

Creating a Professional Portfolio

Promoting yourself during the interview process can be an exciting experience if you are prepared to show a prospective employer what you have to offer. You have been preparing for this moment and now it is time to gather your promotional tools and get your dream job. You will need to show your best **résumé**, **interview skills**, and **professional portfolio**.

You have explored and perfected your résumé and interview skills in your professional development classes. It is important to add the visual component that will showcase your skills: your professional portfolio.

What is a professional portfolio?

A professional portfolio is a collection of your talents and abilities that will showcase who you are as a future salon professional, both personally and artistically. Your portfolio should show your technical capabilities and accomplishments as a future salon professional. The beauty industry is a visual industry and your portfolio allows you to show potential employers who you are, so be creative and make it unique. This is your opportunity to set yourself apart and make a significant impact in a job interview.

How does a “professional portfolio” differ from a “Look Book”?

While the Look Book may contain photos of your personal work, it also contains tear sheets from a magazine, which include others’ work, and is used to direct a guest consultation. Your professional portfolio **only** displays **your** personal work and accomplishments and does not contain others’ work.

What is included in a professional portfolio?

A professional portfolio can be divided into four sections:

Section 1 — Introduction

This section can include your cover letter and business card. This is the introduction to the rest of your portfolio. Describe who you are, why you are interested in a career with the salon, and what a potential employer will experience in your portfolio. Make this section specific to the opportunity you are pursuing.

Section 2 — Who You Are

This section should include your résumé and professional references and can also include letters of recommendation from past employers, Learning Leaders and school staff, your service guests, and personal references. Remember that letters of recommendation can be used for multiple interviews, so make additional copies.

Section 3 — Your Pictorial Collection

This section should include professional photographs of your best work, including cutting, color, texture, styling, and/or makeup. Before and after photographs of your models are a great way to showcase your ability to transform a look and can also be included in this section. In addition, direct potential employers to your website or professional social media pages in this section. This is where your work is featured and where they can continue to follow you as a future and salon professional.

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Have fun with this section. Your portfolio will continue to evolve as you grow to become a salon professional. Represent who you are as a future salon professional now and continue to add to your pictorial collection.

If photographs are printed and showcased in a book, make sure to have them professionally printed and mounted on black cardstock.

Section 4 — Achievements

This section should include your highlights as a Future Professional. Include:

- PM200 Future Professional Scorecard Report
- Student program certificates
- Honors Program and Dean's List certificates

Salon owners and managers would like to see what you achieved during your education, such as high percentages in rebooking, Take Home (retail), attendance, and grades, and testimonials from your service guests and school staff.

Professional portfolios can be presented to a potential employer digitally or in book format. A digital version of your portfolio could be placed on a DVD or stored on an iPad to present in an interview. Creating a book is also a great way to present your professional portfolio. Keep extra copies of your résumé, letters of recommendation, certificates, cover letter, and photographs at home, to replenish any items that a potential employer chooses to keep.

Make your professional portfolio stand out:

- 1 Hire a professional photographer to take your portfolio pictures. If the price is a challenge, be resourceful. Many local upcoming photographers are willing to work with upcoming hair and makeup artists to create photographs and all can benefit. If you take the photographs, invest in a camera that will produce high-quality images, as you will build your portfolio for your entire career.
- 2 Show a variety in your pictorial collection, including your capabilities as a future salon professional and your creative work. Feature different lengths and textures of hair and a comprehensive collection of your cutting, color, texture, style, and finish skills. Your photographs should show your wide range of talent, but include your signature as a future salon professional.
- 3 Offer your portfolio digitally. Create a professional website or use Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc., to showcase your portfolio. Direct all potential employers and fellow industry professionals to its location. Keep the information up to date and current with the latest trends.

For more information and great tips on creating a professional portfolio, visit Plugged In, review the professional development class handouts, and read "Building Your Portfolio" and "Successful Photo Shoots" in *Connecting To My Future*, Chapter 4.