



Portfolio Guide.



Welcome!

Hello hello hello! I'll keep this short and sweet so we can jump straight into the good stuff, but I just wanted to give you a brief overview of what **flo. Create** is, who I am and what this guide is all about.

flo. was developed as a university project but it mainly started to grow once I downloaded TikTok... After posting a few videos showcasing my personal work, I received an overwhelming number of messages asking for portfolio support. Then it clicked. I realised there was an opportunity where I could help others and what better way to kick-start it all than creating a FREE portfolio guide for you guys?

Sorry I forgot to introduce myself, **I'm Yasmin the founder of flo. Create!** I am a recent graduate and Marketing Assistant. I've made a fair few portfolio's throughout university (some notably better than others, it was very much trial and error...) and it's what I love to do. I'm here to help you avoid the mistakes I made so you can build the perfect portfolio.

So, if you need content inspiration, design tips or just general support/ideas, this guide will be your best friend.



Contents.



Introduction.

A brief overview of portfolios. Learn what they are, what types you can have and more.



Portfolio Design.

Key tips & tricks for designing a clean, creative and engaging portfolio.



Structure & Organisation.

Everything you need to know to create a well-structured, readable and cohesive portfolio.



Content Support.

Not sure what to include within your portfolio? Discover new content ideas for inspiration.

An introduction to portfolios.

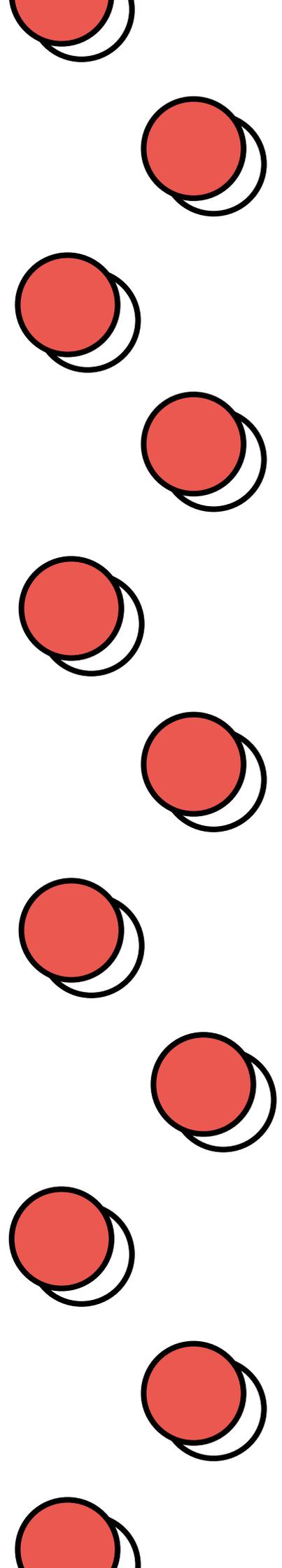
If your sat thinking 'I have no idea what a portfolio even is' don't worry - you've came to the right place! I'm writing this guide and wondering wait; do I even know myself?! Jokes aside, there's no real right or wrong answer when it comes to portfolios - **it's just about showcasing your work in the most effective way possible.**

So, even if you do have an understanding but just want clarity on the benefits, opportunities or whether it's right for you, keep reading.

“ **Portfolio's are everything, promises are nothing. Do the work.** ”

Chase Jarvis.

01.





Before we dive into all the **ins and outs of portfolios, let's quickly run through some commonly asked questions...**

(Sidenote: most of these points will be developed further throughout, don't worry!)

1. What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a *compilation of your most impressive work* that demonstrates your skills, abilities, accomplishments, experiences and more.

2. What types of portfolios are there?

There's many different portfolio styles and formats. Most popular ones include *printed portfolio, online portfolio, showreel and workbook*.

3. How do I create one?

There are no rules when it comes to portfolio creation but here's a few recommendations from me: InDesign, Canva, Wix, Squarespace (+more).

4. What can I use a portfolio for?

Portfolios are useful for career purposes - *interviews, emailing employers, sharing online etc.* but they're also great for personal development!

5. How long should my portfolio be?

There's no right or wrong answer as it depends on the context. My rule: *if you're sending digitally, keep it short. If you're showing physically, go long!*

6. Are portfolios just for graphic designers?

Absolutely not. Portfolios can be useful across the board for a range of industries - mine was marketing focused & it helped me land my job!

Types of portfolios.

What type of portfolio should I create? Any type of portfolio can be effective - it's all down to the content that you actually put in!

I'll give you a quick run through of **online vs print** portfolios...

Print Portfolios.

Pros:

- Demonstrates the quality of your work
- Useful to take to interviews
- Brings your project to life
- You control what people see

Cons:

- Cost of printing
- Risk of losing it (keep a digital copy!!)
- Not accessible for everyone



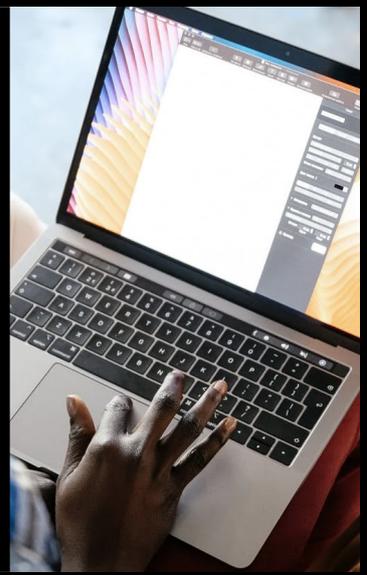
Online Portfolios.

Pros:

- Easy to update and change
- Quick to send, great shareability
- Convenient for employers to view

Cons:

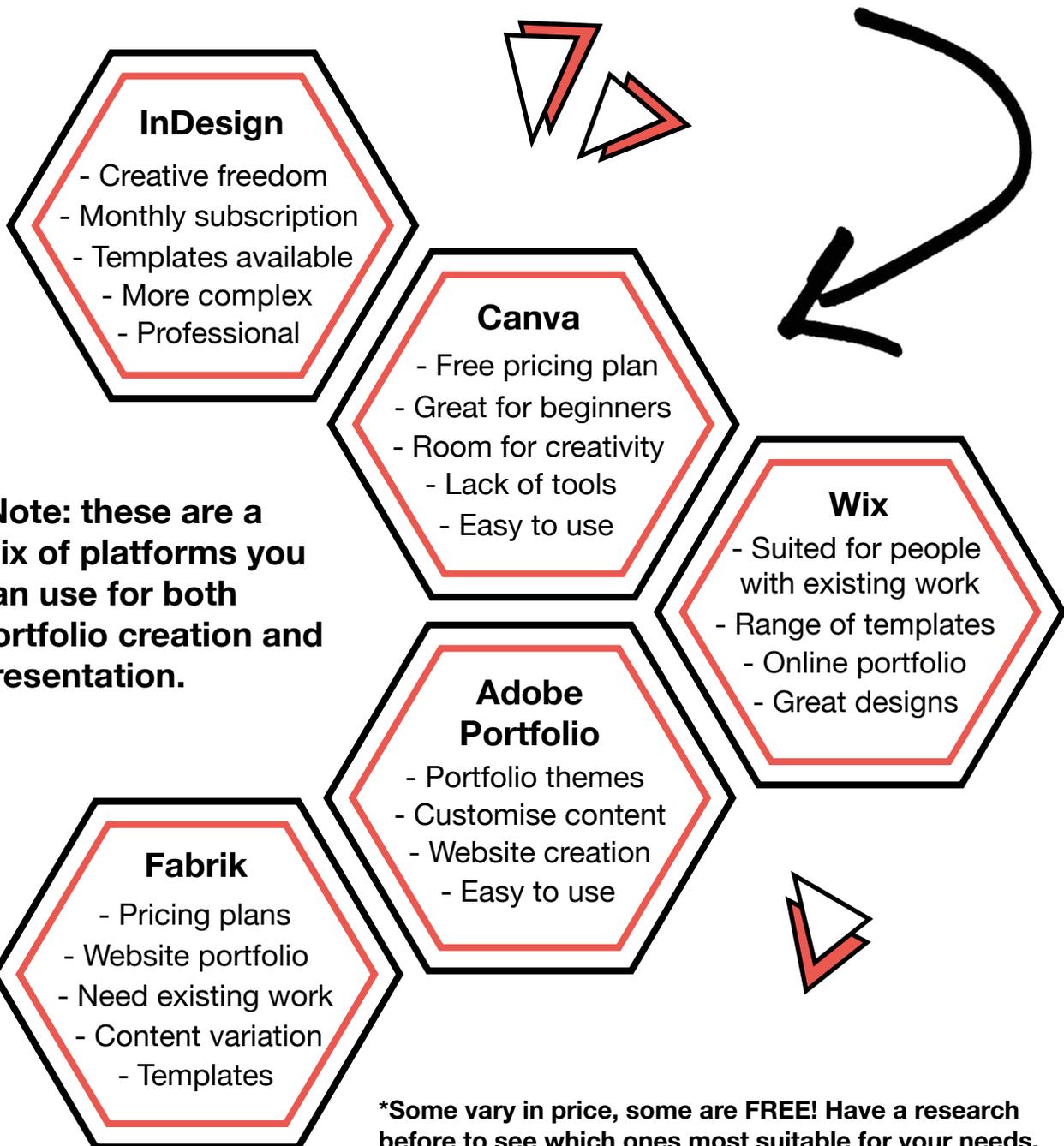
- Requires creating your own website
- Potential tech issues
- You need to protect your work



Which ones right for you? Hopefully now you'll be in a better position to decide which one is the best fit for your needs.

Creating your portfolio.

How can you develop a creative portfolio? There's plenty of apps & softwares out there for you to use - just take a look below!



What can you use a portfolio for?



There's no definite answer to this because you can use it however you'd like to! But here are a **few common ways that creative portfolios** can come in handy...

1. **Job Interviews.**

I debated taking my portfolio but I'm so thankful I did because it helped me get my job. Showcase your skills!

2. **Personal Branding.**

Online portfolios can help sculpt your personal brand - increasing your visibility, network and career opportunities.

3. **University Work.**

If you've created a multitude of projects at university, a portfolio can help you collate all of your work in one place.

4. **Personal Development/Reflection.**

Creating a range of portfolios massively helped me improve my design, researching & marketing skills over the years.

5. **Email, Email, Email!**

Want work experience? An internship? Freelance work? **ATTACH YOUR PORTFOLIO** when reaching out via email!

My portfolio story.

I wanted to share my portfolio journey so you have a better understanding of how they can be useful with a real life case study - ME!



A little bit of background...

'I studied Fashion Marketing at Falmouth University which is where I learnt all about portfolios (we had to design them regularly as a way of presenting our work). Over the 3-year course I developed my skills on InDesign and created a range of portfolios for different modules - including the ones shown above!'

'Why did you have a 220+ page printed portfolio?'

'So, during my last year at university, we had to do a final major project which accounted for 50% of my total grade (that's why it's so long!). This is when 'flo.' was born - I created a series of portfolios developing the brand which helped me achieve a First-Class Honours degree - I still can't believe it!'

'How have your portfolios helped you with your career?'

'First and foremost, it helped me land my first role as a Marketing Assistant! I brought it along to the interview and my employers fed back that they were really impressed. Secondly, it's helped me develop my personal brand & 'flo.'! I feel so passionate about portfolios & I really enjoy helping others with theirs.'

Portfolio Design.

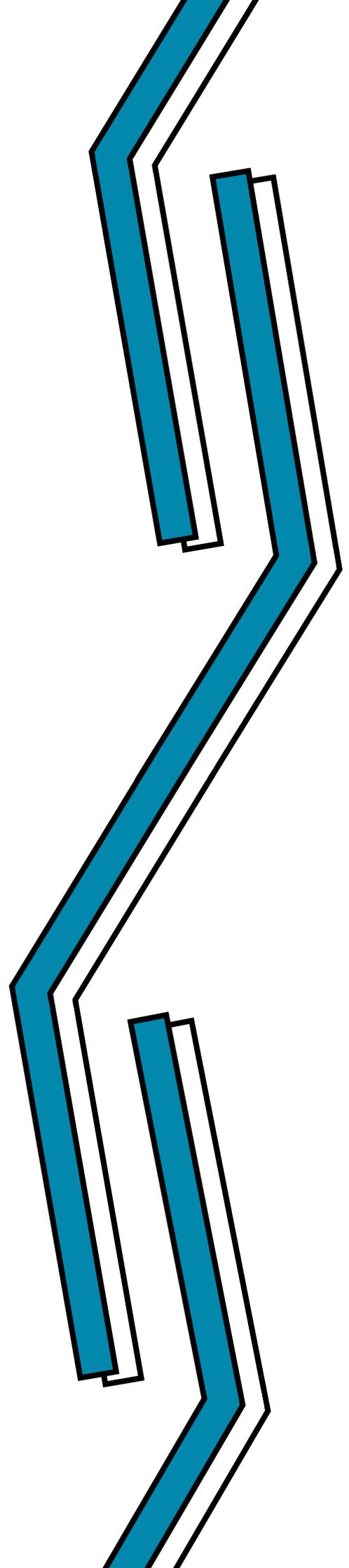
So, now we've covered the basics let's move onto design. No matter what your portfolio consists of, it should be a priority to present it in the best way possible - it needs to look good!

People want to read things that they engage with. I'm not saying it requires intricate graphics or that you need to be a professional designer, but it needs to be appealing.

Within this chapter I'm going to provide you with tips, tricks & advice on how to make your portfolio visually engaging so you can make a memorable impression with your work.

“ **Studies have shown that visual appeal can be assessed within about 50 milliseconds.** ”

Mary Stribley, Canva.



■ Things to think about...

Brand Identity

Every piece of design work has its own brand identity - it's exactly the same with portfolio's. You want to create something that reflects your personality and purpose. Also remember to keep your audience in mind - who is it and will this style resonate well with them? Whilst this is all important to consider, don't overthink it - just be true to yourself, create what your passionate about and the rest will fall into place!

If you're stuck with where to start, here's a few tips that might help inspire you with your portfolio design...

Pinterest, Pinterest & Pinterest.

If you're struggling to come up with a design concept, open Pinterest and spend a good 20 minutes or more just looking at imagery, design work and even other portfolio examples!

Make use of online tutorials.

You might be on the opposite side and have lots of creative ideas but just don't quite know how to execute them. Well, there's loads of online tutorials on YouTube you can watch which might help with specific design requirements.

Templates are always available!

Don't worry if you don't know the first thing about design - you can still create a portfolio! There's plenty of templates (both free and available to purchase) on Etsy, Canva & more!

Let's dive deeper into the nitty gritty design elements that are SO important to think about when creating a portfolio.

Fonts

You want to choose a font that's going to sit well with your overall style - this sometimes isn't always straight forward as you might have to play around until you find the right one.

For example - my design aesthetic was very contemporary, sleek and simple which I why I used the bold & clean-cut sans serif font *Helvetica Neue* (what I'm using now).



Key tip: be consistent with your typeface.

Make sure to use the same font throughout your portfolio otherwise it can be confusing and messy.

You can use contrasting fonts as long they complement one another, but personally I'd stick to 1/2 primary ones to avoid it looking disconnected and unprofessional.

*Below are some common font types that might help you decide on what sort of look you want to achieve. Fons can differ depending on the software that you use to create your portfolio - but most are usually downloadable!

Serif	Sans-serif	Script	Display
Baskerville	Helvetica	<i>Sign Painter</i>	Chalk Duster
Charter	Avenir	<i>Savoie LET</i>	Noteworthy
Georgia	Gill Sans	<i>Brush Script MT</i>	PHOSPHATE
Times	Tahoma	<i>Snell Roundhand</i>	Papyrus
Minion Pro	Optima	<i>Apple Chancery</i>	Marker Felt

Imagery

Whether you're using imagery as part of your design or you need to include images for the purpose of your portfolio, there's a few things to be careful about...

Quality & Sizing.

I've made this mistake PLENTY of times throughout my years of portfolio creation - AVOID POOR QUALITY IMAGES! Blurry, pixelated and grainy images can reflect badly on your portfolio - be sure to look for high-quality resolution!

 **Key tip:** if you're sourcing images on Google, click **Tools > Size > Large** to filter your search to get access to the highest quality images.

 **Key tip:** always print/export a copy of your portfolio before to check the quality of the images!

Copyright & Referencing.

If you're using images that aren't copyright free, you'll need to reference! My advice: have a small reference section at the end of your portfolio & re-size your images to make sure it looks tidy.

*This is mine!



Copyright Free Image Websites:

- Freepik
- Pexels
- Freerange
- Unsplash
- Flickr
- Pixabay
- Adobe Stock
- Life of Pix
- Wikimedia
- Burst
- Stocksnap
- Shutterstock

Structure & Organisation.

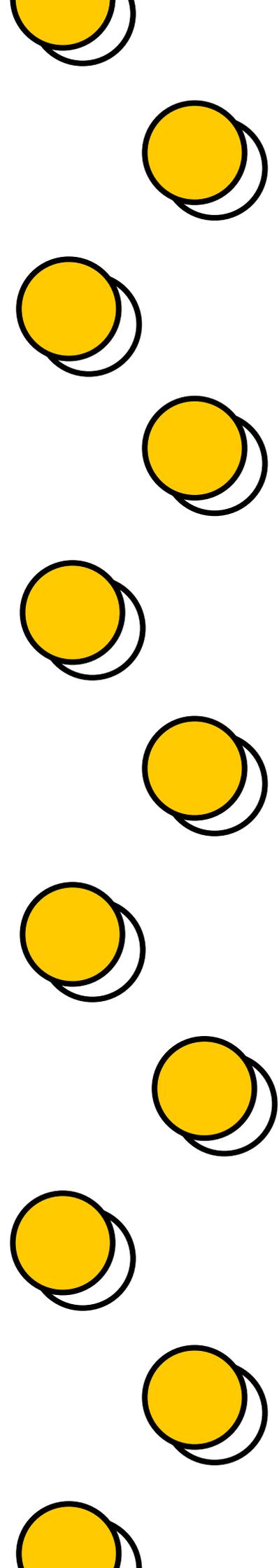
What follows design? Structure.

Any good portfolio will have a clear communication strategy in place, as it enables readers to understand the content clearly and pinpoint what they want to see quickly.

I can't stress enough how important it is to have organise your portfolio in a way that makes it accessible and enjoyable for people to view. If you nail the structure, your portfolio will automatically be more engaging.

“ Show that you can solve problems, and you'll show your worth hiring. ”

Emelyn Baker, Invision.

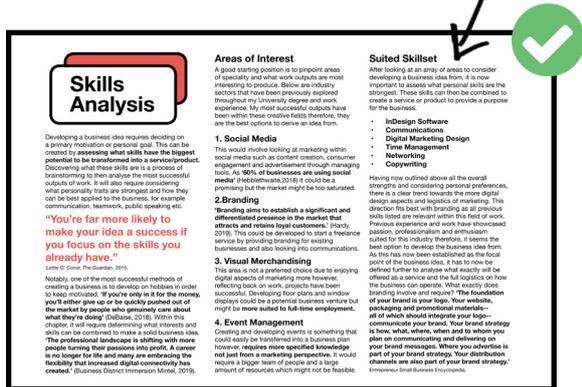
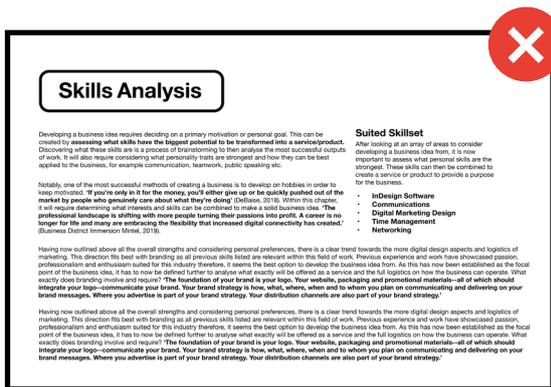


Layout & Readability.

Your portfolio needs to flow (mind the pun) so readers can have an enjoyable, effortless experience when flicking through.

Keep it simple.

Strike the right balance between visuals and copy - don't overdo it on either because it might make it difficult to read. Be careful with white space - you don't want it to be bare but on the flip side, you don't want it to look cluttered and too full.



When presenting information on your pages, avoid using lengthy sections of copy.

Instead, try to lay it out in columns or split the text up into smaller paragraphs.

Other considerations...

- Align your text consistently (I prefer mine being on the right)
- Remove hyphenation so it's easier to read
- Mix up page layouts to avoid repetition
- Make use of bold font options to ensure title headings stand out
- Similarly, ensure text size is consistent but use a variation of sizes when appropriate

“How do I structure my portfolio?”

Whether your portfolio is online, printed or in a digital PDF format, it needs to be accessible and easy to understand, follow & read.

Digital/Printed Portfolio.

Section your work.
Implement chapters, project headings or spacing throughout. This will help readers distinguish the different elements of your portfolio - I'd suggest having separate title pages for clarity!

Page markings.
Make sure to have page numbers so readers can find what they need - for extra professionalism, create your own bespoke page stamp!

01 | THE CONCEPT  *These were mine! I included:
 Right: Chapter No. & Title
Left: My logo, Name & Project

Online Portfolio.

Visibility.
Make sure that the portfolio section of your website is prominent - *include a 'Click to see my portfolio' call to action button, a showreel, a carousel slide of your work...whatever it may be, direct people so they can see your capabilities!*

Navigation Bar.
It's your website, so make it reflective of you. Tell people who you are, what experience you've had & sort of see it as a creative C.V - it allows employers to get to know you!

**Take a look at what I included within my website navigation bar below for some inspiration...*

ABOUT ME CAREER INTERESTS PORTFOLIO EXPERIENCE VIDEO CONTACT



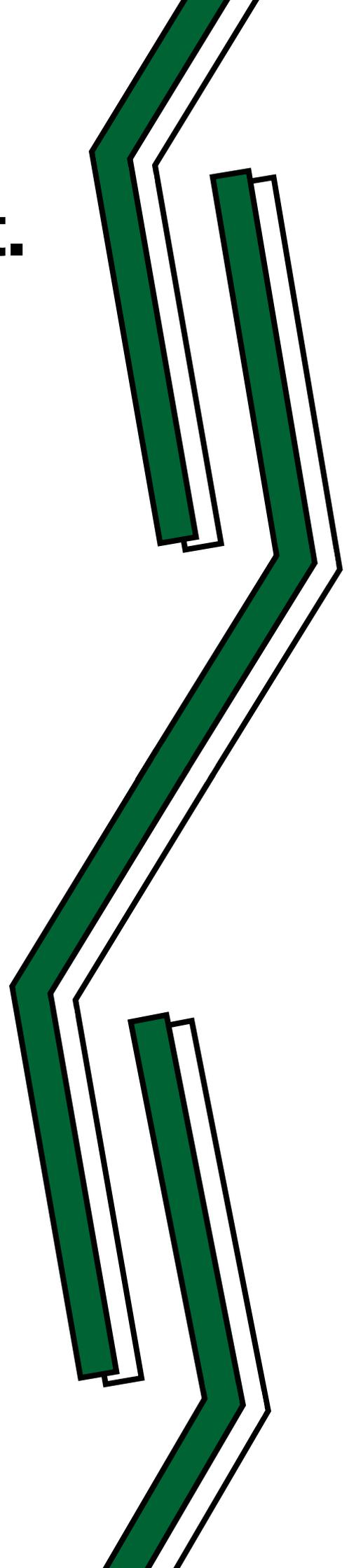
Portfolio Content.

Saving the best until last, what do you actually put in your portfolio? I get asked this question a lot and if I didn't have my university projects to show, I wouldn't have had a clue either!

So, don't worry, I'm here to help if you do get stuck. This chapter will hopefully give you some content inspiration as I'll be providing some creative, unique and fun ideas that you can use within your very own portfolios.

“ Consistent, high-quality, and engaging content impacts audience decision-making more than any other technique. ”

Rebecca Riserbato, HubSpot.

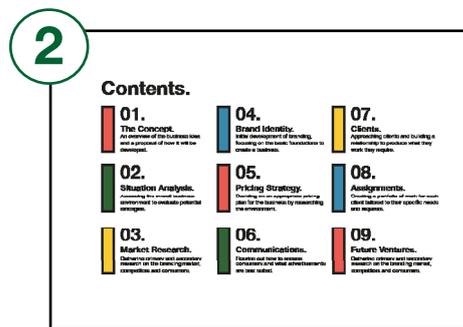


Contents page.

If you're creating an online portfolio this might not be as relevant however, every single print or digital portfolio **NEEDS** a strong table of contents - it sets everything up for success!

Here's a few examples from me...

*All of these pieces of work are my own from university.



***Top Tip:** When designing your contents page, don't worry about it being perfect - just use it as a rough guide. You can always come back to edit at the very end if anything does change!

Here's a step-by-step guide.

Step 1: Determine your audience.

With any portfolio, there's an audience. Mine happened to be lecturers, so the above contents pages were heavily influenced by the development process of a project. Knowing your audience helps you create a timeline - what do they want to see first? Think of the journey.

Step 2: Plan how your content fits together.

Have you covered everything? Does the order of content make sense? You need to put thought into the structure so that it flows naturally.

Step 3: Nail the design.

Use bold page numbers, chapter titles and include a short overview so readers can clearly understand what's what in terms of content!

Content ideas.

One of the most common questions I get is, but what do I actually put in a portfolio? If you don't have any existing work from previous projects in work, university etc. there's still ways you can create content for your portfolio don't worry! **Here's a few ideas:**

1.

Develop a creative campaign for your dream client.

Is there a brand you love or aspire to work for? Develop a campaign for that brand - it could be a collaboration, new product launch, social competition... include marketing outputs & content creation!

2.

Create a rebrand concept for an existing business.

Pick a company and put your own creative spin on their existing brand identity. You could create new brand guidelines, logo design, brand imagery etc. just make sure to give it a fresh, new look.

3.

Develop your own business or marketing strategy.

Base your portfolio around a hypothetical business venture or one you actually aspire to start! This is what I did for my portfolio to create flo. - it means you have full control of the outputs you create!

4.

Build your own personal brand.

Create your own personal brand presence and use it within your portfolio. Include the development of your own website, business card, brand video - you could also interview industry experts!

5.

Plan a hypothetical event in the your field of interest.

Create a marketing plan for a brand event of your own! Brainstorm some concepts for a brand you love and bring one to life with an event timeline, marketing outputs, invitation designs, PR ideas etc.

The sky really is the limit with portfolio content. You don't have to stick to these ideas, this is just for inspiration if you do get stuck! The key: do what you enjoy.

Portfolio Checklist.

Here's a little checklist I've put together that you can use as reference so you don't forget anything when creating your portfolio!



Cover Page/Intro

A section to welcome readers - title of the project, name & blurb.



White Space.

Make use of white space - you don't need to fill every single page with content.



Table of Contents

Sectioning your work/project with chapters or page titles.



Tone of Voice.

Be professional but show your personality. Also make SURE to write in the same tense!



Page Markers

Make sure to include page numbers for clarity & structure.



Spelling.

Triple check your spelling and grammar - TRUST ME on this one.



Check Font Size.

Digital & print are very different. Double check your font sizing.



Sub-headings.

Use sub-headings to categorize your work or projects within your portfolio.



Image Quality.

Make sure you use high quality imagery to avoid blurry visuals.



Layout.

Don't make every single page the same and keep the presentation simple.



Consistency.

Choose a series of fonts, colours and designs to create your style.



Format.

If you decide to send a digital version of your portfolio, download it as a PDF file.



Content Variation.

Have a range of outputs to showcase a broader skillset.



Conclusion.

With print portfolios, don't just have a blunt ending - finish with a short & sweet conclusion.



Columns.

Avoid having long sections of text - use columns & paragraphs.



Referencing.

If you're using external imagery/info from other sources, make sure to reference the original creator.



Research & Quotes.

Highlight key information or stats so it captures peoples attention.



Length.

Portfolio length is completely down to you. They showcase your skills regardless of size.

@flo.create_



Thanks for reading!

I hope you've found this guide useful so you can build and develop your very own portfolio.

Follow me on socials to keep in the loop for even more portfolio tips...

 [flo.create](#)  [flo.create](#)  [flo.creative](#)

