

Your Portfolio: A New Slant on an Old Subject

By June Campbell

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If you're involved in any sort of freelance, or creative work, you know the importance of a portfolio. You need an efficient way to show your best work to potential clients, customers and employers. This article discusses a new approach to creating your portfolio and new ways to portray your creative work to best advantage.

I don't usually include folksy little anecdotes in my articles. It's not my style. However, this is the exception. A few days ago, I was poking around in my local scrapbook store pursuing my favorite hobby. Scrapbooking, for those who don't know, is the activity of creating "memory albums" that are a sort of marriage between a photo album, a scrapbook, and a box full of momentos.

You start with a top-loading or side-loading album with page protectors. Next, you create themed pages using photos, computer printouts, letters, cards, diplomas, brochures, or any other appropriate memento. You give your page a title, add journaling to explain what it's all about, then add various embellishments to create the aesthetic you want. And by embellishments, I'm talking a lot more than good ol' stickers. Today's scrapbookers create special effects with fibre, wire, metallics, beads, eyelits, rubber stamps, mesh, glitter, buttons, ribbon, chalk, calligraphy pens and a whole lot more. It's a creative endeavor, for sure.

Anyway, back to my story. As I was browsing the store, I noticed something unusual. A man was busy matching pictures to colored paper to create a scrapbook layout. In my community, you seldom encounter a scrapbooking male, so I was curious. I asked the man about his project. He replied that he was a furniture designer and was using a scrapbook for his

portfolio. The photographs were images of the beautiful pieces he had designed. This man's scrapbook will do double duty. First, as a portfolio, he will have an attractive and impressive album to show potential clients. Secondly, as a memory album, he will have visual and textual records of the items he has created.

Eureka! What a great idea. I had never realized scrapbooking's potential for portfolio creation.

Any individual (or any business person) who is involved with designing or creating projects could use a scrapbook portfolio to advantage. Furniture designers, inventors, teachers, workshop presenters, construction managers, architects, web designers, software developers, poets, artists, writers, jewelry designers, fashion designers, real estate developers, musicians, chefs, desktop publishers..... If you can depict your projects in words and images, you can display them to good advantage in a scrapbook.

Understandably, people working in electronic fields often opt to use an electronic portfolio. The scrapbooked portfolio is not suggested to be a replacement, but rather an augment. How often have you tried to show a new client your electronic portfolio only to encounter disaster in the form of a hardware of software incompatibility or a fuse that blew or a VCR with a missing cable? Or, how about the times when your "one on one" meeting with the prospective client ended up with eight people crowding around your laptop to view your presentation? The scrapbooked portfolio would be a great backup solution to this scenario, I'm thinking.

A picture is worth a thousand words, as they say. I'm including a few links that will take you to scrapbooking web sites. There you will be able to view a number of sample layouts so you get an idea of what I'm talking about. I'll warn you in advance, most of the layouts you'll find will be depicting family events, kits, pets, vacations and so forth. You'll have to call upon your imagination to visualize how the same techniques could be used for portfolio creation. But we already know you have plenty of imagination, don't we? You wouldn't be needing a portfolio if you didn't.

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