



BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

INCLUDES STRATEGIES FOR
DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS

Chrissy Scivicque, PMP, PCM
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PORTFOLIO BASICS

What Is a Professional Portfolio?

A professional portfolio is a collection of items that document and demonstrate your professional capabilities and accomplishments. It's a helpful visual aid that highlights:

- Your work experience and professional achievements
- Your academic achievements, education and training
- Your volunteer and charitable activities
- Your community leadership activities
- Your professional associations and affiliations
- Your personal brand

A professional portfolio creates an in-depth 360-degree view of your career and who you are as a professional.

Why Do You Need a Portfolio?

A professional portfolio provides tangible proof of your professional value.

In the past, portfolios were typically considered tools for artists and other creators, rather than service providers. However, that idea has recently evolved. Today, they are common in nearly all professional fields and industries.

Think of it this way: As a professional, you are a business of one. When a company chooses to employ you, they are “purchasing” your business’s service. Your professional portfolio is like a marketing brochure for the services you’re selling. By showcasing your skills, abilities and achievements, your portfolio helps your customers (employers) and



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prospects (potential future employers) understand what services you provide and why your services are special (and worth the purchase price).

Whether you're looking to obtain a new job, a raise, a promotion, or simply a positive performance review, your professional portfolio will complement your efforts, providing evidence of your contributions and proof of your value, and helping to differentiate you from your peers.

Aside from all of these benefits, a well-put-together professional portfolio can become a cherished personal time capsule. It serves as a wonderful reminder of where you've been. Looking at it can be both motivating and self-esteem boosting. You'll never be at a loss when someone asks, "What have you accomplished in your career?"

Why Now?

As a professional, you're certainly busy. However, I strongly urge you to make creating your professional portfolio a priority.

This isn't one of those things that can be thrown together in an hour or two. It takes a serious investment of time (on the front-end) to create a nicely formatted, comprehensive professional portfolio. Of course, once created, it's much easier to maintain, provided you update it on a regular basis.

Don't wait until you're in the middle of a job search or the night before your annual review to get started. When you're ready to use your portfolio, you'll want it done. If you're only starting to put it together at that point, you'll be way too rushed to create the kind of finished product you want and need.



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Remember, this is a visual representation of who you are as a professional. You want it to demonstrate your real value and capabilities. It's a reflection of your commitment to your career. If it looks like it's been thrown together haphazardly, and that there was no real effort put into the process, what does that say about you?



HOW TO USE YOUR PORTFOLIO

A professional portfolio can help in any circumstance where you want to make a strong impression. It's all about providing PROOF of your value.

Here are just a few of the scenarios where it's most commonly used.

1. Job Interviews

Take your physical portfolio to a job interview and refer to the items inside while discussing your work experience. It will act as a handy reminder of the great things you've done in your career, while also contributing to your professional image. You'll look prepared and organized, and your interviewers will see that you take your work seriously.

Be sure to make a copy so you can leave it behind as a reminder of who you are and what you offer the organization. If you choose to create a digital portfolio (which we'll discuss more later), you can leave behind a personal contact card with the URL for the portfolio.

I have personal experience using my own portfolio in this way.

In 2005, I was applying to become an Executive Assistant, and I took my portfolio to the interview. The recruiter had mentioned that the role would involve a good deal of written communication, so I made sure to include several writing samples. The executive was clearly impressed with the samples during our conversation and, about a year later, he casually mentioned that this was a key factor in his decision to hire me.



2. Performance Reviews

During a performance review, you can refer to the items inside your portfolio when recounting specific accomplishments and accolades. Your reviewer will be happy to see that you've been tracking these things on your own and that you're prepared for the discussion. You may even be able to draw your reviewer's attention to accomplishments he or she overlooked or simply forgotten.

For most professionals, self-promotion can be uncomfortable. But with a portfolio by your side, you're able to cite objective, verifiable facts. It's not just your *opinion* that you've done a great job; you have documentation that proves it!

In addition, your portfolio will help put you in an excellent position for negotiating more pay, more responsibility, etc.

3. Negotiations

Getting what you want in a negotiation is all about leverage. The person with whom you're negotiating is doing a mental calculation that boils down to this: *Are you worth it?* Does your request make sense given your current value and/or your future value? Your portfolio provides the necessary leverage to help you get what you want.

Salary Negotiations for New Employment

Sitting across from your new (potential) future employer, it can be downright scary to ask for the pay you want and rightfully deserve. After all, you don't want to appear greedy. And you certainly don't want your new boss to question whether or not you're really worth it. But of course, that's exactly what they're doing. Your job is to know your value and demonstrate it. Your professional portfolio is a powerful tool to help you do that.



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Your new (potential) employer has never worked with you before. Hiring an unknown person is risky. They can either take your word for it that you're amazing, or you can prove it to them. Which do you think is more convincing? When considering how much to invest in you, the more you can minimize the risk they are facing, the more they'll be willing to invest. Assure them that you're worth it by showing them proof.

Raises

A raise is both a reward for past work and an incentive for the future. When you request a raise, your employer evaluates how you've already contributed to the organization's bottom line. Have you provided a reasonable return on investment? Have you already performed at a level that exceeds expectations?

Your employer also considers the future: Based on your past performance, what value might you continue creating for the organization, and is that worth the cost? Will the incentive of additional pay increase that contribution? Your portfolio is the perfect companion for this conversation. When confronted with specific, tangible evidence, any doubt regarding your worth will vanish.

4. Promotions

Promotion requests are also bolstered by the presence of a portfolio. Your employer wants to know you're both capable of performing in the new role and deserving of the increased responsibility (and possible increase in pay, visibility, etc.). Your portfolio will provide evidence of your past performance (widely considered the best predictor of future performance) and your potential contribution in the new role.



5. Informational Interviews

During career transitions, many people utilize a tool known as an “informational interview”. This involves speaking with a successful individual who has specific knowledge, experience and/or expertise in a field you are exploring. For example, if you’re interested in possibly becoming a teacher, you might conduct an informational interview with someone who is already working as a teacher. It’s a great opportunity to get an insider’s perspective of what it’s like to work in a certain field day in and day out.

Your professional portfolio can be a helpful way to demonstrate who you are to the person you’re interviewing. He or she can get a full, 360-degree look at your professional background and give you an honest assessment of how well this new career might match your capabilities. He or she can also give you feedback regarding any additional experience, education, or training you might need to obtain in order to be successful.

Note: Many of the items in your portfolio are quite personal so make sure you give it to appropriate individuals only. DO NOT simply leave it on a table in an office lobby or break room hoping the right person will see it.



HOW TO PUT YOUR PORTFOLIO TOGETHER

Hopefully you're convinced at this point that a professional portfolio is absolute must for your career. Now the question remains: How do you put it together?

What you'll need:

- ☑ **Creativity:** This process is 100% flexible and customizable. You can create the portfolio that you want—the one that best serves your needs and your career. What it looks like and what you include is entirely up to you. You're only limited by your imagination!

- ☑ **Time:** Putting together a high-quality portfolio takes a substantial amount of time. Give yourself a few weeks from start to finish. If you'd like to have a "finished" product ready before that, you can certainly make it happen. But be prepared to work your tail off!

- ☑ **Commitment:** Always think of your portfolio as a work in progress. This is something you will continuously update and revise throughout your career. That takes commitment and discipline. Don't work on this in one big burst of energy and then set it aside for years. In order to keep it relevant, you must commit to the ongoing process.

- ☑ **A Good Memory:** Your portfolio is designed to document all of your major professional accomplishments and career highlights, whether they happened yesterday or 10 years ago. Putting this together for the first time might mean you'll need to dig deep into your memory to recall details. This is yet another reason to revisit your portfolio on a regular basis and keep it updated once it's done. Otherwise, it's too easy to forget the important things and waste time trying to recreate distant history.



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Depending on your profession and your own personal preference, you may choose to create an electronic (online) portfolio or a paper one—or both.

Regardless of which format you choose, remember that your personal brand is demonstrated in every piece of this portfolio. Choose high quality materials and keep the styling clean and professional.

Paper Format

A paper portfolio is very traditional and it can help you make a great impression, but like anything, there are pros and cons to consider.

Benefits

- **Easy to Do:** There's no learning curve when it comes to putting together a paper portfolio. We're all familiar with the tools required and you can pick them up easily and affordably at your local office supply store.
- **Cost-Effective:** The costs associated with this are minimal. All you need is paper, ink for printing, a few page protectors, and some kind of cover/container (like a folder, 3-ring binder, etc.).
- **Easy to Use:** With a paper portfolio, you can hand a copy directly to someone (like an interviewer for example) and leave it with him or her. You know this person has it in their hands. It's easy to flip it open and take a peek inside. There's little effort required on the other person's part.



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- **Presentation:** It always looks professional to walk into a business meeting (of any kind) with a well put-together document under your arm. Your portfolio is visible and tangible, right there on display for all to see.

Drawbacks

- **Paper:** If you're an environmentally conscious kind of person, you likely won't be fond of the paper required to put this together. Most people go through quite a bit in the creation process (trying to get things formatted beautifully) and each time you make changes or revisions—or need an additional copy—more paper is required.
- **Physical Burden:** With a paper portfolio, you have to lug it around with you. Some portfolios can be quite substantial and, well, heavy. Carrying it around—or carrying *multiple* copies of it—can be challenging.

To create your paper portfolio, I recommend using a simple, solid color folder (black is usually best) that has a slot for a business card on the inside. Note: Make your own, personal contact card to put in there if you're using your portfolio in a job interview (more on this later).

If you need more space, consider using a simple, solid color 3-ring binder. Choose one that has a clear plastic front and create a nice cover sheet with your name and contact information on display.

All items should be printed on high quality, white or off-white paper.



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Always use an easily readable font—12 points in size, black in color. If you're displaying graphs, charts or tables, these rules don't apply. Simply make them easy to read and visually pleasing.

The best fonts for professional documents are clean and simple. Consider the following:

- Times New Roman
- Helvetica
- Verdana
- Georgia
- Tahoma

Steer clear of anything that could be deemed too fancy, dramatic or cute for the workplace, such as:

- *Comic Sans*
- *Papyrus*
- *Lucida Handwriting*

Remember that every page should be easy to read, so keep your formatting simple. Lots of white space (blank space) is recommended, as is double spacing. Use styling tools to make your documents appear more organized. This includes bullet points, numbered lists, bold headers, italics, etc.

Normal margins are recommended (1 inch all around).

Be sure to include your contact information in the footer as well as page number. You may choose to have a Table of Contents as well, especially if your portfolio is robust.



Electronic Format

An electronic (or online) portfolio is a great tool with lots of benefits, but there are a variety of additional concerns that come up with this process.

Benefits

- **Increased Visibility:** An electronic portfolio can be seen by anyone—not just someone you hand it to (as with a paper portfolio). When something is housed online, it's generally open for public consumption, unless specific restrictions are applied. Literally anyone from around the world could stumble upon it, learn more about you, and contact you with professional opportunities. It's a great way to create a public reputation as an expert in your field.
- **Modern:** An electronic portfolio demonstrates your technical capabilities and shows that you're up-to-date with modern technology.
- **Easy to Access:** An electronic portfolio is basically a website with a regular URL like any other website. You can put that link on your personal business cards and hand it out to anyone you meet. All they have to do is jump online (at their convenience) and visit your site to learn more about your professional achievements and capabilities. People have access to your portfolio 24 hours a day, 7 days a week as long as they have Internet access.

Drawbacks

- **Costs:** While there are plenty of free and low-cost tools available for creating websites (see the resource list at the end of this section), the easiest ones require



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at least some level of ongoing financial investment. You must purchase a domain name as well and renew it each year, though the cost is generally minimal.

Own Your Name

Regardless of whether or not you want to create an online portfolio right now, I recommend that you consider purchasing your own name domain immediately. For example, mine is: ChrissyScivicque.com. This is a reasonably cheap investment that may pay off big time down the road. Once you own it, you can redirect it anywhere you'd like—a personal blog, an online portfolio, you name it.

If your name is already taken, add some words that help brand you and identify your profession or location. For example: JaneSmithAdmin.com or JaneSmithDenver.com.

Internet real estate is precious and it goes fast, so don't wait to do this. Resources for domain name purchases can be found at the end of this chapter.

- **Time:** Even if you're extremely tech savvy and have experience building websites, you know it takes time. No matter how easy a task seems, technology can thwart you at every turn. Putting your portfolio online adds a heavy layer of work. Plus, you'll have regular maintenance to take care of as well—like keeping your technology updated.
- **Technical Learning Curve:** Those who are not familiar with the basic concepts of building websites will likely find it surprisingly easy to grasp, but still time consuming. These days you don't need to know any special coding (like HTML or PHP) to do it. But you still have to be willing to learn a new system. It's fun and typically straightforward enough, but expect a learning curve all the same.



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- **Effort:** Visiting a website can take a little more effort than just flipping through a paper portfolio that's handed to you. It requires the person to take a specific, purposeful action to learn more about you. Alternatively, if you hand them a paper portfolio, it provides a visual reminder and takes only a few seconds to flip open and start reading.

In my opinion, creating an online version of your portfolio is a great way to demonstrate your technical skills. It's also a fun and rewarding way to challenge yourself to learn new technology.

However, it certainly isn't *necessary* for most industries. If you're not comfortable with web development and design (and it isn't something you have any interest in learning), don't concern yourself. Unless you work in a highly technical field (or want to) or have a deep desire to establish yourself publicly as an expert in your field, an online portfolio isn't essential. At the same time, I do believe every professional can benefit from the process of putting one together and from the final product as well.

Note: Even if you do create an online version, you'll probably also need a paper portfolio. There will be times when handing a physical copy to someone in person will be faster and more effective than providing a web address.



Resources for Building an Online Portfolio & Purchasing Domain Names

- Blogger* (www.blogger.com)
- Square Space (www.squarespace.com)
- Wix (www.wix.com)
- WordPress* (www.wordpress.com)
- GoDaddy (www.godaddy.com)
- HostGater (www.hostgator.com)
- BlueHost (www.bluehost.com)

Advanced users may want to explore self-hosted wordpress.org for more flexibility in functionality and design.

**Note: While WordPress and Blogger are technically “blogging” platforms, both are very flexible and easy to adapt to suit your needs.*



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Sample Portfolio Website



This is my personal website available at www.ChrissyScivicque.com.

It is built on the WordPress platform.



LinkedIn

As the world's largest professional networking website, LinkedIn is an easy and effective way of creating an online portfolio. While it's not *fully* customizable like a personal website, it allows you to promote your work experience and connect with others. Features include the following:

- Others can provide you with professional recommendations—written statements regarding your work, character, etc.
- You can create a list of skills and others can “endorse” you for them. Simply by clicking a button, they indicate that they have had a positive experience with you in this particular area.
- You can outline your professional history as well as performance. Create sections for special projects you've worked on, awards and recognitions you've received, and various educational activities you've participated in. Recent updates allow both videos and pictures to be included (especially useful for those in creative fields).
- You can include a personal bio in the “About” section at the top of your profile. This is a first person account of who you are and what you offer.
- Your profile will be fully searchable in the database. Recruiters and other HR professionals often use this as a way of finding qualified candidates for open job opportunities.

If you're not currently a LinkedIn user, get started today with a free account by visiting www.Linkedin.com.



CONFIDENTIALITY

Whether you've opted to create a paper or online portfolio, do not include any information that is strictly confidential. There are no guarantees about who will see this so make sure that everything included is fit for public consumption.

If you want to highlight a specific project you worked on, but the details are confidential, use generic terms to describe the contribution you made. Simply leave out the names of clients, companies, products, services, etc.

Alternatively, you can use a generic term to refer to these confidential pieces of information (i.e., "Private Client", "A Fortune 500 Company" etc.).

Should a document have confidential information printed on it, you can make a photocopy and block out the words you wish to keep private using a black marker. Keep the original (unredacted) copy in your files.



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

The items included in a professional portfolio can vary depending on your experience, profession and industry. The most common items are listed below. You may choose to include all or some of these items. You may also choose to add different items based on your needs. The process is 100% customizable. Every professional portfolio ends up looking different, so make it your own.

- Business Card or Personal Contact Card
- Cover Sheet*
- Table of Contents
- Resume
- Cover Letter / Letter of Introduction
- Letter of Recommendation*
- Reference Lists*
- Social Media Information
- Website URL
- Work Samples
- Project Write-Ups*
- Client Lists
- Awards & Recognitions*
- Education & Training*
- Charitable Activities*
- Affiliations & Associations*



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- Key Accomplishments List
- Professional Bio*
- Other Relevant Items

*Denotes items for which samples and/or templates are provided

This list is also provided in your template pack as a Word document checklist.

On the following pages, you'll find further explanations and tips for how to make the most of each item in your portfolio.



Business Card or Personal Contact Card

If using your portfolio for a job interview, create your own personal business card with all the relevant contact and brand information on it including:

- First and last name
- Title (Your professional expertise, unique value, etc.)
- Phone number, email address, physical address, website, social media URLs, etc.
- Personal brand statement (optional)

You can print your own using your home printer with the help of Avery Business Card Templates (<https://www.avery.com/templates/category/business-cards>) or you can purchase them for very low cost from a printer like Vistaprint (www.vistaprint.com).

If using the portfolio in a performance review or during a discussion regarding a raise, promotion, or anything else within your existing organization, include your company business card if you have one.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

PERSONAL BRANDING FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Learn to identify, express, and demonstrate your unique value in the workplace to stand out from the crowd

- Create your powerful brand statement using a simple fill-in-the blank template
- Differentiate yourself and make your brand more visible
- Protect your brand and strengthen it

LEARN MORE
EatYourCareer.com/Success-Store



Cover Sheet

A cover sheet is simply a front page that helps create a cohesive look and feel to the portfolio. Generally, it will contain some basic contact information and, perhaps, social media profiles or website URLs (if you also have a digital version of the portfolio). Your cover sheet can be as simple or as fancy as you'd like. As with everything in your portfolio, however, it should always look professional.

As a general rule, I do not recommend including a photo of yourself on the cover sheet or any other document within your portfolio. While a photo *is* recommended for LinkedIn, and is perfectly acceptable on digital portfolio sites, it is still not the standard to include it in other professional documentation. There is little reason for this, so the standard convention may very well change in the future.

See sample Cover Sheet in the Appendix

Table of Contents

A table of contents is especially beneficial if your portfolio is more than a couple of pages long. This makes it easy for someone to find a specific section they're most interested in reviewing and flip to it quickly. Be sure it's formatted nicely and that the information is accurate. Microsoft Word functionality makes this easy. If you're not familiar with how to do it, check the Microsoft support site for instructions. And of course, be sure to include page numbers on the individual pages themselves.

Resume

Your resume should always be up-to-date. It's the foundational piece of your professional portfolio and should always be included.



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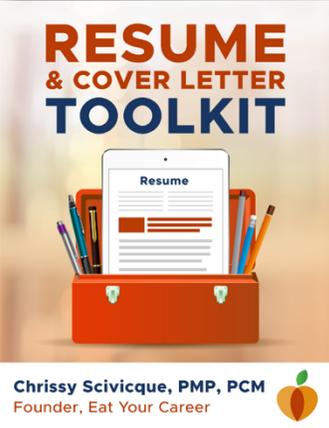
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Cover Letter / Letter of Introduction

Your cover letter is a way to introduce yourself and make a more personal connection with the reader. This is a great place to specify exactly what you'd like to achieve and address any potential obstacles. Be sure to customize it for the occasion.

For example, if you've created a professional portfolio to complement a performance review, your cover letter should be targeted at the reviewer. Explain why the portfolio is being provided and what you want to accomplish with it.

If this is for a job interview, stick with the traditional cover letter style and substance.



RESUME & COVER LETTER TOOLKIT

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

RESUME & COVER LETTER TOOLKIT

Learn expert secrets to create winning job search documents that grab attention and pass computer pre-screening systems

- ✓ Gain inspiration from sample documents
- ✓ Access pre-formatted, fill-in-the-blank templates
- ✓ Minimize "red flags" that might cause concern
- ✓ Stop getting lost in the application "black hole"

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Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation provide helpful insights into your professional background from a personal point-of-view.

Ask someone you trust, who knows you well, has worked with you in some capacity and will offer an honest, rave review of your work.

Consider *former*:

- Co-workers
- Superiors
- Subordinates
- Clients
- Associates with whom you've conducted business
- Fellow members of a professional association
- Someone you've worked with/for at a volunteer organization

I generally do not recommending asking *current* co-workers, superiors, subordinates, etc. for recommendations. This blurs the lines of professional ethics, and you run the risk of publicizing your professional goals, which might cause concern for your current employer. Don't put yourself or others in this uncomfortable position.

Remember to make providing a recommendation letter as easy as possible for people. Make a short list of the specific strengths (2 or 3) you'd like each person to highlight in his or her letter.

Finally, remember that reference letters should always be done in proper business letter format.



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Alternatively, you may choose to print recommendations provided through LinkedIn. Formatting is less important here, but do try to make the page easy to read.

See sample Letter of Recommendation in the Appendix

Reference Lists

A reference list contains the names and contact information for the people who have agreed to provide you with a professional recommendation. Generally, you'll want to include the following for each person:

- First and last name
- Title
- How you know this person
- How long you've known this person
- His or her phone number and email address

References can be personal or professional, though professional usually have more credibility. Do not include anyone related to you, as they will have a natural bias. Refer to the section above for a list of possible people to contact.

Make sure the people included on your reference lists are aware and willing. Let them know if/when it's likely that they will be contacted. Prepare them as best you can. For example, if you're interviewing for a new job, give them a short description of what the job entails and the key strengths you'd like them to highlight for you.

See sample Reference List in the Appendix



Social Media Information

For many occupations, social media is an important professional tool, particularly for those who are in sales, marketing, recruiting, or any other field that relies heavily on networking. If this applies to you, be sure to include URLs for your various profiles (including Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn). For a physical portfolio, you can add this information on your cover sheet, business card or resume. For a digital portfolio, simply include the links.

NOTE: Regardless of whether or not you use your social media accounts for work purposes, always be cautious of what you're sharing online. Anyone can see the information on social networks (don't trust privacy settings). Your actions online will reflect on you as a professional, and once something is out there, it's there forever.

Website URL

Again, while this isn't a requirement for most non-tech industries, if you do have a website, be sure to reference the URL in your portfolio, on your cover sheet, business card or resume.

Work Samples

If you have a tangible work product, provide a few samples that demonstrate the high standard of quality you offer. This is especially applicable for creative professionals (writers, designers, artists, web developers, etc.). You may choose to include a DVD or CD of samples if appropriate, or provide links to sample work housed online.



Project Write-Ups

If you worked on a special project that you'd like to highlight but there's no product to sample, draw up a brief outline that summarizes the project, the various steps and actions you took, and any outcomes with which you were involved. Remember that specifics are always more compelling than vague generalities. The more you can quantify your achievements, the better. Use numbers! Put a value to your work. How much money did you save your company? How much did you earn? How much did you increase productivity (hours saved per week, percentage increase in efficiency, etc.)?

See sample Project Write-Up in the Appendix

Client Lists

If you've worked with an impressive list of clients (whether people, companies, organizations or other), consider sharing this in your portfolio. As always, be very conscious of confidentiality restrictions.

Awards & Recognitions

If you've received more than a handful of awards or recognitions in your career, you may wish to make a list for your portfolio. Include the name of the award, when it was won, who provided it, and a brief description of what you did to earn it. If you've received one or two, you may want to provide a photocopy of the award, award letter, or something else that demonstrates your achievement.

You may also want to include more informal recognition, such as copies of emails or letters from superiors or clients praising you for the work you've done.

See sample Awards & Recognitions List in the Appendix



Performance Reviews

Documentation received during performance reviews can be helpful additions to your portfolio (especially if it's a good one, obviously). You don't need to include ALL of them, just the most recent.

Education & Training

You can include photocopies of degrees, licenses, or special certificates of achievement you've earned for education, skill development, or other professional training.

If you are an active participant and have attended various courses that do not provide certificates, consider creating a list of your activities. Include the name of the course, program or class as well as the institution or provider's name and the date in which you completed it.

See sample Education & Training List in the Appendix

Charitable Activities

If you've been involved in community service and have received a letter of thanks, you may want to share a copy in your portfolio. If you don't have a letter, consider making a nicely formatted list of your service activities including dates and organization details.

Use your discretion when sharing affiliations with religious or political groups. Like it or not, these things can be divisive to some. You may prefer to be vague in your descriptions. For example, list your fundraising work for a "National Political Candidate," or your leadership work in a "Local Spiritual Group."

See sample Charitable Activities List in the Appendix



Affiliations & Associations

Consider including a list of the various *professional* organizations and associations with which you are affiliated. Be sure to include the dates of your involvement and any special leadership roles you've held (including committee memberships or board positions).

See sample Affiliations & Associations List in the Appendix

Key Accomplishments List

Many of your key professional accomplishments should be captured on your resume. However, if you have additional accomplishments to highlight but that don't specifically fit into one of the other document categories, you can always create a new list.

You may want to include personal accomplishments as well as professional. For example, if you play an instrument, have completed a marathon, or travelled the world, these things might be worth noting.

Professional Bio

A professional bio is a great opportunity to show off your writing skills. Your bio should include a narrative (3rd person) description of who you are as a professional and a high-level overview of your experience. Try to stay under 400 words and keep paragraphs short. Including a professional headshot is optional. While it is more generally acceptable than including a headshot on a resume, it is not necessary.

Your professional bio can also be used in the "Summary" area on LinkedIn. Just be sure to change it to 1st person to maintain the conversational tone of the platform.

See sample Professional Bio in the Appendix



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Other Relevant Items

Remember to be as creative as you'd like! Anything that demonstrates your abilities and accomplishments may be applicable.

A word of caution though: Don't go overboard. You don't need to create an epic tome. In fact, if it's too lengthy, it could be overwhelming. People may set it aside and avoid looking it over if it appears to be painfully time consuming to review.

Make sure everything included is relevant and demonstrative of your abilities.



KEEPING YOUR PORTFOLIO UP-TO-DATE

As mentioned earlier, building your portfolio is not a one-time thing. It's a continuous process of updating and revising. Once it's "done," create a reminder on your calendar to review it once per quarter. Add anything new that you want to highlight and remove anything that no longer applies. I recommend keeping everything in an archive file though. You never know when you might want to refer to that older information.



APPENDIX

The following materials and resources will help support your success as you create your own professional portfolio. Samples are provided here, along with links to downloadable templates.

It's worthwhile noting that these samples and templates use very basic (but professional-looking) formatting within MS Word. If you have the time and the skill, you may want to explore tools like PowerPoint or Canva (<https://www.canva.com/>) for creating more dynamic and visually appealing materials. This is especially important if you want to show off your creative skills. However, it is not mandatory! The substance is what matters most. Fancy formatting won't make up for a lack of valuable content.

Additionally, whether you're going for a simple or artistic design, meticulous attention-to-detail is a must. Consistency is especially important. Design elements should enhance the readability of the document, not detract from it. If you're not comfortable designing fancy documents, this is not the place to practice your skills. It is far better to have a nicely formatted, simple Word document than a complicated, poorly designed one.



PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

- Business Card or Professional Contact Card
- Cover Sheet
- Table of Contents
- Resume
- Cover Letter / Letter of Introduction
- Letters of Recommendation
- Reference Lists
- Social Media Information
- Website URL
- Work Samples
- Project Write-Ups
- Client Lists
- Awards & Recognitions
- Performance Reviews
- Education & Training
- Charitable Activities
- Affiliations & Associations
- Key Accomplishments List
- Professional Bio
- Other Relevant Items

Word document template provided in zip file



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SAMPLE COVER SHEET (WORD)

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO OF

Chrissy Scivicque

PMP | PCM



123.456.7890



email@email.com



Website.com



Linkedin/profile.com



Facebook/profle.com

*Helping leaders optimize their time and attention so they can deliver
greater value to the organization*

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SAMPLE COVER SHEET (CANVA)

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO OF

Chrissy Scivicque

PMP | PCM

PH. 123.456.7890

CHRISSY@EATYOURCAREER.COM

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/CHRISSYSCIVICQUE

CHRISSYSCIVICQUE.COM

*Helping leaders optimize their time and
attention so they can deliver greater value
to the organization*





SAMPLE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

August 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my privilege to provide a recommendation for my former colleague, Angela Conroy.

I spent two years working side-by-side with Angela in the Learning Organization at XYZ Co. During that time, I was fortunate enough to co-facilitate and co-create many training programs with her.

I quickly came to know Angela as the person who keeps a cool head, even when all those around her are losing theirs! When faced with challenges in the classroom, Angela is a consummate professional. She remains poised and calm on the surface as she strategizes and problem-solves beneath. I—and many teammates—relied on Angela to be a solid voice of reason in difficult times.

Together, Angela and I executed many successful projects, including a comprehensive overhaul of a critical 5-day employee readiness program. Angela played an instrumental role in this, liaising with the client and deftly navigating the inner-workings of the business. Within a short-time, we reported dramatically improved new hire assessment scores.

I feel any organization would be lucky to have Angela on staff. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further details of my experience working with Angela.

Best,

Name

123.456.7890

Email@email.com



SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST

JULIE BROWN

Title: Director of Marketing

Company: ABC Inc.

Relationship: Former Direct Supervisor

Length of Relationship: 6 years

Email Address: Julie.Brown@ABCinc.com

Phone: (555) 555-5555

MICHAEL DAWSON

Title: Senior Sales Associate

Company: 123 Corp.

Relationship: Former co-worker / team member

Length of Relationship: 10 years

Email Address: Michael.dawson@123corp.com

Phone: (999) 999-9999

GARY BALDWIN

Title: VP of Client Service

Company: USA Co.

Relationship: Former client

Length of Relationship: 12 years

Email Address: Gary.Baldwin@usaco.com

Phone: (777) 777-7777

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE PROJECT WRITE-UP

Name of Project

ABC Corp. Annual Employee Family Picnic Celebration

Company

ABC Corp.

My Title

Executive Assistant

Project Start Date → Project Completion Date

Approx. January 2018 → April 22, 2018

Project Overview (Deliverables, Purpose, Deadlines, Etc.)

The Annual Family Picnic is an employee appreciation event designed to help strengthen relationships among team members throughout the organization. It is meant to be a fun, laid-back, family-friendly event where employees can get to know one another in a comfortable setting outside the office. The event has always been referred to as a “celebration”, but in the past, many employees saw it as a tedious work obligation. The goal of this project was to change the event’s image, generate enthusiasm, and create a memorable experience that feels like a real party—not just another day at the office.

My Role in the Project

Event Coordinator



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My Responsibilities

Responsible for organizing all aspects of the event including promotion, location selection, permits, guest invitations, parking logistics, catering, music, event agenda, materials for games and activities, prizes, etc. Also responsible for managing and adhering to the budget of \$5500.

Results & Overall Impact of Project

With over 200 employees and family members in attendance, this event was a phenomenal success. In surveys conducted afterward, 90% of respondents rated the event as “outstanding” and agreed they would attend in the future. Employee motivation skyrocketed; I received multiple appreciative notes from Directors & VPs who said they noticed an immediate and lasting positive impact on team dynamics. In addition, I came in \$500 under budget by aggressively negotiating with vendors.

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE AWARDS & RECOGNITION LIST

| Date Received | Name of Award / Type of Recognition | Issuing Body |
|---------------|--|-----------------|
| 4/2017 | Stand Out Performer (Team Recognition) | ABC Corp. |
| 12/2018 | Administrative Assistant of the Year | XYZ Association |
| 6/2019 | Innovation Award (Process Improvement) | 123 Corp. |
| 1/2020 | Annual Spirit Award | 123 Corp. |
| | | |

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE EDUCATION & TRAINING LIST

| Type | Name of Course or Program | Name of Institution or Provider | Date Completed |
|------------------------------------|---|---|----------------|
| BS Degree | Business Administration | San Jose State University, CA | May 2016 |
| Certificate Program (120 hours) | Advanced Digital Marketing Specialist | WebWorks, Palo Alto, CA | September 2017 |
| In-Person Seminar (7 hours) | Creative Problem Solving & Strategic Thinking | Fred Pryor Seminars | December 2017 |
| Virtual Workshop (6 hours) | Project Management Learning Lab | Eat Your Career Chrissy Scivicque, PMP, PCM | January 2018 |
| | | | |

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES LIST

| Dates | Organization | Volunteer Activities |
|----------------|----------------------------|---|
| 6/2016-11/2018 | Spiritual Center of Denver | Provided spiritual education and counseling |
| 1/2017-12/2017 | Youth at Risk Colorado | Served as a mentor to teens |
| 8/2020 | Red Cross Relief Center | Emergency volunteer after flooding |
| | | |

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE AFFILIATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS LIST

| Dates | Organization | Role |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2016-2019 | Toastmasters International | Member |
| 2016-2021 | American Society for Administrative Professionals (ASAP) | Member 2020 Advisory Committee |
| 2020-2021 | Project Management Institute (PMI) | Member |
| | | |

Word document template provided in zip file



SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL BIO

CLIENT X

Client X is part coder geek, part digital artist, and part enthusiastic entrepreneur. He seamlessly blends high-level business analysis and strategic marketing expertise with hands-on, technical design and implementation skills.

Client X is at his best when solving complicated business problems. He has an uncanny ability to identify missed opportunities and hidden areas of potential growth. More importantly, he knows how to navigate the modern digital landscape to tap these opportunities and turn them into profits.

Throughout his career, Client X has achieved a proven record of success, delivering measurable ROI for clients of all sizes, from expansive government agencies and Fortune 100 companies to fledgling start-up operations.

A graduate of the Art Institute of Atlanta, Client X is the founder and Creative Director of Company X, an award-winning, privately held, full-service Interactive Agency. His role is both strategic and tactical. He works with key stakeholders to conceptualize and design custom business solutions using today's most advanced technology. He then guides his team in developing, deploying and upgrading these systems to support changing business needs.

As an instructor, published author, and public speaker, Client X is a recognized and respected authority in the interactive space. As an investor, he looks to marry his passions with high-potential ventures where he can contribute expertise as well as funding.



MEET THE AUTHOR



Chrissy Scivicque is the foremost authority in professional development education for administrative professionals, emerging leaders, and other career-minded individuals and teams. Through her company (CCS Ventures, LLC), Chrissy provides a robust assortment of training and resources to improve job performance and enhance personal fulfillment.

Chrissy is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and certified Professional Career Manager (PCM). She holds a BS in Business Administration from Sonoma State University and has obtained Training and Instructional Design certification from the Association for Talent Development.

Since 2009, Chrissy has developed and delivered custom training programs for teams inside some of the world's most recognized companies including 3M, Amazon, Microsoft, GoDaddy, Capital One, Northrop Grumman, Grainger and more.

Chrissy's work is regularly featured on popular websites including Forbes and US News & World Report. She has published over 500 articles on career-related topics and is the author of several books, including *The Proactive Professional*, *The Invisibility Cure*, and *ELEVATE Admins*, all available on Amazon.



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ABOUT EAT YOUR CAREER



EAT YOUR CAREER

Chrissy believes that work can be an enriching, *nourishing* life experience. She loves helping professionals figure out what that means *for them* and how to achieve it.

We provide professional development training and resources to help you conquer career complacency & find fulfillment at work.

Our products and services include:

- On-Demand Programs
- Information Products
- Virtual Training Workshops
- In-Person and Virtual Speaking & Training Services
- The Career Success Library

We offer FREE monthly training webinars and Q&A sessions, where Chrissy provides straightforward advice to help address *your* workplace frustrations and career challenges. Sign up to get notified about upcoming sessions here: www.EatYourCareer.com/signup

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH

Chrissy@EatYourCareer.com



THE CAREER SUCCESS LIBRARY



The Career Success Library is a convenient, affordable on-demand learning center that gives you an unmatched competitive edge in today’s working world.

Learn more and sign up here: <https://mycareerlibrary.com/>

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Training Webinars Enjoy a new virtual training course every month. Plus, get on-demand access to the complete video archives!</p> |  <p>Digital Downloads Get step-by-step career guidance, support and education with interactive workbooks, worksheets and more.</p> |
|  <p>Q&A Sessions Learn strategies to help you overcome your most challenging workplace obstacles.</p> |  <p>Certificates of Attendance Use your proof of training to earn continuing Education Units (CEUs) for your professional certifications.</p> |
|  <p>Audio Sessions Download MP3 audio files of past Q&A “Ask the Career Coach” Sessions.</p> |  <p>Special Events Get exclusive invites to members-only training and networking events.</p> |
|  <p>Interactive Quizzes Gain self-awareness and expand your business acumen with fun and thought-provoking quizzes.</p> |  <p>Learning Tracks Focus on the right training to achieve your goals by following our simple roadmaps.</p> |



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We offer a wide variety of learning options to help you enhance your professional skills and create the career you want and deserve.

Browse the Success Store here: <https://eatyourcareer.com/success-store/>

On-Demand Programs

Our online, self-paced learning programs offer convenient, step-by-step career guidance to help you achieve your goals.

- F.I.N.D. Your Nourishing Career: Fearlessly Identify New Direction
- G.R.O.W. Your Nourishing Career: Gain Recognition, Opportunities and Wealth
- Job Seeker Jump Start: Everything You Need to Land the Job You Want NOW

Information Products

Our comprehensive career manuals offer in-depth exploration of important professional development topics.

- Build Your Professional Development Plan
- Personal Branding for Professional Success
- Resume & Cover Letter Toolkit
- Rock Your Interview
- Build Your Professional Portfolio
- Guide to Goal Setting & Goal Getting
- Modern Business Etiquette
- Networking Naturally

The Learning Lab

Our full-day live, interactive online workshops offer a deep-dive, hands-on training experience unlike any other! Visit the website to explore upcoming sessions:

<https://eatyourcareer.com/the-learning-lab/>