Presentation Notes for Maximize Your Job Search with a Career Portfolio

Maximize Your Job Search with a Career Portfolio

Slide 1
All job seekers can benefit from creating and building an employment portfolio which can show samples of your work to an employer. It adds visual impact to your presentation. It can also showcase your accomplishments, training, and expertise. Your portfolio is a selling tool for you! A portfolio is always changing and evolving. What does this mean?

During a job interview, your portfolio makes you stand out from the competition:
• Employers will see you truly want the job.
• Employers will believe you can do the work.
• Employers will remember you.
• It can also add confidence and credibility during the interview process.
• It provides an edge over other applicants and employers tend to be impressed.
• It requires time and organizational skills.
• Employers understand this and are impressed by initiative and organizational skills a portfolio communicates.

Note to teacher: Show the students the sample portfolio you have and discuss its contents. You can briefly introduce the components of an employment portfolio at this time.

If you have a personal portfolio, you may share it with the students.
### What is a Portfolio?

- **Port** means that a person’s credentials are portable and transportable; convenient, and manageable. They provide an image or picture of one’s experience, interests, achievements, goals, and capabilities.

- **Folio** means a packaging of one’s credentials through photographs; reproduced evidence, work samples, videos, audio, and other formats.

### WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?

A portfolio gives you a visual and tangible way to represent your credentials, skills, and achievements.

Port means that a person’s credentials are portable, transportable, convenient, and manageable. They provide an image or picture of one’s experience, interests, achievements, goals, and capabilities.

Folio means a packaging of one’s credentials through photographs, reproduced evidence, work samples, videos, audio, and other formats.
Job Interview-Creating a Portfolio
Laura DeCarlo, Certified Interview Coach with Career Directors International shares job interview and creating a portfolio tips

Your portfolio can be very simple:

• Use a new three-ring binder.
• Keep the cover clean — no doodling.
• Put pages in sheet protectors.
• Have a table of contents.
• Divide sections with tabs — you'll find pages easily.

Job Interview-Creating a Portfolio
Laura DeCarlo, Certified Interview Coach with Career Directors International, shares tips on job interviews and creating a portfolio.
http://youtu.be/hQhigdJ-xEk
What to Include:

- Résumé
- Cover letter
- Two letters of recommendation
- List of skills
- Licenses, certificates, and other records
- Copies of awards, honors, and scholarships
- Goals and plans for the future
- Copies of transcripts
- Work samples and project summaries
- Past employment evaluations from employer or practicum supervisor
- Job descriptions
- Detailed challenges and solutions faced on previous jobs
- List of technical skills
- Extended learning experiences, such as community service and active participation in career and technical student organizations and professional organizations

Include only relevant material in your portfolio.

- Stick with work-related items; it is not a scrapbook.
- Use items that bring your résumé to life.
What to Include

- Highlight items related closely to the job you want.
- Bring copies of material for the interviewer to keep.
- Include relevant volunteer and other activities.

Include only relevant material in your portfolio.
The electronic portfolio is a vehicle for collecting and presenting evidence of growth and achievement over time. The employment e-portfolio complements your hard copy portfolio rather than replacing it. The e-portfolio can be placed on a CD, DVD, flash drive, or on the web. It can be set up as a PowerPoint™ presentation or a PowerPoint™ slideshow can be included as part of the portfolio.

What to include in your e-portfolio:
We have all heard the phrase, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” In addition to the kinds of materials that would be included in a traditional portfolio, an e-portfolio, gives you the freedom to add audio, video clips, and links to e-mail or a personal website. This type of portfolio gives an employer an in-depth look into your personality as an individual and potential employee.
An e-portfolio will set you apart from all the other applicants. An e-portfolio can make the difference between interviewing for a job and actually being offered a job.

How to create your e-portfolio:
Include electronic versions of items from your traditional portfolio. For example, include the word processing files for your writing samples and résumé, scans of appropriate photos and certificates, and Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files of graphics such as brochures that you have designed. Avoid personal information and inappropriate links.

Respect the privacy of previous team members, professors, or former employers whose information might be accessible without their consent. Carefully check your e-portfolio for names, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses.

When to use your e-portfolio:
The e-portfolio can be beneficial after the interview when the employer can review it again and give access to others who were not in the interview. Some companies will request an e-portfolio in advance through their websites. Include a cover letter and your résumé as a further incentive to encourage the employer to invite you for an interview.

Teacher note:
Please refer to Kuder.com or Bridges to help students develop an e-portfolio.
41 Benefits of an Electronic Portfolio
Benefits of an E-Portfolio for Students, Educators, Employers or Corporate Companies
A web résumé (a web page of your résumé) and portfolio (examples of your work online, e.g., photos) can be helpful, especially if you specialize in website design, graphic arts, or related fields. Once you create them, make sure you keep them updated!

Make sure it's well-organized and easy to navigate.

Keep it simple--no clutter or slow-to-download extras.

Avoid gimmicks, e.g., flashing text and hard-to-read colors.
Compiling a Professional Portfolio

Dr. Jody Gallagher of Edinboro University’s Office of Career Services shares essential tips for job seekers. In this clip, Dr. Gallagher explains how to format a proper portfolio.

http://youtu.be/sXCF9hZ9IXc
You created a résumé during the lesson “Show Yourself Off: Write a Résumé!” We will be incorporating it into your employment portfolio. If you have any changes that need to be made on your résumé -- address, phone number, additional job experiences, etcetera, please do so before adding your résumé to your employment portfolio.
Cover letters, which "cover" your résumé, should:
- clearly state how your skills and experience will help the employer;
- convince the employer to grant you an interview.

"A cover letter is an introduction, a sales pitch and a proposal for further action," says career expert Michelle Tullier. It's also one of your most valuable tools for contacting employers. Every letter must be uniquely tailored to the job in question. Generic letters do not get you interviews!
There are essentially three types of cover letters, but the basic format for each is the same. The types are as follows:

Response to an ad, e.g., in newspaper

Cold-call letter (asking about upcoming or unadvertised openings)

Referral letter (mentioning a person known to both you and the employer)
Before you begin writing, do a little research.
Find someone who works at the company whose name you can drop with their permission.
Find out to whom you should send the letter. (If it's the Human Resources Department, send it to the hiring manager as well).
Research the company.
Don't just repeat your résumé.
Address the letter to a person, never a generic title.
Use your first sentence to grab attention.
If someone referred you, mention that person's name and title in the first sentence.
Compare the job specifications or ad language side-by-side with your abilities and experience.
Don't say how the job will benefit you! Focus on how you will help the employer!
Keep the letter brief — less than a page.
Use the format described on the next page.
Use bullets to list your relevant qualifications.
Make sure you have no typos or errors.
Be neat — no smudges or crinkles.
Additional guidelines:

Say nothing negative!

Use direct, simple language with active verbs.

Show that you have knowledge about the company.

Ask for an interview and note that you'll call. You need to follow-up; don't wait for the employer to do it.

Don't write, “Please find my enclosed résumé.” It wastes space and states the obvious.

Sign the letter in blue ink to show it's an original.

Keep a copy for your records.

Make some parts of the letter suitable for any employer, but make certain sentences unique to the specific job.
Review the points to include on a cover letter.

Text version of this cover letter is available on the website.

Texas Workforce Commission
Texas Job Hunter’s Guide to Step Four Contact: Cover Letter
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/news/tjhg/s4ltrex.html
There are several types of recommendation letters including recommendation letters for employment, college, or graduate school. Here is information on the different types of recommendation letters including employment, academic, personal, character, and student plus more sample recommendation letters.

Character and Personal Reference letters:
Are you looking for your first job? Or are you concerned about the references your employer might give you? Neighbors and acquaintances may be willing to write a reference for you. Business acquaintances, academic advisors, customers, and vendors can all make good references.

Employment Recommendation letters:
These employment recommendation letter examples include employee recommendation letters, letters from supervisors, recommendation letters for a promotion, letters from previous employers, personal recommendation letters, and other employment-related recommendation letters.

Teachers can also write letters of recommendation for students. Consider asking your counselor, coach, club advisor, or school administrator. Provide a copy of your resume to assist the person from whom you are requesting a letter of recommendation. Allow 2-3 weeks for the person to write the letter of recommendation.
Each company looks for a different mix of skills and experience depending on the business it's; however it's no longer enough to be a functional expert. To complement these unique core competencies, there are certain "soft skills" every company looks for in a potential hire.

"Soft skills" refers to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with. Companies value soft skills because research suggests and experience shows that they can be just as important an indicator of job performance as hard skills.

1. Strong Work Ethic
Are you motivated and dedicated to getting the job done, no matter what? Will you be conscientious and do your best work?

2. Positive Attitude
Are you optimistic and upbeat? Will you generate good energy and good will?

3. Good Communication Skills
Are you both verbally articulate and a good listener? Can you make your case and express your needs in a way that builds bridges with colleagues, customers, and vendors?

4. Time Management Abilities
Do you know how to prioritize tasks and work on a number of different projects at once? Will you use your time on the job wisely?

5. Problem-Solving Skills
Are you resourceful and able to creatively solve problems that will inevitably arise? Will you take ownership of problems or leave them for someone else?
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6. Acting as a Team Player
Will you work well in groups and teams? Will you be cooperative and take a leadership role when appropriate?

7. Self-Confidence
Do you truly believe you can do the job? Will you project a sense of calm and inspire confidence in others? Will you have the courage to ask questions that need to be asked and to freely contribute your ideas?

8. Ability to Accept and Learn From Criticism
Will you be able to handle criticism? Are you coachable and open to learning and growing as a person and as a professional?

9. Flexibility/Adaptability
Are you able to adapt to new situations and challenges? Will you embrace change and be open to new ideas?

10. Working Well Under Pressure
Can you handle the stress that accompanies deadlines and crises? Will you be able to do your best work and come through in a pinch?
Internships and job shadowing activities need to be documented in your portfolio.
Include formal recognition you have received. Do not omit professional or academic awards. These are often listed with an applicant’s experience or education, but some list them at the end of their résumé.

“You need to be specific—dates, how many years, any awards, what they meant, and who you received them from,” says Grace Brauchle, who helps students put their portfolios together as the career center coordinator for Lehman High School in Kyle.

You can include an award for participating in an event, placing in competitions, newspaper articles, or any recognition of special honors.
Goals and Plans for the Future

- What is your five year plan?
- Be realistic in stating your plan

Employers want to see that you have a vision and a plan for your future.
Copies of Transcripts

Make sure it is an official transcript

Where can you obtain an official transcript? Why is it important that the transcript is official?
Start with your most recent education and work backward. For each school you have attended, list the name and location, diploma, certificate, or degree earned, and year of completion.

If you have not yet completed one of your degrees, use the word “expected” before your graduation date. If you do not know when you will graduate, add “in progress” after the name of the unfinished degree.

The education section is especially important for recent graduates. Include your overall grade point average, average within a major, or class standing if it helps your case. The general guideline is to include averages of 3.0 and above, but the minimum useful average is still widely debated. Graduates should also consider listing relevant courses under a separate heading. Listing four to eight courses related to a particular occupation shows a connection between education and work. College graduates need not list their high school credentials.
Work Samples and Project Summaries
- Samples of communication/writing skills
- Training/workshop packets or handouts

You can also include materials from conferences or workshops you attended, participated in, or presented. A summary of scholarly research or projects can be documented in your portfolio as well.
A positive evaluation from a teacher or coach is also applicable.
Job Descriptions

What job duties did you perform at your present or past jobs?

Use correct and concise words to describe your job duties:

- Arranged
- Calculated
- Categorized
- Constructed
- Organized
- Performed
- Constructed
- Developed
- Created
- Designed
- Established

What other words can you use to describe your job duties?
Challenges and Solutions on the Job

Make it a point to describe a work related situation in which you utilized your strong personal and professional skills.

Detailed challenges and solutions faced on previous jobs:

Describe the situation you encountered in detail.

Tell how you’ve used your skills to analyze the problem before you considered subsequent actions, e.g., solutions.

Explain the solution that you selected and your approach. Why did you decide to take this particular resolution?

Finally, describe the outcomes/results and what you have learned from that situation.

Any company would want an experienced person who is able to rise above complex situations. Therefore, make it a point to describe a work-related situation in which you utilized your strong personal and professional skills.
List any special skills you have that are closely related to the job, such as computer application, or equipment operation.

If you have specific computer, foreign language, or technical skills, consider highlighting them by giving them their own category—even if they don’t relate directly to the occupation you’re pursuing. For jobs in information technology, for example, job seekers may list programming and computer application skills in a separate section. Because most occupations now require computer skills, job seekers in other fields also may list those skills separately.

You can also include examples of handouts, letters, memos, reports, charts, graphs, and brochures you designed.
Activities can be an excellent source of experience, especially for students in high school or college who don’t have much work experience. Students can list their involvement in school or extracurricular activities as a way of showing a prospective employer their initiative. Activities might include participation in organizations, associations, student government, clubs, or community activities. Include those related to the position you are applying for or that demonstrate hard work and leadership skills.

What extended learning experiences do you have?
How to Use Your Portfolio in Your Interview:

- It helps keep the conversation flowing.
- You are able to focus better at the interview.
- You can refer to your portfolio during the interview.

How to Use Your Portfolio:

Carry the portfolio in your left arm so that you can shake hands with the interviewer. Remember a firm handshake is ideal for a good first impression.

Keep it as inconspicuous as possible until you need it, setting it aside on the table or next to your chair where it is easily accessible. It is important to keep the focus on you and build rapport. What does inconspicuous mean? What is rapport?

During the conversation when describing a project or skill, ask the interviewer if he or she would like to see your portfolio. Some interviewers will ask for it and start asking questions pertaining to its contents. You can start conversations that wouldn’t be likely without a portfolio in hand, e.g., the collaboration skills you developed while on a community service project as shown in an on-site group photo.

Make sure you are so familiar with the portfolio contents and organization that you can instantly flip to the appropriate tab without undue interruption to the flow of the interview.

Employers want to hire people for internships and jobs who can create results. You can also include graphs and charts which help build on past performances and project summaries. This is the best predictor of future success! What are some reasons for developing graphs and charts?

Your portfolio represents your work, and it's valuable. Treat it with respect!
Never send it with your résumé and cover letter.

During the interview, show examples related to the discussion; don't go through your portfolio page by page.

Put the portfolio away if the interviewer seems uninterested.

Never leave it with the employer.

Your portfolio helps you plan and track your career-related experiences and accomplishments. When you update your portfolio regularly you see your own progress and growth as a professional. You're now set to impress an employer!
The Portfolio - A Career Boosting Tool
Learn how to put together your portfolio and what types of documents you can use to highlight your abilities for employers. This video also includes how to use your portfolio in your interview. http://youtu.be/lBIQPcW_DN0
References and Resources

Textbooks:

Websites:
- How to Design a Winning Job Portfolio
  To create a portfolio that is winning, include an assortment of items in a professional and polished-looking collection.
  http://www.ehow.com/how_2310601_design-winning-job-portfolio.html
- Texas Workforce Commission
  Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas.
  http://www.twc.state.tx.us/twcinfo/about-texas-workforce.html
- Want to Create an Awesome Work Portfolio?
  A portfolio is a collection of the best examples of your work. No matter what kind of work you do, it showcases what you excel at. Look at what a work portfolio is and how to create one.
  http://www.manifestyourpotential.com/work/take_up_life_work/Ill_get_hired/how_to_create_awesome_work_portfolio.html

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Your Job Skills Portfolio: Giving You an Edge in the Marketplace

You can use your career portfolio in job interviews to showcase a point, to illustrate the depth of your skills and experience, or to use as a tool to get a second interview.

http://www.quintcareers.com/job_search_portfolio.html

YouTube:
- Compiling a Professional Portfolio
  Dr. Jody Gallagher of Edinboro University’s Office of Career Services shares essential tips for job seekers. In this clip, Dr. Gallagher explains how to format a proper portfolio.
  http://youtu.be/sXCF9hZ9IXc
- Job Interview: Creating a Portfolio
  Laura DeCarlo, Certified Interview Coach with Career Directors International shares job interview and creating a portfolio tips
  http://youtu.be/hQhigdJ
- The Portfolio: A Career Boosting Tool
  Learn how to put together your portfolio and what types of documents you can use to highlight your abilities for employers. This video also includes how to use your portfolio in your interview.
  http://youtu.be/lBIQPcW_DN0