

Organizing Before Writing Your CTSM Portfolio – From Simple to Complex

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Writing your portfolio can seem daunting - seven sections to write, hours of sessions to remember and draw from, and then formatting and making it your own. It doesn't have to be daunting though. Today's busy, multi-tasking professionals may not always have the luxury of tackling a project in a very linear fashion. **Remember: A portfolio can be broken down in much the same way.**

Here is the out-of-the-box way that my portfolio grew, almost organically, into a finished piece that I was very proud of. I try to look at problems in very unique ways. I like to **start small with foundations and work out from this starting point.** By adding layers of complexity, I find it easier to build my complex solution to my problem. This process will also naturally help you focus on one area at a time, while still keeping the whole solution, and end objective in mind

Start by remembering what the portfolio is meant to accomplish - demonstrating how you applied what you learned from the program. This is where I started. I **looked through my class handouts and pulled out quotes of what really resonated** with me. This didn't take long, I knew what resonated with me because it was usually highlighted with lots of program specific ideas scribbled next to it! You should be able to instantly see how these manifested in your program. **These quotes helped guide me through a loose framework of what I was going to write about in each section. They became my starting outline that I used to expand my portfolio.** I found it tremendously easy to fill in the gaps from this outline.

Quotes turned into sentences. Sentences became paragraphs. These concepts and demonstrations needed introductions, and then I began elaborating on these demonstrations. Before I realized it, I had entire portfolio sections written. Each completed page instilled me with confidence and achievement. My outline ensured that I kept consistency throughout my portfolio. For a written piece such as portfolio, it can be easy to drift into un-related areas that, while impressive, did not help me articulate the event I was demonstrating in my portfolio.

When I was finished, I went back to ensure that I had matched what was required for each section? In most cases I did. There were some that needed a little refinement. At this stage, it is easy to shift the direction of a piece of your manuscript.

Once I knew I had a consistent and well-articulated piece; **then came the fun part, adding graphics, charts, pictures; things that added a layer of visual acuity to my portfolio.** Consider this your polishing step!

For those of you who are nearing completion of your studies and considering when you will begin your portfolio, the time is NOW. It took me many years to complete all my required classes. But I was thinking about how I would tackle my portfolio all along. From reports you write at work to event plans, booth project trackers to marketing assets. Those all-important measurable objectives take time to implement, gather, and analyze. You know when you made something better because of something you remembered in a CTSM class. Tuck a copy of this excellent work away in a folder. Gathering this information ahead of time helped me feel more

prepared to start my outline because I knew the outline I wanted to form. Added benefit: It will make it easier to add polish to your portfolio when the time comes.

Step by Step guide

1. Start early; tuck ideas away in a folder for easy reference
2. Review portfolio requirements
3. Pull out quotes from class handouts and notes
4. Form a rough outline with quotes that resonate with you and your trade show/event you choose to focus on
5. Begin to write introductions, demonstrations, and elaborate on how you injected these quotes into your program
6. Review your manuscript for section requirement alignment
7. Polish with graphics, charts, pictures to further articulate your manuscript