

CREATING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

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CREATING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

The key to creating good promotional materials is learning how to talk--and write-- about yourself and your work. There are different kinds of promotional pieces that are used for different purposes and are appropriate in different circumstances. They are:

- a brief biography
- a personal statement
- an artistic statement
- a resume
- photographs
- a brochure
- a portfolio

These are pieces that you may work on over a period of time, refining and modifying them as your needs for promotional materials change and as you build your business.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

A short biographical statement is handy for newspaper or magazine interviews and articles, for brochures, for catalogs and festival programs. This differs from the resume in that it is not a list or a chronology, but a few paragraphs about you and your life -- what you feel is important for people to know about you so that they can better appreciate your work. For example,

"I am a third-generation basket maker. I learned to make pack baskets from my grandfather and my two uncles who settled in the North Country in 1910."

THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement is a short statement about how and why you became an artist, craftsperson, or performer, and why you do the kind of work that you do. Make it short and honest. The purpose is to tell something about *what your work means to you*, how it is a part of your life and the traditions of your family, community, region etc. This statement can be

used in a variety of promotional pieces such as brochures, and press releases, or as part of an exhibition or booth display.

THE ARTISTIC STATEMENT

This is a description of your work. Pick out the most important elements of your work and state them simply and directly. This *description* can be used in your brochure, on cards, as a short statement in a catalog or in a festival brochure. The "personal statement" is about you and what you do; the artistic statement is about what you create, for marketing purposes:

“Traditional forms and patterns in locally dug clay.”

THE RESUME

A **resume** is a list of credentials. Credentials can be formal or institutional, including degrees, major exhibitions, awards, grants, commissions and/or public performances, or informal, relating to life experience, technical expertise, or personal activities that inform or are a part of your work. A *career summary* is a paragraph or two which highlights a few of your major credentials. Your resume should list everything that relates to your work, in the following order:

- Basic personal data: may include birth date and place, marital status, children, where you live and have lived, general work experience.
- Formal credentials: education, exhibitions/shows/performances, festivals, workshops, grants and awards.
- Personal credentials: special interests, hobbies, travel or other interesting or unusual experiences, persons who have influenced your work.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs of you and your work are essential marketing tools. Black and white photographs are the most practical and the cheapest. You will want some to submit with press releases, and photographs to keep in your portfolio to show to dealers. You may also wish to consider using photographs in your brochure or on cards. Photographs of you at work, as well as good high contrast shots of some of your individual pieces will be the most useful to you. Keep several copies of your best photographs on hand at all times, so that you will be prepared to provide them upon request. They should be identified on the back as to

date, place, subject of photograph (in pencil or on a separately typed label) and name of photographer, and stored in a closed envelope in a cool dry place.

If you are entering a "juried" (competitive) show, you will be asked to submit three (3) to five (5) slides of your work with your show application. If you wish to have these returned to you, be sure to include a post-paid self-addressed envelope and a written request that the slides be returned to you after jurying.

THE BROCHURE

A brochure is a helpful, but not essential, marketing tool. It may be any size, and may be printed on one side of a single sheet or card, or it may be printed on two sides and folded in panels.

Before designing your brochure, you must decide what you want it to do:

- Will it be your catalog?
- Will it explain your traditional art form?
- Will it be used in conjunction with a performance, tour, demonstration, or exhibit?
- Is it an educational tool?
- Will it interest people in visiting your studio/workshop?
- Will it sell your products?
- How will it be distributed?

Once you have decided what you want your brochure to accomplish, you can begin to think about what it will look like. Try to keep your brochure simple and inexpensive, as it may need to be updated from time to time.

A good brochure will include the following:

- At least one **example of your work**. It should be in sharp focus, showing the entire composition against a simple background, with the object square with the camera (not slanted or at odd angles which will cause distortion), in black and white. A good, simple black line drawing can also be effective.
- A short description of your work (**artistic statement**)
- **Hours open** and simple **directions** to your shop/studio

Optional:

- **photograph of craftsperson or performer**

- **map** giving location of your studio/workshop
- an insert providing **product description, prices and an order form.**

Plan a budget based on how much you have to spend. Consult local printers for estimates and advice on paper and ink combinations and type styles. Your costs will include typesetting, layout and/or design work, paper, ink, the number you will have printed, and mailing or other distribution costs.

You may find that you have to scale down your design plans to meet your budget. Perhaps including a photograph will be too expensive for your first brochure. Colored inks, and using more than one color of ink (even if one color is black) is more expensive than plain black. Paper stock varies in price; you may have to use a less expensive paper.

Remember, your goal with a brochure is to have something simple, attractive, easy to read, and which provides the information you want people to know about you, your business, and/or your craft/art form. Don't try to be too elaborate. Don't sacrifice substance for style!

THE PORTFOLIO

A *portfolio* is a group of materials -- papers, photographs, drawings, etc. -- which represent your work. It is helpful to have a portfolio to show to new and prospective clients. It is a summation of your career (to date) and helps you to look professional.

Use a large loose-leaf binder, with a plain cover, such as a plain scrapbook or photograph album. The pages should be covered with acetate film to protect and preserve the materials underneath.

Your portfolio should include the following:

- **Promotional materials** such as your resume, brochure, card, etc.
- **Invitations or catalogues from shows, fairs or festivals** in which you have participated, particularly those which include your name and/or photographs of you and/or your work.
- **Reviews** of your work, shows and/or festivals in which you have participated.
- **Feature articles** from newspapers or magazines, including the name of the publication and the date the article appeared.
- **Photographs of you.**
- **Photographs of your work.**

Reviews, articles and photographs look neater if you clip them, arrange them on 8 1/2 x 11 paper and photocopy them -- they don't "dog-ear" or yellow. Update your portfolio at least once a year. Keep information and photographs current. You can keep old and out-of-date pieces in a separate file. Do not keep mementos, souvenirs and snapshots in your portfolio. Remember, this is not a scrapbook but a professional tool.

Plan your promotional information and materials carefully. All of them should fit together! Statements you write for press releases can also be used in your brochure and/or portfolio. Photographs from your portfolio should also reproduce well for a brochure or for newspaper publicity. "Putting yourself on paper" in an organized way can save you time and effort, and can really help you sell yourself and your work!!