GRAPHIC DESIGN PORTFOLIO

All about Portfolio

Definition

A graphic design portfolio is a curated collection of your works throughout the years. It provides potential clients with a well-rounded vision of your work, style, and other important background information that can help influence hiring decisions.

The bulk of your portfolio will include images and descriptions of your past experience—but an online graphic design portfolio means you can engage visitors in new ways.

What should be included in a design portfolio?

A graphic design portfolio should first include a well-curated selection of your best work that showcases your skills, creativity, and versatility as a graphic designer. Other specific elements or sections it should include are -

- Introduction/About Me
- Work samples: a. Branding and Logo Design b. Print Design c. Digital Design d. Illustrations (if applicable) e. Typography f. Motion Graphics (if applicable) g. UI/UX Design (if applicable)
- Project descriptions. For each of the design include a short description.
- Design process (optional)- eg for a logo, Show right away from sketches to the final product
- Contact information
- Testimonials (optional)-Positive feedback from your client
- Resume/CV- For online web portfolios
- Regular updates with new work and projects

Why create a static PDF Design portfolio?

Although online portfolios have gained popularity over the last few years, static design portfolios are still one of the most powerful tools you have.

A PDF portfolio can hold a recruiter or client's attention longer, has fewer constraints as you don't have to work with code, and allows you to tell a more vivid story than online counterparts.

Also, PDF portfolios will save you money (you won't need hosting nor site builders) and time (you can create more iterations faster).

Note: you can always create a website to give your potential clients an overview of your skills and let them download your static portfolio for a more in-depth look into your work.

Steps to follow to design a good portfolio

1. Define your target audience

Keep in mind that you're creating a marketing asset. As such, it needs to have a target and a goal.

The goal of your portfolio is clear: getting hired!

Your audience is the type of person you want to encourage to hire you. Your design choices will vary depending on who you are targeting. You should pick different work samples when showcasing your portfolio to a recruiter versus a potential client.

These are a few examples:

- If you are looking for a job in a marketing agency, your target audience is recruiters. In a marketing agency, you'll likely be working on different types of projects like PDFs, feature images, social posts, graphics for articles, etc. So a broader work sample is a good choice.
- Suppose you are looking for clients in a specific niche. In that case, a better approach is to pick work samples that reflect your expertise in their industry. In some instances, hyper-focus your pieces to a specific type of work like branding, product design, UX/UI, etc.

Steps cont'd

2. Look for inspiration

Like any other design project, having a pool of references and inspiration is ideal for getting the creative juices flowing.

You want to pick two to three references to build your layout.
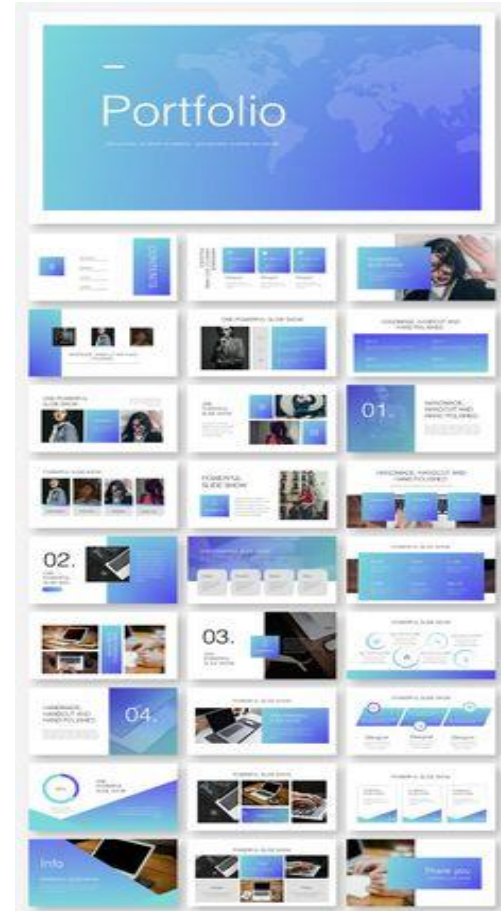
Steps cont'd

4. Focus on showcasing your strengths

We're sure you're a multifaceted designer with hundreds of interests, a whole book of knowledge, and various work samples. Because of this, you'll be tempted to add everything to your portfolio.

However, you might want to consider a tighter approach.

By honing your skills, you're building a crucial factor to land a client or a job: expertise.

So, how do you focus on your core skills? Simple, you first think about your target's needs.

For this experiment, imagine you're looking to break into the UI industry. By definition, you'll create user interfaces for websites, mobile apps, web apps, etc.

Following this train of thought, adding your logo design skills is kind of irrelevant because it's not what your target audience is looking for.

Steps cont'd

5. Sketch the layout for your portfolio

The layout is one of those things that can make or break your design.

Sketching your layout is not a must, as you can always try different configurations while working. However, experimenting with different configurations can quickly become inefficient.

If you want to nail your static portfolio, you have to treat the entire thing as a design project. You can think of it as a magazine.

Grab a piece of paper and start drawing different layouts. Once you settle for one, you can go to your illustrator and start designing.

Steps Cont'd

6. Pick your best work

It's time to pick the actual parts you want to share with your prospective clients.

For this step, focus on the best workpieces you have in your arsenal.

Even if you have only three samples, it's better to showcase one awesome project than three average ones.

Thinking logically, your client or employer will judge you based on the weakest piece in your portfolio.

Make sure only to add those you are most proud of or ones that better met the project's goals (like increasing brand awareness, increasing attention, making the user experience better, increasing the CTR of an ad, etc.)

Steps cont'd

7. Write a brief case study for every project

There are three things you want to convey with your copy:

If you can show those three things to a potential client or employer, your chances of success will skyrocket.

- The problem you needed to solve with your design
- The process you followed to solve it, and
- The goals your design achieved

Steps Cont'd

8. Put everything together in the editor tool

Alright, you have all the building blocks of your portfolio. It's time to make it happen

Steps Cont'd

9. Add your contact information

The last thing we want to add is a contact page. Add the following information to this page:

Then click save and that's it. Your portfolio is ready for proofreading.

- Full name
- Email
- Phone number
- Website (if you have any)
- Call to action

Steps cont'd

10. Proofread your copy

Spelling mistakes are a quick way to get your portfolio sent to the trash.

Rest for sometime and read it carefully so you have a fresh pair of eyes ready to spot all of those grammatical errors.

You just finished your portfolio! Time to close up your deals