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| EVENT SUMMARY: | CREATING A KILLER PORTFOLIO  |
| EVENT DATE:    | May 25, 2006   |
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| ONLINE:        | <a href="http://www.officepdx.com/resources.php">www.officepdx.com/resources.php</a> |
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The following details a summary of the most common Top Do's and Don'ts in putting together a killer portfolio, based on the three-part panel discussion "Creating a Killer Portfolio" created and held at OFFICE during Spring of 2006 @ OFFICE ([www.officepdx.com](http://www.officepdx.com)). The event asked representatives from Wieden + Kennedy, JDK, Aquent, Nike, ZIBA Design, 52 LTD, HUB Collective LTD and Dark Horse Comics, all based out of wonderful Portland, Oregon, to share their insights. Of note: the owners of OFFICE have put together hundreds of killer portfolios as well as reviewed them, and typically share their insider knowledge with customers as well as offer distinctive portfolio and presentation tools for sale in store and online.

## WHAT TO DO:

### 1. DO HAVE 3 PORTFOLIOS.

Designers should have 3 portfolios: 1) a two-page Introduction PDF (size to 8.5 x 11) 2) a mini print out/leave behind with more project and bio info (OFFICE's M.O. line of presentation tools are gorgeous + cost effective and perfect for an informal interview or leave-behind) and 3) the classic, hardbound "book" that will be brought out in the interview - that may or may not be left behind (OFFICE's Pina Zangaro screwpost covers make great formal portfolios)

### 2. DO PROVIDE DETAIL.

A great portfolio (or marketing kit) provides a great overview with a bio or resume, clients and market sectors, design services and finished work but is no longer than 15 pages combined.

### 3. DO INCLUDE COPY.

Do include copy on each of your projects, with client info, the role you played, the deliverables and challenge/solution. Don't use jargon. What problem did you help them solve? How did you help them do business better? What were the goals? Were you hired back? Is this a long-term client, conceptual work or a new client?

### 4. DO CREATE YOUR OWN PROJECTS.

If you want to expand your project work, it's absolutely appropriate to, on your own, make a project to show your problem-solving skills. For example, on your own and unpaid, redesign a street lamp, or redesign a NIKE point of purchase or display. You don't have to wait for an actual job from a paying client. Unpaid work, unpublished work, works for non-profits are always appropriate - if applicable to your interview.

### 5. DO SHOW (ONLY) 1 PROJECT PER PAGE.

Show one project per page - typically 3 photos or 1 one great photo of your project work. If environmental/ interior/architecture - show broader sweeping panoramic shot in 11 x 17 format.

### 6. DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

Get informed on your potential employer or client needs - go to their website, search their press release section, and/or articles in business publications to find out what's new and what's a current challenge (and you could help them address it).

**7. DO ASK WHO MAKES THE HIRING DECISIONS.**

Do find out who makes hiring decisions – most times, individuals/freelancers/ full time creatives are hired by the design recruiters. Account managers typically hire design studios. Do your homework. In most cases, this is a “who you know” opportunity vs. formal RFP process. Find out how to get on a preferred vendor list, what the process is, and if you can set up an informational interview with some of the account/client services reps.

**8. DO ASK FOR AN INFO INTERVIEW OR TOUR.**

Nike, ZIBA, and most design firms provide tours and/or will let you set up an information interview to have someone (usually HR or design recruiting) review your portfolio (and help you edit it) before making a date for an official interview. Take them up on it. This is the same for individuals as well as studios.

**9. DO EMPHASIZE YOUR PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.**

You don't have to have previous experience working on similar projects (example Sports for Nike) but you do have to have an understanding of the business, and an appreciation for what they do and be a conceptual, unpretentious designer. Clients want to work with and for designers and studios that ultimately, make them look good and are easy to work with.

**10. DO HAVE MANNERS.**

The simple things are often forgotten but always needed – spell checking documents, not using form letters, and sending a hand-written thank you note. Often, these little things are forgotten, but make a big difference.

**11. DO FIND THE BEST PLACE TO SHOW YOUR ART.**

Sketches / Art are appreciated – put them in the back of your portfolio and/or bring your sketchbook and/or comps or real products with you to show process (in case you are asked for it).

## WHAT NOT TO DO:

### 1. DO NOT CREATE AN ONLINE PORTFOLIO

(for individuals only) don't expect that someone will go to your website (for freelancers/individuals). No one has time to review a designer's website (for the most part - design firms are different), so sending a PDF and/or hard copy kit is the way to go.

### 2. DO NOT SEND A CD.

Do not send or leave behind, a CD, a memory stick, etc. It will not be looked at. Also, don't make the files too big, too many or too colorful - find a nice balance that allows someone to easily print out and save your portfolio to get an interview. Don't make them work hard to get basic information.

### 3. DO NOT SHOW ALL OF YOUR WORK.

Do not show all of your work - edit to the most appropriate work and work that you are most proud of. If you want to add more work or your portfolio is feeling light, include sketches or concepts to show conceptual thinking process. Again, a good portfolio has about 15 pages. It's all about quality not quantity. Don't ever put anything in your portfolio that you are not proud of.

### 4. DO NOT "FUDGE" ON THE ROLE YOU PLAYED.

Do not fudge on the exact role you played in a project. Portland is a small town (as is the design community at large) - be clear and honest and unashamed.

### 5. DON'T BE AFRAID TO INTERVIEW THEM.

Don't be afraid to bring your own list of questions - the interview is as much as you interviewing "them" as they are you.

### 6. DON'T BRING MOUNTED SAMPLES IN A BOX.

Don't bring a big box of mounted samples or comps and present each page individually. Bring a portfolio book is interesting and concise, one that allows the review your portfolio quickly and ask you questions about projects that interest them.

## PANELISTS:

- 52 LTD – Steve Potestio
- Aquent – Jennifer Jacobs
- Dark Horse Comics – Lia Riabacci
- JDK – Mike Hyp
- Nike – Stephanie Milne, Ray Butts, Allan Brabo, Julie Freeman
- WK – Fritz Mesenbrink
- ZIBA – Lindsay Wolff Logsdon

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ABOUT OFFICE:

OFFICE ([www.officepdx.com](http://www.officepdx.com)) is a specialty design store, art gallery and event space created by design professionals for design professionals and appreciators. OFFICE owners have more than 10 years of expertise creating killer portfolios, reviewing portfolios and pitching new business. As such, [www.officepdx.com](http://www.officepdx.com) specializes in providing a vast array of distinctive portfolio and presentation gear, among other quality products for the modern worker.