

Tips for Creating a Success Portfolio

WHY SUCCESS PORTFOLIOS WORK

Success portfolios work so well because:

- They provide tangible evidence of your productivity. By contrast, most applicants base their employment pitches solely on uncorroborated promises of their productivity. In other words, actions speak louder than words.
- Employment pitches that feature impressive materials appeal to multiple senses. Therefore, they are more vivid and memorable than oral pitches alone.
- Your competition probably won't take the time and trouble to create a success portfolio. Therefore, your success portfolio will help you prove to interviewers that you are more organized and thoughtful than other applicants.
- Your portfolio will leave your interviewers with an indelible impression that will linger long after you have left the interview.

WHAT YOUR SUCCESS PORTFOLIO SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Your success portfolio should be a portfolio with pockets that holds a well-formatted, hard-copy version of your resume, your business card, and a sample of documents that validate your relevant successes. If your achievements involve the Web, you may bring a device with an Internet connection with your relevant Web sites bookmarked, so that you can easily show them during your interview. However, if you choose this method, be sure to have a back-up plan in case you do not have an Internet connection in your interview office.

Some tips on creating an impressive hard-copy success portfolio:

- When you're invited to an interview, ask for each interviewer's name and title. If possible, provide each interviewer with his or her own portfolio that is labeled with their name and leave it with him or her when you leave the interview. Bring extra copies of your portfolio for unanticipated readers.
- Emphasize key text in the portfolio with a highlighter. Label and annotate your materials so they are self-explanatory to hiring managers who may review your portfolio after the interview is over. Identify your contributions to group projects.
- During your interview, artfully weave your success portfolio into the conversation. Introduce your portfolio with pride and confidence but without cockiness.
- Remember: preparing an impressive portfolio is time-consuming. So don't leave its preparation to the last minute.

TYPES OF DOCUMENTS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR SUCCESS PORTFOLIO

- Excellent performance evaluations; praising emails from managers, colleagues or clients; evaluations from conferences, trainings or other events you helped organize; major awards and their justifications; and written recommendations from your references.
- Writing samples, such as reports, articles, newsletters, press releases and associated press clips.
- Print-outs of PowerPoint presentations you prepared or delivered.
- Programs from events you organized or conferences that featured your work.
- Explanatory maps, charts and photographs.
- Samples of artwork or manufactured products that you helped produce.
- Students and recent grads: your transcripts, copies of your relevant papers (preferably with praising comments from professors) or a list of your relevant courses or papers that received high grades.