

Prepare a UX portfolio for job applications

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- Reading: Learn more about UX specializations 10 min
- Discussion Prompt: Share UX portfolio tips 10 min
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Prepare for UX interviews

Answer interview questions

Develop an elevator pitch

Ace whiteboarding and panel interviews

Pursue freelance UX design work

Week 6 review

Course review

Certificate program review

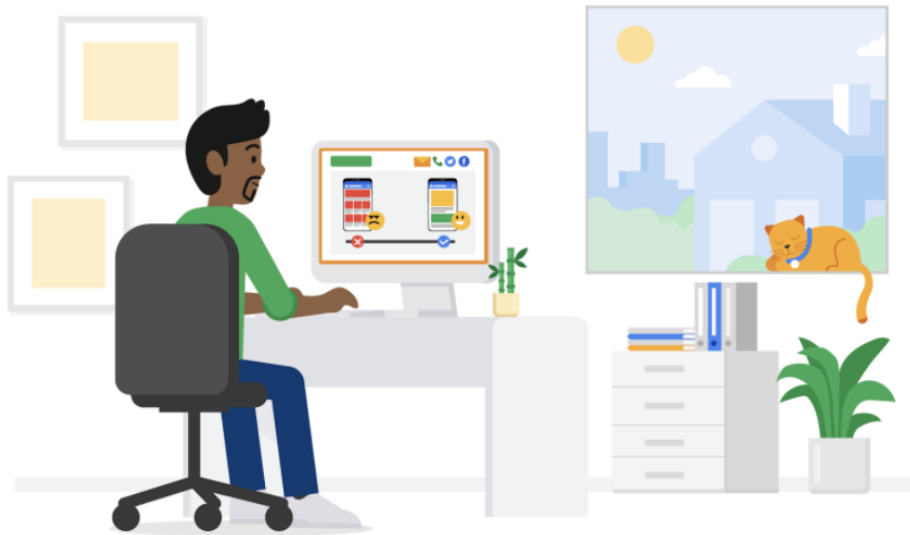
Tailor a portfolio for types of jobs

You've learned that creating a stand-out portfolio is key for landing a great job or internship in UX design. You've also acquired the skills to do so, like empathizing with users, creating wireframes, building prototypes, and conducting usability studies. With the building blocks to make a great portfolio, now is the time to finalize your website and make sure it accurately represents who you are to help you get the job you want.

You've also learned that a UX designer's job can be different depending on where you work. For instance, when it comes to conducting user research, you might be responsible for leading the research or you might be handed the results of a research study after it's completed depending on the company or client you're working for. From research to wireframes to prototypes, each company and job requires different responsibilities.

Your portfolio should reflect that reality. If you're applying for jobs at startups, you'll want to emphasize the breadth of your knowledge. Or, if you want to apply for a specialized job at a large company, you should show more depth within a particular focus, like interaction design, visual design, or motion design. Your case studies and overall portfolio should reflect these interests. Putting in the time and effort to honor the golden rule of UX design: empathize with your audience. In this case, your audience is employees at the company you want to work for!

Freelancing, startups, and small businesses



If your dream is to be a freelance designer or to own your business, a strong portfolio website is absolutely critical. You'll need to attract clients, demonstrate your knowledge of UX design, provide contact information, and perhaps even inform them of your pay structure. The clients you contact will most likely expect a broad range of experience because you are a freelancer, so presenting a focused set of design skills in your portfolio is key. You should also include as many projects as possible.

If you want to work at a startup or a small business, your portfolio's audience might not be very familiar with UX design. For example, a small business owner who wants to create their first e-commerce website may know they need to hire a UX designer, but they might not know what that job will require. To appeal to an audience who might be unfamiliar with UX design concepts, you may want to avoid technical jargon or complicated explanations in your case studies. The great thing about stories is they are universal. As you prepare your case study, focus the user's journey from the problem, to your design ideas for addressing the problem, to the product's ultimate solution.

Large companies and agencies



If you're planning on applying for a position at a large company, like Google, Microsoft, or Salesforce, you're going to need to emphasize UX design work differently in your portfolio. Your audience will likely be hiring managers and recruiters who are acutely familiar with the specifics of UX design. They're going to know exactly what to look for in your case studies, including whether you followed accessibility standards and implemented usability study feedback in a way that makes clear that you understand your user.

In addition, when you interview for a job at a larger company, you'll likely explain your portfolio to the hiring manager during the initial interview process. Make sure your website is easily navigable. Try this pro tip: Walk through your website while describing who you are, what you do, and the work you've completed. If moving through your portfolio feels clunky, consider revising the structure so it flows more naturally. That might mean changing an image carousel layout to a continuous scroll layout or reorganizing your content.

Design for the job you want: generalist vs. specialist

Finally, one of the most important things to consider when developing your portfolio is understanding the type of UX design job you'd like to pursue. If you have your heart set on becoming a virtual reality designer, you'll need to demonstrate that in your portfolio website *and* look for the type of company that might need that type of role. If you've never done any VR work, you'll probably want to build something for your portfolio to demonstrate your knowledge on the subject. Maybe you want to use one of the projects you built for this program and put a new VR spin on it.

Another way to do this might be by looking for an existing product on the market and building a prototype to reflect changes you think will improve it. Expanding on someone else's idea is not as powerful as creating your idea, but it's something to consider if you need to differentiate your portfolio for a particular role.

Similarly, if you're planning on applying for work at a small business, you're going to need to show that you understand the process of UX design, from the research stage to the final hand-off. Essentially, every skill you've learned will need to be represented in your portfolio in some way, proving you can:

- Lead research
- Define a problem in the market
- Empathize with users
- Create wireframes
- Ideate solutions
- Build prototypes
- Conduct a usability study
- Finalize the product for launch

It's a lot, but there's no need to show every stage of the process in each case study. But, each of those steps in the design process should be accounted for throughout your portfolio.

For example, that might mean showing the in-depth research stage for one project, the design development process of a second project, and the testing and iterating stage for a third. Each of your projects needs a clear description of your contributions so a recruiter will understand your involvement — and be able to ask you follow-up questions.

UX designer portfolio checklist

Wish you could distill this information into a simple checklist? You're in luck! The "must-haves" for a portfolio are listed below. Some of these are more concrete than others, but they're all important for creating a holistic website that demonstrates your abilities as a UX designer.

- Intro splash or welcome page
- Brand identity
- Consistent tone of voice
- At least three case studies, including your role on the team, the product's goal, the research, the users, information architecture, wireframes, mockups, prototypes, results from usability studies or other research, final polished designs, takeaways or a conclusion, and lots of images of your design process.
- Links to extra information (like research or reports), if necessary
- Clear navigation
- A description of who you are
- A link to your UX resume
- Contact information

Keep up the research

There's definitely more to learn about building a tailored portfolio; and, there are plenty of resources available to you to give you some broader perspectives and more examples. Here are a few to get you started:

- [How to write a UX case study](#) [↗](#) from InVision
- [Design a Winning Portfolio — Tips + Tricks from a Google Designer](#) [↗](#), from Prototypr
- [Google UX design portfolio tips: How to prepare your design portfolio](#) [↗](#) from Google's Career team
- [The UX Portfolio: Why You Need More Than One](#) [↗](#) from Bentley University

Mark as completed

