

Writing Samples and Other Portfolio Materials

What to present and how to present them.

Janis Ramey, STC WorkQuest™ presentation, June 3, 2003

Portfolio items

Writing samples

- Partial, pull-offs, clips, snippets
- Books, manuals, reports – possibly mark chapters or pages you've written with a tab
- Short items -- e.g., press releases, data sheets, brochures

Interactive presentations

- Interactive training projects
- Websites
- On-line help
- Shows and presentations

Complete projects

- Planning documents, overviews, etc.
- Sets of books

Other items

- Letters of recommendation, awards, and certificates
- Photos -- e.g., showing you receiving an award, in trade show booth, teaching a class, or leading a meeting, etc.
- Photos of projects that are too big to transport, such as a pile of manuals.
- Resume, business card, list of projects, list of clients, course outlines, etc

Presentation techniques

Loose collections

- Choose items that demonstrate your experience in the field of the interviewer or are the type of projects the job will require.
- Show only a few items. Talk about each one.

Formal print portfolios

- Separate your writing samples by industry or document type.
- Create a table of contents and/or colored tabs to help the reader skip.
- Use a presentation binder.
- Add labels to explain items.

"Soft" portfolios

- Present on CD or website or send as email attachments.
- Make sure it works on the computer it will be shown on.
- Use standard typefaces such as Ariel or Times New Roman.
- Include any applications that may be needed such as Adobe Acrobat Reader or PowerPoint Reader.

- Include a startup or contents page.
- Include an autostart application.
- Include a readme file that explains how to operate the startup page or application.

Create portfolio samples

- Collect copies of everything you've produced.
- Write something for the interviewer's website.
- Write an article for a trade magazine in the interviewer's technology. Doesn't have to actually be published.

Caveats

- Do not leave your samples with the interviewer. Chances are you will not get them back. Instead, leave snippets or copies, if necessary.
- Show only recent examples, if possible. Especially omit samples that are about obviously old technology.
- Do not use samples that were poorly printed or are stained or torn.
- Be prepared to talk about each item, including details about your involvement in the project, who you did it for, how it was distributed, etc.