

Module 3: Interview with Kesley Beachum

1. What makes a good portfolio?
2. How did you use, or are you using your portfolio for jobs?
3. What kind of feedback do you typically receive about your portfolio?
4. What did you struggle with the most?
5. How did you articulate your visual brand?
6. Do you have any other tips or things I should know as I'm starting to build a portfolio of my own?

1. A good portfolio demonstrates a range of skills and experience and proves you're good at what you do. You can tell people you're perfect for a job in your cover letter, but a portfolio is a great way of showing rather than telling. It's proof you can put your money where your mouth is. A great portfolio sets you apart from others in your field and leaves a positive and memorable impression.

2. For interviews, I always brought in a hard copy of my portfolio targeted to the specific job I was applying for, but on applications, I always included the URL to my online portfolio on my resume and sometimes in my cover letter, as well. It was a good way to direct people to my work without having to rely on getting an interview to be able to show them my portfolio pieces.

3. Probably half the time when I went in for interviews, someone would bring up my portfolio and mention they were impressed, which always surprised me a little. I think some people were surprised I had one. I usually got the most positive feedback about my samples themselves, as opposed to the design work. I've had a few recruiters contact me as a result of my online portfolio, as well.

The company I'm currently working for was very excited that I had an online portfolio. I'm an associate editor, so of course I do a lot of writing and editing here, but some of my other duties include design work, social media, online publishing, planning (especially for the magazine) and basic coding, and through my online portfolio I was able to prove to my current boss that I'm experienced and capable in those areas before I even came in for the interview.

4. I had a hard time with aesthetics. The choices I made regarding content were less harrowing than making design choices. I'm happy with the layout, especially the navigation and the overall layout, but I don't love the colors. At the time, I didn't do much design work, so I was guessing a bit when it came to color. I suppose that's indicative of a larger problem, actually — I had a hard time setting my portfolio apart. I think that can be tough to do without veering towards being gimmicky or overly flashy.

5. I tried to stick to a very geometric, clean design. The idea was to balance out a more minimalistic look with bright colors to create something that demonstrated

I'm serious about what I do, but simultaneously showed that I'm creative when it comes to my work.

6. If possible, try to design your portfolio with an eye toward the specific job you want. I wanted a job in small publishing, and I knew from an internship I had that jobs with small publishing companies require that you wear a lot of hats. My portfolio was designed to demonstrate to a small publishing company why I was ideal for the job. I'd also recommend including a good range of portfolio pieces (e.g. include pieces that are published for different purposes, in different formats, using different styles and tones, etc.).

A good portfolio proves you're good at what you do is something that really stuck out to me in my interview with Kelsey. She gave great advice and shared her personal experiences, which I found very helpful. From my knowledge, portfolios are a way to show a potential employer your work, rather than telling. From Kelsey's experience it seems like a lot of people enjoyed and/or found her portfolio impressive and useful. I did hear from a few other PW alumni and they didn't find their portfolios too useful in interviewing processes etc. Kelsey's design is very organized and minimalistic and I think that's definitely something I'll keep in mind when creating my own. I don't want people to feel overwhelmed when viewing it. She also said to try to design my portfolio with an eye toward the specific job I want, and include a good range of portfolio pieces. I feel that I'm a very creative person, and after seeing all of these different portfolios I'm excited to get started in designing my own.