



ESL Podcast 876 – Preparing a Professional Portfolio

GLOSSARY

ta da – a sound one makes when one is proud of something, is introducing or presenting it for the first time, and wants others to see and admire it

* Ta da! What do you think of the new drapes on the windows?

portfolio – a collection of one's work, showing one's best pieces, often used to secure work with new clients

* Before hiring a webpage designer, make sure you ask to see his portfolio.

sample – one piece of something, meant to show what other pieces are like

* Anyone who applies for the job has to send in at least two professional writing samples.

highlight – the most impressive, important, or interesting part of something

* Your presentation was the highlight of the three-day conference.

groundbreaking – innovative; new and interesting, not yet done by anyone else; pushing the boundaries of what is expected or accepted

* She's doing groundbreaking research that could lead to a cure for cancer.

fact sheet – a one-page written document that provides basic information about someone or something, usually as a bulleted list (not with full sentences or paragraphs)

* The company has a fact sheet on its website, and investors who want more detailed information can call the manager.

accomplishment – achievement; something that one has done, especially something that was difficult and required a lot of effort and determination

* Getting a book published is a major accomplishment. Congratulations!

client – a person who purchases products or services from a company or an individual, especially when talking about consulting services

* Krystal is a technical writer, and most of her clients are software developers.

award – an honor or prize given to a person in recognition of his or her accomplishments or outstanding performance

* In elementary school, Jill received an award for perfect attendance because she hadn't missed any days of school.



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resume – a written document, usually one or two pages, presenting an individual's name, contact information, professional experience, education, skills, and awards or honors, used to search for a job; a curriculum vitae

* According to her resume, she used to be the human resources director for the hospital.

testimonial – a written or audio statement from a customer or recipient, evaluating the product, service, or experience interacting with a company, used to encourage other people to do business with the company

* The first few pages of the book are filled with testimonials from business leaders who say it is one of the most important books they have ever read.

satisfied – pleased with something because it has met one's expectations, without any complaints

* If you were satisfied with our service tonight, please fill out this brief survey to let our managers know.

a work in progress – something that is still being worked on and is not yet finished; something that is under development

* They've been renovating their home for years, and it is still a work in progress.

blank – without any words, images, or other marks; without any information; not written or drawn upon

* Let me give you a blank check, and you can fill in the amount I owe you once the work is completed.

thin – without very much substance or content; sparse; partly empty

* The actors give a good performance, but the plot is a little thin.

room for growth – with opportunities for improvement and/or expansion; not yet finished or complete

* We've increased sales significantly this past year, but there's still room for growth.

plenty of – a lot of; much

* We'll have plenty of food, so please bring a friend!



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Chad refer to Melinda’s portfolio as a work in progress?
 - a) Because it shows a lot of her unfinished projects.
 - b) Because there are empty pages in her portfolio.
 - c) Because she isn’t being paid to work on it.

 2. What is on the testimonial page of Melinda’s portfolio?
 - a) Written statements from past clients.
 - b) Nothing at all.
 - c) Logos of the clients she has worked for.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

sample

The word “sample,” in this podcast, means one piece of something, meant to show what other pieces are like: “Would you like to try a sample of our new blue cheese?” A “sample” is also a small amount of something that is tested to determine something about the larger amount: “The scientists are collecting water samples from local lakes and rivers for testing.” When talking about a survey or a questionnaire, a “sample” is a small group of people who answer questions, and whose answers are used to try to understand the larger group: “Each year, the institute interviews a sample of 400 people about their opinions on gun rights.” Finally, when talking about music, a “sample” is a small part of one song that is used to create a new song: “The performer uses samples from many popular folk songs.”

thin

In this podcast, the word “thin” means without very much substance or content, or sparse: “The attorney presented only a thin argument, so he’ll probably lose the case.” The phrase “to walk on thin ice” means to be doing something that is dangerous or risky: “Rebecca knew she’d be walking on thin ice if she ever talked to her mother that way.” The phrase “to vanish/disappear into thin air” means to disappear completely, without an explanation: “Where are my car keys? They couldn’t have vanished into thin air.” Finally, the phrase “thin-skinned” describes someone who is offended or insulted easily: “It was just a harmless joke, but Harold is so thin-skinned that he took it personally and became very angry.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Who Uses Portfolios?

People working in many different professions use portfolios to “showcase” (display; show off) their work. Artists’ portfolios are filled with images of their “sketches” (simple drawings), paintings, and sculptures. “Architects” (people who design buildings), photographers, and “landscape architects” (people who design outdoor areas) also have portfolios with images of their work. It is generally easier for them to present a printed portfolio than to bring their artwork or take the client to the physical “site” (place; location) where their work is displayed.

“Graphic designers” (people who use computers to produce images) and “website designers” (people who create websites) often have “digital” (electronic) online portfolios on their website, so that “prospective clients” (people who might become clients) can review their past work.

“Models” (people whose job is to wear clothing or make-up to help a company sell products) also have portfolios. These are usually books filled with photographs of them on the “runway” (the long, flat surface that fashion models walk on in front of an audience) or in advertisements. Sometimes these portfolios “serve a dual purpose” (have two uses), since they showcase the work of the model and the photographer at the same time.

Some business professionals also have portfolios. These might be a well-organized collection of documents that present their education and experience. For example, a “career portfolio” might contain academic “transcripts” (records of which classes one took at a particular school and what grades one received), work samples, and certificates demonstrating “proficiency” (ability to do something well) in foreign languages or technical skills.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – b; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome English as a Second Language Podcast number 876: Preparing a Professional Portfolio.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 876. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is ESLPod.com. Become a member of ESL Podcast and download the Learning Guide for this episode.

This episode is a dialog between Melinda and Chad about preparing a portfolio of your work. Let's get started.

[start of dialog]

Melinda: Ta da! I'm finally done with my portfolio. Do you want to see it?

Chad: Sure. This portfolio has samples of your work, right?

Melinda: It does, but it's much more than that. It's a presentation of the highlights of my career, with examples of my groundbreaking work.

Chad: Uh, okay, if you say so.

Melinda: Let me show you. The first page is a fact sheet of my major accomplishments, clients, jobs, and awards. That's followed by a more detailed resume. And then, there are some samples of my best work, and finally, there are testimonials from satisfied clients.

Chad: But this is still a work in progress, right?

Melinda: What do you mean?

Chad: Well, your fact sheet is a half a page long. There are two samples of your work, and there are no testimonials, just a blank page.

Melinda: I admit that it's a little thin right now, but what do you expect? I just started working in the field six months ago. This portfolio shows that there is room for growth.



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Chad: Yeah, plenty of room.

[end of dialog]

Our dialogue begins with Melinda saying to Chad, “Ta da!” That’s an expression, “Ta (ta) da (da),” that we use when we are proud of something that we’re presenting to someone else – like, “Here’s something that I painted,” or “Here is my song,” and you show it to the other person because you are proud of it, because you think you did a good job. You say, “Ta da!” – means “Here it is. Look at this!”

Melinda says “I’m finally done with my portfolio.” A “portfolio” is a collection of your work, usually the best things that you have done. If you’re an artist, for example, it would be a collection of your pictures; if you’re a photographer, of your photographs; if you’re a writer, perhaps, of some of the things that you’ve written – any collection of your work that you use either to give to someone who may give you a job – a potential employer – or to give to someone who might want to hire you. So, if you’re an architect, you might have a portfolio of the plans that you’ve drawn of buildings to show to someone who might want to hire you to work for them.

Melinda has a portfolio. She asked Chad if he wants to see it. Chad says, “Sure. This portfolio has samples of your work, right?” “Samples” (sample) is one piece of something that is used to represent a larger group. A sample, in this case, would be one of the things that Melinda has done. An “example,” is another way of saying this.

Melinda says, “It does.” My portfolio does have samples of my work. “But it’s much more than that. It’s a presentation of the highlights of my career, with examples of my groundbreaking work.” The “highlight (highlight)” of something is the most important or most interesting part of something, the best thing among a group of things. “The highlight of the evening was when I told a joke and everyone laughed.” That probably wouldn’t be the highlight of the evening, but that would be an example of what I think is the most important thing that happened during that event. The portfolio has “highlights,” or some of the best things that Melinda has done in her career, in her work experience. “With examples of,” she says, her “groundbreaking work.” “Groundbreaking” is something that is new, something that is interesting, something that no one else has done before.

Chad says, “Uh, okay, if you say so.” What Chad is saying here really is that he thinks Melinda might be bragging a little bit. Melinda might be saying how



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important she is and of course, no one likes to listen to someone else tell them how important they are. So Chad doesn't really like the way that Melinda is describing herself.

Melinda says, however, “Let me show you.” Let me demonstrate to you by letting you look at something. The first page of her portfolio is a “fact sheet of my major accomplishments, clients, jobs and awards.” A “fact (fact) sheet (sheet) is just what it sounds like – a sheet of paper, a piece of paper, that lists certain important facts about you or about a company or about whatever is the subject of that particular report. In this case, it's a list of the Melinda's “accomplishments, clients, jobs and awards.”

“Accomplishments” are things that you have done – achievements – usually things that are important. It might be, for example, publishing a book. That might be an accomplishment, something that you have done that you're proud of, that's important. “Clients” (clients) are the people who have bought things from you, either your products or your services. A client is the same thing as a customer, someone who buys something from you. It's used more in professional occupations like lawyers, for example, have clients, whereas, if you work at a store, you would just talk about your customers.

Melinda's fact sheet has a list of her clients, jobs, and awards. An “award” is a prize or an honor given to someone to recognize some good thing that they have done. Maybe they were the best salesman of that month, or maybe someone was the fastest runner in their high school. They might get an award for that. Usually, an award is either a metal or, perhaps, what we would call a “trophy” (trophy). A “trophy” is sort of like a small statue really that people give as an award. An award might also just be a piece of paper that says you have won this award.

Melinda says that the fact sheet that she has is followed by a more detailed resume. When we say it's “followed by,” we mean that after the fact sheet, perhaps underneath it in the portfolio, as you open up the folder where she might have this information, you'd find a resume. A “resume” (resume) is a written document showing your work and education. It's used if you are applying for a job. It's a summary of the places you've worked, the schools you've attended, the things that you've done.

Melinda then says, “And then there are some samples of my best work, and finally there are testimonials from satisfied clients.” A “testimonial” (testimonial) is a written statement or perhaps an audio or video recording from a customer who is happy with whatever they purchased. A “testimonial” usually is a letter or an



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email that someone sends a company that says, “Wow, I really loved what you sold me. I really love this thing that I purchased from you, I bought.” “Satisfied clients” would be clients who are happy, who are pleased with something, who are pleased with or happy with whatever they bought from you.

Chad says, “But this is still a work in progress right?” A “work in progress” (progress) is something that isn't completed yet. It isn't finished. You haven't done everything you need to do. Melinda says, “What do you mean?” Chad says, “Well, your fact sheet is a half a page long.” In other words, it's not very long. It's just one half of a piece of paper. He says, “There are two samples of your work” – which isn't very much – “and there are no testimonials, just a blank page.” “Blank” (blank) here means empty, without any words, without any photos, nothing on it. So, she doesn't have any testimonials and she only has two samples of her work.

Melinda says, “I admit that it's a little thin right now.” When she says “it's a little thin,” she means there isn't much in there. There isn't a lot of content. There is not a lot of substance. “But,” she says, “what do you expect?” That question, “What do you expect?” means you should not be surprised. “I just started working in the field” – in this kind of job – “six months ago. This portfolio shows that there is room for growth.” The expression “room for growth” (growth) means that you have opportunities for improvement, that it's not finished, it's not complete. You still have a lot more that you can accomplish. Chad says, “Yeah, plenty of room.” “Plenty (plenty) of something” is a lot of something – much. “We have plenty of food.” We have a lot of food. Melinda has “plenty of room for growth,” meaning she hasn't really accomplished very much so far. So, of course, she can only do better in terms of the things she puts in her portfolio.

Let's listen to the dialog this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialog]

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Chad: Yeah, plenty of room.

[end of dialog]

We thank our scriptwriter for her groundbreaking work. I speak, of course, of the wonderful Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

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