

# CareerSMARTZ

***A highly effective career success strategy built around “Find a need and fill it.”***

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## **Milestone 4: Define and Promote Your Talent (i.e. Your Professional Brand) Checklist 4.2 (Promote Your Talent)**

### **Objective**

Your objective in this Checklist is to create an online career portfolio to promote your career-related talent (aka your Professional Brand) to the world. Publicizing your talent is so important that we've given it its own separate Checklist. Other materials that you will need to market your talent will be addressed in a future Checklist.

### **Remember**

Your support team is a powerful source of information and assistance. Don't hesitate to call upon them when attempting to complete this Checklist.

### **What is an online career portfolio?**

An online career portfolio is a website on the Internet where you can display (using photos, graphics, audio, videos and text) information about your career-related talent for viewing by interested parties, especially potential employers.

A wide variety of people; such as career professionals of all kinds, artists, musicians, photographers, entertainers, speakers, politicians, skilled craftspeople and technically trained workers all use an online career portfolio today to promote their talent to the public as of means of soliciting offers of employment.

Portfolios are modern, electronic multimedia versions of traditional business cards and resumes, with the added feature of being accessible by anyone around the globe.

### **Rationale**

Why create an online career portfolio? Every successful business owner knows that without a marketing strategy, customers will not know about the company's products or services and, as a result, no sales will be made.

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This same concept is true of job seekers. If employers don't know you exist and how you can help them achieve success, you'll never be hired! In today's world, many employers search the Internet looking for talent. If you're not on the Internet, you can't be found!

There is no better method of promoting your talent to the largest possible audience – at the lowest cost - then through the use of the Internet! If displaying your talent online is not part of your personal marketing campaign, then you can expect less success in your future job search.

## **What information is typically contained in an online career portfolio?**

- Your name
- Contact information
- Photo
- Career goal and mission
- Description of your talent
- Desired employment positions
- Employment value (how you can be of value to employers)
- Knowledge and skills
- Educational background
- Employment history
- Volunteer activities
- References and testimonials
- Military history
- Honors, awards and certificates
- And more...

There are no universally accepted “right and wrong” rules regarding what you should include in your online portfolio. However, the common belief is that the more information you include about your career-related talent and how employers can benefit from hiring you, the more effective it will be.

## **Materials needed**

- Checklist 4.2 (the document that you're reading now)
- A blank, printed copy of Form 4.2 (My Online Talent Portfolio)
- A computer with access to the Internet

## **Completion time**

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Varies depending upon how much time you elect to devote to the activities suggested in this Checklist. However, this Checklist cannot be completed in just one sitting. Expect to spread the work out over several sessions. We recommend that you devote one hour for reviewing sample online website builders, one hour for creating the first draft of your portfolio, one hour for getting second opinions, and one hour for revising the first revision of your portfolio.

**Follow the steps below to complete this Checklist.**

1. Let’s view some portfolio examples. Enter the phrase “Online career portfolio examples” into Google.com. When the search results page is displayed, select the “Images” option at the top of the page. Note that some portfolio examples are “text-only” portfolios, while others contain multi-media elements, such as photos, graphics, and videos. It is strongly recommended that you add multi-media elements to your portfolio to make it more attractive and appealing.

Examine 10-15 multi-media portfolios to get a good understanding of what content is included and how it is arranged.

**Do this now.**

2. Understand your options for creating an online portfolio.

There are two main tools for creating online career portfolios. One is to use an Internet service that specializes in producing only online career portfolios. These websites typically provide you with a series of template styles depending upon your profession and fill-in-the-blank fields for entering your data. They also typically include a checklists of items from which you can select the kind of information you wish to enter into your portfolio.

These websites are usually easy to use, but often come with restrictions. For example, they may not offer a category of information that you want to include. Some may limit the amount of text or files that you can add to your portfolio, or include unwanted advertising ads in your portfolio. These websites may or may not charge a fee.

***Even though these websites sound ideal for building a portfolio, we recommend another option (see below) due to the restrictions outlined above.***

The second type of tool that you can use is an Internet service that allows you to create any kind of website. These generic website builders are not just for building portfolios. They

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are used to create a wide variety of sites, such as personal, professional, business, organizational, religious and commercial websites.

However, the advantage of using these website builders is that they allow you to add whatever information you desire. They are typically template driven for easy and quick building, allow editing of the templates, and often come with free technical support. Some are free and some require a reasonable fee.

***Beyond the advantages listed above, using these websites will help you develop Internet skills which employers find very valuable and often require for employment.***

Our favorite website builder is [1and1.com](http://1and1.com).

Other website builders include:

[GoDaddy.com](http://GoDaddy.com)

[Webbly.com](http://Webbly.com)

[Wix.com](http://Wix.com)

Search Google.com if you wish to find more website builders!

3. Try before you buy! Try out several of the sites listed above or that you have found from your own research to get a feel for how they work. Also, check out the “How to build an online career portfolio” videos on [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com). Then decide which tool you want to use to build your portfolio.

***Do this now.***

4. From the options mentioned above, decide which type of website service you prefer to use to build your online career portfolio. If necessary, sign-up (Register) with the service. Next, get a copy of Form 4.2 (My Online Talent Portfolio). Note that Form 4.2 contains the following 5 columns:
  - Information commonly included in an online career portfolio
  - Items I want to include
  - Ready to enter
  - Entered into portfolio
  - Notes

In column (2), check those items that you wish to add to your portfolio.

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## **Do this now.**

Next, gather or create the information that you checked in column (2) and wish to include in your portfolio.

**Do this now.** This may take time, so be patient and come back when completed.

## **Note the following...**

Most website builders offer the option of keeping your website private or public. We suggest that you keep your first draft private until you feel comfortable allowing the general public to view your data.

If you're new to using website builders, don't get frustrated if your first draft is not up to your expectations. Even as easy as these modern website builders are, they still require a learning curve.

Accept that the goal of your first draft is simply to build a basic portfolio with basic information about your talent. Later, with editing, you can refine the look and content of your portfolio.

5. Using the website builder that you have chosen, start building your online career portfolio. Use Form 4.2 (My Online Talent Portfolio) to record your progress.

## **Do this now.**

6. Get a second and third option. After you've created the first draft of your portfolio, we suggest that you do two things:
  - **First**, share with people on your support team that you're developing a portfolio and ask them for suggestions regarding what content should be included.
  - **Second**, meet with a career counselor to review your portfolio and ask for suggestions regarding how to improve your portfolio. ***Considering the importance of your portfolio, this suggestion is highly recommended!***

## **Do this now.**

7. Using Google.com, continuing reviewing examples of portfolios and with continued sessions with a professional career counselor (and advice from your support team members) enhance your portfolio until you are pleased with both its look and content.

## **What's your next step?**

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Now that your talent is public, move on to Milestone 5 (Seek and Secure Employment) to learn how to seek and secure employment in your chosen occupation.

**Need more help? Get the full power of CareerSMARTZ!**

Private, one-to-one career guidance is available from the authors of the CareerSMARTZ program. One-hour counseling sessions are provided via Skype, Hangouts or other video chat services and can be scheduled to meet your time zone. Receive personalized guidance from the convenience of your home, office, or dorm room. Visit [CareerSMARTZ.com](http://CareerSMARTZ.com) for more information.