

Blackstone Industrial Designer Talks Portfolio Creation with Design Students

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Steve Puertas, senior industrial designer, Blackstone Products

All Utah State University Outdoor Product Design & Development freshmen and sophomore students take an industry seminar class as a part of their preparation to apply to be a part of the professional program. Students learn concepts of creating a compelling portfolio that represents their work. Frequently throughout the semester, students learn from designers in the industry about what makes a strong design portfolio. Steve Puertas, senior industrial designer for outdoor cooking company Blackstone Products, spoke to the students about the value of a portfolio.

Puertas made it clear that designers are valued in the industry because they have the ability to visualize their ideas for others to see and experience. Mastering tools in order to communicate those ideas is the difference between someone who can make their ideas a reality versus someone who has no ideas at all.

A portfolio is a tool for prospective employees to catch the attention of a hiring manager and land an interview. A portfolio should be clear, easy to navigate and show designs and projects of real value, not ideas and concepts that have been done before. Portfolios should show technical skill, but also creativity and give a glimpse into a designer's thought process.

Puertas spoke on the importance of not only building a beautiful portfolio that represents your best work, but building a network through sharing your projects through Instagram and Behance, a social media platform to showcase creative work. He said portfolios and projects are powerful when they can be shared. Designers are ultimately a brand in and of themselves, and that brand is built through consistently sharing good work and building a network.

Puertas said getting a job in the industry is a combination of factors including building a strong network, developing technical design skills, an ability to communicate design, and creating a positive work atmosphere. Watch the full presentation below.