



A professional employment portfolio could be just the thing that sets you apart from other job candidates. The material will show what makes you different from the other applicants for a particular position.

A well-prepared portfolio 1) shows your achievements, 2) documents the scope and quality of your experience and training, 3) shows your skills and abilities.

Purpose

The portfolio can help you market yourself to employers. You can support what you tell an employer in an interview with items from your portfolio.

Getting Started with your PEP

You need to begin with self-assessment and evaluation to determine what you have to offer an employer. What is the best way to market your assets?

Organizing Your Portfolio

First, decide what skills and experiences you have that relate to the needs of the employer. Second, spend some time thinking about what you have done that will exhibit those skills to the employer.

Suppose the employer is seeking a person with a strong finance background. You could discuss the requirements of your finance major, your courses, your internship in the finance department of an insurance company, and your membership in the finance club. Show the employer your transcript (courses), your internship summary report, and your finance club certificate of achievement.

Keep in mind that your portfolio displays you to an employer; therefore, it must present you in a professional manner. Buy a loose-leaf portfolio notebook and a supply of plastic page covers to add materials whenever you need. You will need to place similar information together. If you have three letters of recommendation, they should all be placed in the same area of the portfolio, not scattered throughout. You may want to label the different sections for ease of finding information in the portfolio.

Arrange your portfolio to show how your abilities relate to the employer's needs. The examples of your work experiences can come from paid work (part and full-time), volunteer work, internships, cooperative education, clubs, practicums, and even church-related experiences. A well-organized portfolio indicates that you are a serious job seeker.

What to Include

1. A copy of your resume, even though you may have already sent one to the employer. You may want to have several copies with you at the interview.
2. An official copy of your transcript(s).
3. A fact sheet, in list form, that displays your skills and what you like to do.
4. A list of experiences that do not fit into your resume.
5. Certificates of award and honors; special certifications for special training.
6. A program from an event you planned or in which you participated as a part of a class project or campus organization. Be sure to only take partial credit for group efforts.
7. A list of conferences and workshops you have attended and a description of each.
8. Some samples of your writing of which you are proud. If any of the samples are unpublished college papers, remove any remarks from the professors.

9. Documentation of technical or computer skills that would be of benefit to the employer.
10. Letters of commendation or thanks from previous employers, campus organization advisors, or leaders of volunteer projects in which you have been involved.
11. Letters of nomination to honors and academic organizations.
12. Newspaper articles that address some achievement.
13. Internship or co-op summary report.

If you are seeking a teaching position you may want to add

1. Student teaching evaluation materials.
2. Sample lesson plans.
3. A videotape of your teaching.
4. Sample syllabi.
5. Pictures of bulletin boards you designed.
6. Teaching tools you have created.
7. Information about a field trip or other event you organized.
8. Pictures of yourself working with students.

Telling an Employer about Your Portfolio

You may want to mention your portfolio in the reference section of your resume, as well as in your cover letter.

Always bring your portfolio to interviews. When the employer begins to ask questions about your resume, you can use your portfolio to support your responses.

For example, the employer might say, "I see that you have worked for your school newspaper. What were your favorite writing assignments?" You might reply, "My favorite assignments included this health article (show article in the portfolio) that required a lot of research and this creative writing piece (show article) that I wrote for a special edition."

During on-campus interviews, you may not have an opportunity to show your portfolio to an employer in detail, but you can offer to send copies of the materials to the employer as a follow-up to the interview.

Keeping Current

You need to continue to update and add to your portfolio. To help you remember to put things in your portfolio, you should keep an achievement diary.

Everyday (or at least once a week), make notes in your diary about projects or ideas you have written as well as notes about decisions you have made that had a positive results. Include anything you think might help you in a future job search.

~ Thanks to Ball State University, Career Services