



## **PORTFOLIO PREPARATION & PRESENTATION**

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### **1. Keep it simple.**

Your portfolio should be easy to carry, easy to present, easy to clean, easy to update. Digitally printed sheets compiled into book form are the current norm. Take digital photos of 3-D pieces or collateral materials. Print your work on standard sheet sizes 11 x 17 or 12 x 18. Large enough to see the work, small enough to fit on a messy desk. Individual printouts, mounted to boards and placed in a box are easy to customize. Laminated sheets are easy to clean, and prevent scuffing of your work. Metal or wood boxes may be cool, but can be awkward to use and can easily scratch up a mahogany conference table.

### **2. Keep it digital.**

A PDF deck of your work can be great to send off with an e-mailed resume. It doesn't have to be your entire portfolio, but a few strong pieces may seal the deal on getting an interview.

### **3. Back it up.**

Copy your work to a portable drive. And a flash drive. And burn a DVD. (You get the picture.) Keep these backups in different places. I have seen portfolios get lost in large agencies, never to be found. Re-printing is a lot easier than re-creating.

### **4. Less is more.**

Show me only your best work. Present work that highlights your talents/thinking/capabilities. Anything that doesn't measure up should be refined or removed. Five strong pieces seem a lot stronger on their own instead of nestled within 15 other not-so-strong pieces. The weak work detracts from the great work, and makes us question how often your creative will hit the mark. As an interviewer, there is nothing worse than having to flip through 40 pages of so-so work.

### **5. Concept is key.**

Design isn't just about how something looks, but about problem solving. The concept behind the work should be evident without explanation, but sometimes we want to know how you think and why you did what you did. We want to see your mental gears churning. Be able to summarize the key concept of a piece in a few sentences. Keep it simple. If we want more, we'll ask for it.

### **6. Best work up front.**

Your ability should be apparent from the first two pages of your portfolio. Impress me in the beginning. Keep me enthralled the rest of the way.



**7. Craftsmanship counts.**

No matter how long you've been in the business, your technical skills, attention to detail, and ability to neatly "comp" up an idea is essential. Score your folds. Use a sharp exacto to trim your edges. "Erase" excess spray mount. If a comp is looking a bit worn, make a new one. Then photograph it.

**8. Spelling and Grammer count too.**

Double and triple check your e-mails, cover letters and thank you letters for spelling and grammar. And please, do not spell the potential employers name or title wrong. Call the office and ask if you don't know. "Creative" spelling doesn't cut it in the business world.

**9. Go with the flow.**

Some interviewers like to be presented to and want to see how you handle yourself and your work. Other interviewers like to look through your portfolio and ask questions as needed. Don't be thrown off guard if their way is a little different than yours, be flexible. Don't try to force fit the situation. Your work should speak for itself.

**10. Adapt to time constraints.**

Some interviewers may be able to spend only 10 minutes with you, while others might have an hour set aside. If you are asked to present your ideas accordingly, err on the side that your time is limited. Be concise.

**11. Book. Bag. Portfolio.**

These all mean the same thing.

**12. Avoid the cute stuff.**

Gimmicky tricks are not recommended. Your portfolio should be simple. Let the work and the concepts behind it shine. Having a unique portfolio may help you stand out among a crowd of candidates, but you want the interviewer to remember the quality of your work, not the portfolio itself. The presentation vehicle should not overshadow the work.

**13. Come prepared.**

Do your research about the agency/studio/gallery before the interview. Prepare a few questions ahead of time. Write them down. It is easy to forget what you wanted to ask when under pressure. It is okay to reference your notes. Practice presenting your work on your friends, family, dog. Anyone who will listen. Get comfortable with what you're presenting and present it with passion and confidence.

**14. Learn the art of spin.**

Be able to turn what the interviewer may see as a negative personality trait into a positive one.

**15. Personality counts.**

If you're creative, odds are you'll be interviewing with another creative. Always be professional, but it's okay to see your fun / creative side too. Be yourself. We want to know how your personality will mesh with the group dynamic. This will help you find the perfect fit for yourself and the company your interviewing with.



16. Keep an open mind.

Be open to various types of work environments - every experience will teach you another important aspect of the business. You may think you know exactly where you want to work, but keep yourself open to opportunities that you may not have initially considered. They could be a perfect learning experience for you.

17. The 3 Es.

Eager. Energetic. Enthusiastic. That's what we're looking for.

18. Smile

19. Be a sponge.

Whether you're a recent grad, or a 20 year veteran, always keep an open mind to new experiences, knowledge and ideas. Nothing is more frustrating than working with recent grads that think they know everything. We know you're trying to prove yourself. We've been there. Just remember that we hired you because we saw potential. There is always something more to learn. Be open to it. Absorb the world around you. It will help inspire your creativity, keep your ideas fresh and make you a valuable resource to the coworkers that surround you.

20. Relax.

You're going to be just fine.