



# My Portfolio Resume

## Introduction

The time of the traditional resume is over. The experience you've had, the talents you use, the valuable work you did needs a new format to better present yourself.

Traditional resumes assume a traditional working life of related roles as the employee of organisations, where job title and role description are used to define your ability and experience.

The Portfolio Resume assumes you have unrelated, simultaneous roles with titles that don't best reflect the work you have done within those roles. It also assumes that your vocational activity is not always paid work in the service of an employer.

"Portfolio" indicates that you are a collection or assortment of things when it comes to your vocational proposition. This is a good thing – not a reflection of a confused personality. As J.R Tolkien said: *"All that is gold does not glitter; Not all those who wander are lost."* There is goodness in your working life that needs a better platform on which to be presented.

## Explanation of the design

The basic design of the Portfolio Resume is four pages; no more, no less. Each page has specific content:

Page 1 – Contact details, biographical description, key skills or capabilities

Page 2 – Portfolio: List of selected items of work experience

Page 3 – Testimonials: Excerpts of recommendations that relate to the Portfolio items

Page 4 – Qualifications: List of selected items; and Work history: job title, organisation, and dates for all your working life

## Order of the content

There is a logic to why the content is laid out in a particular order.

**Page 1** is the page likely to get the most attention from your reader. Therefore, it needs the most important information: how to get in contact with you; what to remember about you (your description should be memorable!); and the set of capabilities that make you useful and desirable.

**Page 2** is a tailored list of things you have done, that shows what you are capable of in the best light. This content differs from normal work history in a number of ways:

- You can include small items (an interesting blog post you wrote; a powerful introduction you facilitated) as well as large items (a project you managed).
- You can include old items as well as recent items. Traditional resumes tend to drop off content older than five years. This hides experience that could be transferable or more than what you've done in the recent past.
- You can include extracurricular items that don't have a place to go in the traditional resume because they aren't related to a job (social media activity; leadership in a professional association; a volunteer role).

- You can be specific and concrete, and mix activity with achievement or purpose – giving more interesting and relevant information:  
 Compare “*Managed large projects*” with “*Managed the ABC Project with \$500K budget and team of 20 people, delivering on time and within budget.*”  
  
 Compare “*Made a blog*” with “*Designed, built and maintained professional blog with insights and inspiration for people leading knowledge workers or doing knowledge work* (<http://knowledgework.myblog.com>)”

**Page 3** is content that provides ‘social proof’ about your experience and talents. Some of the good things said about you in the past are still useful to your story even when you’ve lost contact with the person, or they are not available to be a verbal referee.

Don’t leave your reader waiting to talk to referees to learn what others think about you. Provide this knowledge as soon as you can for the most positive effect.

**Page 4** contains facts that need to be evident and can be checked out if necessary. This is typically not the content that will sway someone to consider you – however, it’s due diligence that this information is available. The work history is downgraded content – you are presenting information that shows you are more than the roles you have held in organisations.

## Creating the Portfolio Resume

### 1. Reuse content you have

For this new style of resume, reuse content from your traditional resume for Pages 1 and 4.

For **Page 1** content, make sure you include multiple ways to contact you. If you have quality online profiles (e.g. LinkedIn), include a hyperlink.

Consider including a quality professional photograph.

Have a description that is more akin to a bio (though write it in first-person) and includes a sense of where you’ve been, where you are, and where you’re going. Be memorable; be interesting.

For **Page 4** content, include Qualifications or Certifications rather than listing courses you’ve taken. If you wish to promote the fact that you are continuing to learn – then add that content under the Skills section or a relevant item or two in the Portfolio section.

Keep the list relevant to the audience, and be prepared to adjust this content each time you use the resume. For example, your First Aid Certification is probably not so relevant if you are applying for a leadership role.

### 2. Gather and create content you need

For this new style of resume, you probably don’t have content ready for Page 2 and Page 3.

For **Page 2** content, look back over your work life; use your old resume as a prompter and compose a list (a loong list!) of work experience items.

Organise the items under headings that relate directly to your audience. If your audience is a recruitment panel or HR personnel filtering applications in response to a job advert, use the headings from the Position Description.



Include hyperlinks to online examples, or reference material relating to the items.

Keep lists of content for pages in a digital notebook, like MS One Note. Prepare the text in the right typeface and font size to simply cut-n-paste the items into the resume.

For **Page 3** content, you've got old content to reuse, and new content to get:

- a) Look through old letters of reference and review recommendations that have been posted online; extract short excerpts that are relevant to reuse. Don't be afraid to cull words – though be sure to use conventions that show if you have edited someone else's quote.
- b) Ask people for recommendations. Ask people from your past to provide relevant content. When you are finishing up a job or project, ask people to compose you a recommendation.

Whether it's old or new content, all recommendations should support what you have chosen to include in the Portfolio section on Page 2.

### 3. Test the resume content with a friendly audience

You are unlikely to get the content right in your first version. Like any quality piece of writing, have someone look at it with fresh eyes to find the obvious errors before you decide you have your first final version. Be sure to let them know that the format is not in question as you are following a new format for which they may not be familiar.

Consider testing the resume with someone who doesn't know you well, and can read it from the perspective of a prospective employer or client. Ask them to share the impression they get of you, as a result of reading your portfolio. You want to make sure that the impression you want to leave with others is the impression that the content is will most likely give.

## Supplementing the resume

Your resume is a marketing document for a target audience, so it isn't a record of all the details of your work history. Keep that worthy information somewhere else like a digital notebook.

In addition to cut-n-paste text for the resume, consider storing results from assessments you've done, bios you've written and used in the past, and reflections about work you've done.

### Just one resume?

This advice is for a single resume. It is entirely possible that you have a suite of resumes, tailored to a different theme or focus, or a different industry domain. For each resume theme, consider changing the following:

- The Description on Page 1
- The order of the Skills on Page 1 (put the most relevant first)
- The Portfolio headings and items on Page 2
- The Testimonials on Page 3

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