## PORTFOLIO TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

While in the process of applying for internships and preparing for interviews, it is important to put together a portfolio. A portfolio includes samples of your best work compiled together in a neat package. The purpose of a portfolio is to market yourself and show off your experience and skills. It will often act as a first impression and help you establish contacts in your field and/or lead to interviews and internships.

Keep branding in mind when creating your portfolio. Think about your unique self (e.g., your passions, strengths, etc.), and what makes you stand out as an excellent candidate. Include this in your branding and throughout your portfolio. Additionally, the branding design in your résumé, cover letter, business cards, etc. should all be present in your portfolio. This includes fonts, color choices, contact information, and overall "feel."

**Getting started**

o   Consider creating two versions of your portfolio, one hard copy (i.e., book or reel) and one online version (i.e., website and/or blog).

o   Gather work that you would like to show. Include related work from classes, freelance and volunteer opportunities, internships, and current or previous jobs.

o   Ensure that the work you wish to include in your portfolio looks nice and neat and is edited. Remember, you will be showing your portfolio to a professional in your field. Show only your best work.

o   Less is sometimes more. Too much material can be confusing or overwhelming.

o   Present your portfolio to others and watch for reactions as they look through it; consider their suggestions.

**Hard Copy Portfolio**

Your hard copy portfolio is what you will want to take with you to interviews and to networking events. The portfolio should include hard copies of your best work and be reflective of your online portfolio. It should include all of the same branding you have used on other materials (such as your résumé and business card). You will want to:

o   Organize and show your work as a professional presentation.

o   Arrange your work in a way that will be easy to view during an interview.

o Create a table of contents or menu for your work so you and the interviewer know exactly where specific items are located in your portfolio.

o When creating a portfolio book: consider creating cover pages for each section (keep branding consistent on these pages) and include a tab on each cover page, section divider, or sample, depending on how your book is set up.

o When creating a demo reel: make sure it is professionally labeled; if using a DVD, create a menu that is organized, easy to navigate, and aligns with personal branding.

o Present your hard copy portfolio to others; this is a good time to test your portfolio to make sure it is easy-to-use.

o Consider creating multiple versions: one main portfolio and multiple smaller versions (i.e., a smaller book or extra DVD or CD) that you are comfortable leaving with an organization, as potential employees may ask you to leave samples of your work for their review after an interview.

**Online Portfolio**

Your online portfolio will be one of the first impressions you give to potential internship supervisors, especially if you send them your link before your interview. Not only will they look at the content and the samples you included, but they will also look at the manner in which your work is presented. It is important to ensure that your site is user-friendly, has a good layout, contains working links, and is professional. Unless you are familiar with programming languages and/or website editing software, consider building your online portfolio using an online template program. See Online Portfolio Development Tools and Suggestions for more detailed information about choosing a template program, and the Online Portfolio Criteria document for further assistance with creating your online portfolio.

Here are some tips and suggestions to consider while going through the process of building your online portfolio:

o Create an outline for what you plan to include, where information will go, and the layout of the whole site.

o When thinking about your website, keep in mind that the domain name (URL) should be easy-to-understand and professional. Also consider the following: what is the annual/monthly fee, what is the capacity, and what kind of support is offered by the host.

- o Consider including the following: area of specialization or industry; sample work and projects; résumé; contact information; biography, professional profile, and/or artist statement.

- o Keep in mind the following elements, which will enhance your portfolio: complementary design elements (i.e., limited fonts, neutral colors, purposeful graphics and images); well-written, edited text; clean, simple pages that are easy-to-navigate; cohesive, consistent branding across all media.

- o Link to social networking sites only if content is appropriate and professional. Use social media icons to link your portfolio to your social media sites. Be aware that public social profiles might be viewed by your professional contacts.

- o Test your site. Click through the links. View your site in different browsers and with various Internet connection speeds. Make sure that large items load in a reasonable amount of time. Also, send your link to yourself and others to ensure it works. Do this each time before sending your portfolio link out to potential internship supervisors.

- o Make sure your site is frequently updated and ready for your professional contacts to view. Check your portfolio link regularly to ensure it works and there are no problems accessing it.

Remember that your professional portfolio may be different than the one you create for the SOC Portfolio Review requirement and may contain different elements. The sample work in your professional portfolio should be without comments or grades and should contain only your best work.

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