are many options for creating an online version of your portfolio. Several websites and networking platforms offer online portfolio services, and some are free. You could also create your own website. Format your online portfolio like a slide presentation or add pictures and infographics to make it visually appealing. When your online portfolio is ready, include a link to it in your resume. You could also add the link to your email signature.

#### **4. Customize your portfolio**

Once you have a master copy of your work portfolio, you can customize it for specific job applications and interviews. Change your resume and skills pages to highlight the requirements listed on the job description.

Consider adding a solutions section. Some portfolios include a 30/60/90 plan, which outlines what you will do in the position in the first 30, 60 and 90 days if you get the job. You can research the company and formulate ideas you could implement to help the company. A 30/60/90 plan demonstrates to employers your interest in the company and position.

Try to update your portfolio every few months or once a year. Revisiting your portfolio regularly will help you add relevant information while it's still current and remove outdated parts. It's also a useful way to review your progress and look for areas of improvement.

It is never too late to start saving and/or creating documents for your new portfolio! It will be worth the effort next time you find yourself competing for your next promotion or new job.

**\*\*Be careful not to reveal anything confidential from your current (or previous) employer.**

Source: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/build-your-work-portfolio>