

career
development manitoba



A PRACTITIONER'S
GUIDE TO
**BUILDING
A CAREER
PORTFOLIO**

YOUR FUTURE YOUR WAY

Manitoba 

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Introduction

Portfolios demonstrate what you've learned, what you know and what you can do. The client resource, **A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio**, contains information and worksheets to support clients to build career portfolios. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here. Instead the focus of this guide will be to provide facilitators with additional information, tips and strategies for conducting a portfolio workshop or working with individual clients.

The information in this guide covers the core concepts related to building a career portfolio. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

Guiding Frameworks

Many skills can be developed from building a career portfolio. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills and Employability Skills 2000+.

Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Building a career portfolio helps develop the following Blueprint competencies:

- Competency 1 – build and maintain a positive self-image
 - Level 1 – build a positive self-image while discovering its influence on self and others
- Competency 5 – locate and effectively use life/work information
 - Level 2 – locate, understand and use life/work information
- Competency 7 – secure/create and maintain work
 - Level 2 – develop abilities to seek and obtain/create work

Essential Skills

Engaging in portfolio development will enhance the following Essential Skills:

- reading text
- document use
- writing
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use (if building a computer or Web-based portfolio or using a computer to create portfolio documents)
- working with others (if in a workshop)

Employability Skills 2000+

Building a career portfolio will develop:

- Fundamental Skills
 - o communicate
 - o manage information
- Personal Management Skills
 - o demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
 - o be responsible
 - o learn continuously
- Teamwork Skills (if working with clients in groups)

Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to build a career portfolio is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge, and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to build a career portfolio overlaps with many of the Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:

- Assessment
- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Career Counselling
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development

Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

You'll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide; this leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly on the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Feel free to tailor the workshop to your personal style and participants' needs. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

Required:

- **A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio** (one copy per participant)
- Show What You Know Guide (a few copies to pass around; available in Appendix A of **A Guide to Recognizing Your Prior Learning**)
- pens, pencils
- blank paper (one piece per participant)
- for workshops:
 - computer, LCD projector, and screen
 - flip chart paper and markers

Optional:

- PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
- handouts from the client guide
 - content checklist
 - master portfolio template (Appendix A)

If you are interested in assisting your clients in developing an on-line ePortfolio training is available on how to deliver the on-line ePortfolio workshops to your clients, contact Phyllis Mann at Workplace Education Manitoba at 204-272-5044 or at pmann@wem.mb.ca.

Do you want to see an example ePortfolio? Check out www.careerportfolio.mb.ca. Once there, click on "Take a look at what you can do in this example ePortfolio" to view a sample.

PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 26 slides. Reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a three hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the PowerPoint document to review the complete content.



Welcome participants to workshop.

Introductions:

- Have participants introduce themselves.
- An icebreaker activity can be incorporated; see Icebreakers/Energizers section for more information.

Time:

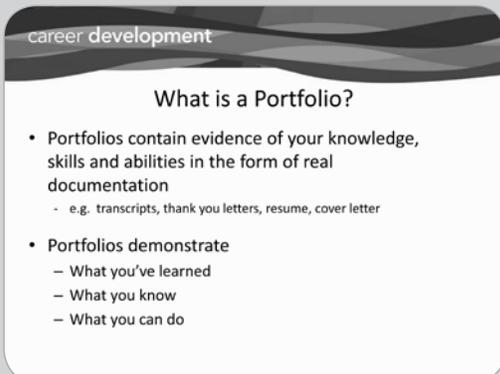
- Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.



Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes



A portfolio may be a new concept for participants. Outline what a portfolio is and explain that while it can take time to build, it can be a very worthwhile experience.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Use a Portfolio To...

- Identify knowledge and skills
- Identify new options and choices
- Recognize a need or desire for further learning
- Plan a career and learn about yourself
- Search for a job
- Gain credit in post-secondary institutions

There are many more examples of how portfolios can help in the client guide. If possible (and appropriate) share a personal story about how your portfolio has helped your career.

Time:

- seven-to-ten minutes

Master Portfolio

- Contains all of your items or “artefacts”
 - Organize by themes (e.g. job descriptions, course outlines)
- Useful for
 - Keeping track of life and academic experiences
 - Assisting in creating your resume and cover letter
 - Helping to prepare for interviews

Explain that a “master” portfolio contains everything. It would rarely be shown to anyone else and never taken to an interview.

Share the following tips:

- keep several photocopies of content
- store at least one photocopy of content out of the house, in case the portfolio is accidentally destroyed, you’ll still have a copy
- store content so it’s protected (ex.: clear plastic covers)
- organize into themes

Time:

- 10 minutes

Targeted Portfolios

- Tailored for a specific purpose
 - Demonstrate skills to apply for a promotion
 - Show an employer during an interview
- Target your portfolio by
 - Gathering sources of relevant information (e.g. job description)
 - Writing down skills, experience, and other qualities needed
 - Reviewing your master portfolio and selecting appropriate items

Unlike a master portfolio that stores “everything” a targeted portfolio is tailored for a specific purpose. If possible, share an example of common master “items” that might be selected for a targeted portfolio.

Time:

- 10 minutes

Preparing a Master Portfolio

- Step 1: Reflect: Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Step 2: Gather evidence
- Step 3: Group evidence into themes
- Step 4: Organize and assemble

Advise participants that the four steps (listed on the slide) will be covered in detail. As noted in the quote, a lot of learning can occur simply by the process of building a portfolio...it truly is a valuable activity.

Time:

- five minutes

**Building a portfolio is a process.
Although the process will take time,
it will become just as important as
the product.**

This is a transitional slide. Explain meaning of quote.

Time:

- two minutes

Step 1: Reflect

- Reflect on the skills you've developed through
 - Work experiences
 - Course work
 - Internships
 - Volunteering
 - Life experiences
- Some skills will be specific (e.g. using a specific machine)
- Some skills will be transferrable (e.g. communication)

Note: advise participants to see the **Show What You Know Guide** and **A Guide to Recognizing Your Prior Learning** to assist with identifying knowledge, skills and abilities.

In groups of three or four have participants

- brainstorm types of skills, accomplishments, knowledge, personal characteristics, volunteer work, memberships and work history.

Individually have participants

- identify ways they can showcase these experiences and items (ex: communication skills could be showcased by a customer service award).

Time:

- 15 - 20 minutes

Step 2: Gather Evidence

- Collect *everything* that might be relevant
- Choose the best items to put in your portfolio
- Review each item; ensure it's
 - Free of errors
 - Reliable and authentic
 - Current
 - Appropriate
- Collect items on an ongoing basis

Examples of evidence include:

- Letters of reference
- Thank-you letters
- Transcripts
- Awards
- Examples of technology skills
- Degrees and certificates
- Photographs

Have participants complete the “Content Checklist” worksheet in the client guide.

- Individually, complete the content checklist worksheet.

Time:

- 10 - 15 minutes

Step 3: Group Evidence Into Themes

- Identify themes or sections
 - Accomplishments
 - Skills, knowledge, and experience
 - School, education, and training
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership

Different methods can be used to group evidence into themes:

- Essential Skills
- Skills such as Customer Service

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Step 4: Organize and Assemble

- Write each theme on a piece of paper
- Spread themes on a large table or floor
- Sort contents into most relevant theme
- Place in your portfolio
- Create a table of contents

The client guide has images that support this activity.

Time:

- five minutes

Developing Occupational Goal Statements

- Describe short and long term goals
- Similar to a job objective but not aimed at an employer
- Can help keep you focussed

Keep goal statements in your portfolio

A sample goal statement is available within the client guide.

Have participants complete the “**Occupational Goal Statement**” activity in the client guide. Note: some participants may not be ready to write a goal statement. Provide individual support or have participants work in pairs. Another option would be to draw their attention to the activity and remind them to come back to it when they are ready.

Time:

- 10 - 15 minutes

Developing Personal Mission Statements

The Statement should:

- Reflect who you are
- Let the reader know your goals in work and life
- Help you stay focuses on the things most important to you

A sample personal mission statement is available within the client guide.

Have participants complete the “**Personal Mission Statement**” activity in the client guide. Note: some participants may not be ready to write a goal statement. Provide individual support or have participants work in pairs. Another option would be to draw their attention to the activity and remind them to come back to it when they are ready.

Time:

- 10 - 15 minutes

Putting it all Together

- Select a logical order for your items
 - Introduction
 - Title page
 - Table of contents
 - Personal statement
 - Goals and plans
 - Resume
 - Letter of recommendation
 - Summary of knowledge, skills, and experiences
 - Evidence

The client guide has a couple of images of portfolio storage systems. Remind participants that the key piece is to choose a system that will work for them.

Show the class samples of evidence.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Design Tips

- Store your portfolio items in
 - Binder
 - Portfolio case
 - Accordion file
 - Website (online)
- Choose an option that will
 - Keep your portfolio the most organized
 - Be easiest for you to maintain

Remind participants to choose a design that is easy for them to organize and maintain.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Style Tips

- Keep more than one copy of each item
 - Ensure originals are kept safe
- Use clear plastic covers
 - Protects documents
 - Helps avoid hole punching
- Create tabs
 - Page dividers work well in a binder portfolio

Suggest places participants can purchase materials.

Provide samples if possible.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Why Go Online?

- Save paper and "go green"
- Easy and quick to update
- Supports multi-media
- Less expensive

Remind participants that anyone not comfortable with computers shouldn't choose this option. If Internet access is available take participants to www.carbonmade.com – a user friendly, simple online portfolio system. Any paper documents can be scanned (or photographed) and uploaded to the system.

Time:

- 10 minutes

Remember...
get permission from contacts before
uploading their personal information online

This is a transitional slide. Explain meaning of quote.

Time:

- two minutes

Building Your Online Portfolio

- Identify relevant items
- Scan all paper-based items into your computer
- Save all content in one folder
- Create themes
- Identify the online tool or “webspaces”

Organizing an online portfolio is similar to a paper-based portfolio. However, some online systems may not allow for customized sections (sections are pre-determined).

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Using Your Portfolio

- Planning your career
 - What have you accomplished? What’s next?
- Evaluating job opportunities
 - Do you have required skills? Are there any gaps?
- Preparing for an interview
 - What items do you want to highlight?
- Completing education
 - What prior learning can you demonstrate?

Use the client guide to expand on each point.

Give concrete examples of how to use the portfolio for each scenario.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Presenting Your Portfolio

- Carefully select relevant items
- Place items in logical order
- Bring extra photocopies of key documents
- Ensure Internet is available for online portfolios
- Be ready to speak about each item

If possible, provide some examples of how to integrate their portfolios into conversations.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Remember

- Use photocopies
- Keep information organized
- Include testimonials
- Organize items effectively
- Tailor your portfolio for each use
- Include photographs of projects

Pull from conversations in the workshop to expand on each point.

Additional tips are listed in the client guide.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Your portfolio is a reflection of who you are and what you have accomplished...don't hesitate to show off!

This is a transitional slide. Explain meaning of quote.

Time:

- two minutes

Summary

- Building a portfolio is a process; the process takes time and effort
 - Maintaining it is simple, but important
 - Make photocopies of original documents
- Customize your portfolio for different purposes or audiences
 - Collect relevant items; select the best to include
 - Selecting a portfolio style is a personal preference
 - Creating a web-based portfolio is a popular option
- Review your portfolio before an interview to refresh your memory about
 - Knowledge, skills, abilities, accomplishments, and qualifications

Summarize the topics discussed; try to weave in stories from the discussions that occurred.

Time:

- 10 minutes



Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form (see appendix A).

Time:

- two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed.

Additional Tips and Strategies

- Pay attention to new trends in building career portfolios.
 - Portfolios are no longer just for design students.
- Encourage clients to review online portfolio tutorials, websites and user guides.

For More Information on Building Career Portfolios

Building a Personal and Career Portfolio

www.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects/repository/portfolios.pdf

A guide to support teachers and students to develop career and personal portfolios

How To Get a Job: How To Create A Portfolio

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdJGUR3GVi4&feature=fvw

A brief video describing career portfolios and the basic components for building one

Create an Online Portfolio: Carbonmade and Creative Skills

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jai7JksoszY&NR=1

A video tutorial for two different online portfolio sites