

Power To Your Portfolio

In the current jobs market the pressure to shine in interviews has intensified and an essential part of selling yourself as a must-hire hairdresser is your portfolio presentation.

Providing photographic evidence of your technical ability and vision can be a daunting prospect, but do it well and it'll endorse your credentials as the standout candidate.

Snap decision

With so much riding on the outcome, putting together a portfolio can be daunting, irrespective of your levels of experience, and it's easy to over-think the process and be panicked into including every Polaroid you possess. As a rule the recipe for success is to be selective - quality will always count for more than quantity, providing you show evidence of ability across a range of skills – and keep it varied. Limit yourself to a maximum of 20 images and take time and trouble over the editing process. Make a selection and mull it over for a day or two so as to be certain it's the strongest body of your work available. Putting it off until the day of the interview is a rookie mistake.

Picture perfect

Cropped head and shoulders close-ups are the preferred format for showing off your hairdressing skills. Trying to be too clever with angles or lighting, or directional with make-up or clothing can seriously shorten the lifespan of your pictures - nothing dates as rapidly as high fashion. If professional models are beyond your means make this less obvious in your imagery by relaxing your clients, children or friends in front of the camera, so they look more natural.

Make an impact

To make the strongest impact, start and finish with the best examples of your most recent work. Take your prospective employer on a reasonably brief, but illuminating, pictorial journey through your career highlights. Communicate your grasp of the classic techniques fundamental to creating commercial and contemporary styles as well as showcasing your ability to produce cutting-edge looks.

Peerless presentation

This is the digital age and so emailing attention grabbing PDFs, CVs and jpg images is second nature for young hairdressers, but the traditional concept of an A4 size or larger loose leaf binder filled with a selection of page mounted glossy prints works best in face-to-face interviews. Sloppy presentation will distract from the content. Dog eared pages, scruffy captioning, crooked photos, spills and spots of glue all highlight chinks in your professionalism, which are bound to count against you in an industry where precision is everything.

Word up

Prepare to talk confidently, but concisely, about the inspiration and techniques behind each image. Speak from the heart and explain your concept and thought processes with passion and conviction.

More ways to make your portfolio a page turner

Top tips for success:

1. At Francesco Group we're generally looking for evidence of a strong foundation in the classics so it's always best to show your understanding with some classic images. Don't be afraid to show your personality though, we're not looking for robots.
2. If you're applying to work in the salons as a stylist, snapshots of your best work are sufficient, but a good looking model will always improve the image.
3. If you're applying for an education or senior creative position then the more professional your book looks, the better, and use professional models all the way to really sell your skills.
4. The most common mistake made with portfolios is cramming too much in for the sake of it. Be objective: don't be too emotionally attached to images because they're from your first shoot for instance. You want to show your strengths and a variation of skills.
5. Know your audience. Think about what position you're applying for and what you want to say about yourself and include the hair work you're passionate about and that represents you professionally in the best possible way.