myFolio Guide to:

Starting Strong

What It Includes:

✔ Resources for starting strong

✔ myFolio Lesson Plan for Starting Strong

✔ Suggestions based on common member goals

✔ Member Insights on starting the year strong

myFolio Lesson Plan:

Starting the Year Strong

Problem to Solve:

Even as the sands continue to shift underneath our feet, starting strong with myFolio this year can help you and your school feel supported and prepared to thrive in the year ahead. We think starting strong is all about being clear:

- clear about where you are headed based on what you have learned
- clear about how you are moving with unity
- clear about continuing to grow, and grow together, for your personal and collective resilience and effectiveness
- clear about how you make space for listening, seeing, and providing space to share and ask for the support you need

We know this will require us to be courageous as Brene Brown reminds us, and that Clear is kind

Resources Needed:

Part 1: 30 minutes of Folio Admin time with some scratch paper, stickies, or your computer
Part 2: 1 hour of Folio Admin time (based on comfort with the myFolio platform) and your computer
Part 3: 1 hour of Folio Admin time and 1 hour with your leadership team
Part 4: 15 minutes of presenting and 45 minutes of work time for faculty and staff

TOTAL TIME NEEDED TO START STRONG: 4.5 hours

1 **Identify where you are starting and where you are headed**

Take a minute and reflect on what you have learned and what you already know about community culture and support:

- What did you learn last year about what faculty and staff need in terms of support?
- What is your vision for faculty and staff support this year?
  - What do you want to keep, stop, and start doing to help employees feel seen, heard, and supported?
  - Use any survey/anecdotal data you may have collected or use these as discussion prompts at a leadership meeting or retreat.

TO DO:

Once you are clear on your direction, write a vision statement that you could post in your myFolio Community Feed or present at opening faculty meetings before asking people to write their Goals.

2 **Build clarity in a unified direction using myFolio**

Once that vision is in place, it's time to align your myFolio process to support it:

- What <u>Themes</u> do you want to use this year to drive myFolio Goal Setting, conversations, feedback to support the vision you have identified?
- How might you adjust the myFolio Goals Wizard prompts to reinforce your vision and connect employee Goals to that vision?
- How might you use the Community Feed to gather the collective wisdom that is already in your school to reinforce your Themes?

TO DO:
- Determine and set-up your Milestones for the year (using your grading and holiday calendar to inform the timing of things)
- Set-up your Themes for the year and consider adding icons to make them stand out.
- Review the Goals Wizard Customization form and adjust the questions as needed.
- Post supporting content and resources related to professional learning and your vision for the year in the Community Feed.
- Don't forget to add and delete users as needed based on your hiring for the year and assign them to their Supervisor.

3   **Create certainty by mapping an action plan for your desired outcomes**

While most plans don't survive their collision with reality (#COVID19), without a plan it is easy for strategic work to fall by the wayside when things get busy. So, it's important to map the steps and block the time in advance – even if you have to shift it later.

TO DO:
- Define/review expectations around <u>Goals Meetings.</u>
- Write some sample Goals based on your Themes for the year (use the samples below as a good starting place).
- Consider how myFolio use and reflection can live in monthly meetings and during other key professional learning moments.
- Create a calendar for your myFolio use this year to track engagement, patterns in the conversations, and desired outcomes.
  - Is using myFolio scheduled as opposed to "homework"?
  - Do we have meetings set aside for supervisors to debrief as we learn about faculty/staff needs and opportunities discovered during myFolio conversations throughout the year?
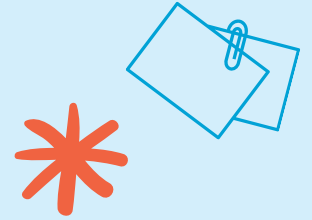
4   **Prepare staff to engage deeply in collaborative learning on myFolio**

Building time into opening faculty meetings sets the tone for myFolio use for the rest of the year. It demonstrates the school's commitment to supporting faculty and staff (in good times and bad), and provides awesome opportunities for collegial conversation.

TO DO:
- Designate time in opening faculty meetings to:
  - review the myFolio platform,
  - present your vision and action plan for the year (expectations for Goals and Goals Meetings, as well as defining Themes and why they matter, etc.)
  - model your own myFolio Goals for the year,
  - give colleagues an opportunity to brainstorm Goals and/or gather resources around Themes and capture them in the Goals Wizard and Community Feed.
- Use these materials when training new hires and refreshing veteran myFolio users alike: <u>Onboarding new faculty and staff members </u>and <u>handout</u>

Goal Ideas

inspired by common Member Goals

While it is important for individuals to own their Goals, sometimes, it helps to have a starting point. Here is a curated list of Goals questions based on common member Goals to use as models and inspiration when facilitating Goal Writing with your faculty and staff:

For Leaders:
- How might I
  - help teachers collect evidence of learning and analyze the formative data in order to maximize student learning?
  - use myFolio as a tool to help build deeper relationships with faculty in order to spur connection and collaboration?
  - encourage and structure peer feedback in a safe and meaningful way in order to increase teacher efficacy?
  - help us to shift from connecting feedback to evaluation in order to deepen our culture of growth?
  - build trust in order to engage in myFolio with openness to grow?
  - improve the quality of feedback I am providing to my department members in order to support their growth goals?
  - shift mindsets about growth in order to improve our ability to support each other?

Faculty members:
- How might I
  - use interactive modeling more effectively in order to help students improve their soft skills when working in groups?
  - strengthen student problem solving skills in order to improve student ability to diagnose a physical problem and apply the proper laws and mathematical steps for a solution?
  - use the "flipped'' learning model in order to increase student ownership over their learning?
  - design and structure class time in order to address the needs of all students?
  - ensure that my students feel a sense of ownership and relevance in their work in order to increase their enjoyment of school?
  - use more inclusive language in order to bring all students into the discussion with a feeling of equity and bring greater understanding to how we affect each other with words?
  - manage my time differently in order to increase the time I spend collaborating with colleagues on our cross-curricular project?
  - use the reciprocal learning strategy in order to help students become more self-directed and improve their communication skills?

Staff members:
- How might I
  - make my message to current donors more concise and mission-driven in order to increase their annual giving?
  - further develop and implement policies in order to continually maintain the safety and security of all faculty, staff, students, parents, and visitors?
  - approach my role from an inclusion standpoint so that all families feel a sense of belonging?

Starting Strong

Ideas from Members

"Consistency has made a difference, and making time - either when we do full faculty and staff conversations or ask the Division Directors to make time during their division meetings. Time is the gift that we have in schools that is in short supply. And so, if you are going to make it [Folio] a priority, and make it something that's consistent, you have to demonstrate it by the time you set aside to make it happen to allow the faculty and staff to dig into it."

– John Bracker, Head of School at Polytechnic School (video starting at 2:02)

"Spotlighting system - encourage your teachers to use it. It makes a huge difference in the school culture! Way more than I would have ever anticipated."

– Jon Cassie, Director of Curriculum and Innovation at TVT Community Day School (CA) (video starting at 3:40)

"Make sure that you've got in the back end the right forms and tools and instruments that you want your faculty to use so that they don't inadvertently use Folio in a way that you don't intend it to be used. So, you have to be intentional about how you set it up, or it's not going to be used as you would like."

– Jon Cassie, Director of Curriculum and Innovation at TVT Community Day School (CA) (video starting at 3:40)

Our Favorite Resources for Starting the Year Strong

Need some food for thought to punch up the cohesive nature of your **Themes**? Check out **Themes** we are seeing across schools as well as a lesson plan for how to solidify your themes with your leadership team for added cohesion and a sense of rowing together as a community. If you need to know how to set up the themes in myFolio, click **here** for instructions.

Most of us are facing **onboarding** new faculty and staff or are starting strong by introducing the features of myFolio. In our calls with you this summer you asked for a lesson plan to use with faculty and staff and here it is: **Onboarding new faculty and staff members** (presentation) and **handout**. If you would also like to provide your faculty and staff access to our online refresher course please sign up here.

Goal setting provides clarity and can also provide a sense of calm in a moment. These handouts might be useful to faculty and staff to collect their thoughts before moving online. Take a look at this **goals overview** as a great handout for faculty and staff. Or, if you are leaning into DEI as a way of creating a deeper sense of belonging, you might find these helpful too: **Intentional and Aligned DEI Goal Setting** or **Racial Equity and Inclusion Goal Setting**

Many collaborative members have been asking: us how to make myFolio a daily or weekly destination? We think the answer lies in the little habits that shape our daily actions. In essence, while myFolio is designed to both support and ignite learning, it begins with forging new routines about how we stay anchored to our intentions. Goal setting is as much about the clarity they provide us as the steps we take to bring them to life. Here is **food for thought** as you think about the habits that define you as a community of faculty and staff.

Speaking of new habits, using myFolio applies to the **leadership team meetings** just as much to the many professional learning moments that comprise your professional learning system. As you map out the leadership meetings for the year, soak in some good ideas from a Collaborative member about shifting your **leadership meetings**.

We have been busy working to ensure myFolio supports and catalyzes growth, collaboration and is a place to be seen and known. Feel like you might have missed the **product update** announcement? Look **here.**

Creating a growth mindset and **culture of growth** was the top goal for Folio Collaborative members that attended the Summer Institute. While we will delve deeply into this topic in our September newsletter, here are two resources to grab and go:
- How to **infuse myFolio** into meetings and build excitement.
- How to **set the tone** for a strong start and how to keep it going through the regular use of **Mindful Minutes.**

Also consider how a group of staff and faculty launch the Community Feed to start the year and spark the power of sharing.

At Folio we are here to help. Connect with us today members@foliocollaborative.org.