

## RÉSUMÉS AND DEMO REELS: IF YOURS AREN'T WORKING, NEITHER ARE YOU!

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What does it take to get a job at a visual effects, computer-animation, or interactive company? This workshop shows how to open the door to interviews, put your life on a one-page résumé, and showcase your talent in a three-minute-or-less demo reel.

The purpose of the résumé, portfolio, and demo reel is to get an interview with someone who makes hiring decisions. Prepare these items with care. Ask others for comments and critiques before you send them.

### RÉSUMÉS

If your resume doesn't work, neither will you. Your résumé should tell who you are: what you know (skills), what you've done (accomplishments), and what you want to do (objective or goal). If you are changing careers, focus your résumé on the job you want rather than the job you have. If your résumé shows a variety of jobs, make sure you have an objective at the top that indicates what job you're seeking.

- Make sure your current, correct contact information is on your résumé. This includes your name, phone number (with current area code), and email address (if you have one). Make sure the contact information is easy to read and easy to find.
- Don't send a URL and expect the employer or recruiter to look for your résumé there. If you want someone to see your résumé, email it as a message not an attachment (Sometimes downloads don't work). If you email a résumé, make sure your name, phone number, and email address are on it. Don't email your résumé as a jpeg attachment (they don't print well).
- Choose a type face that is easy to read. Many companies scan résumés into databases. Select a font where the lower case l and number 1 are different enough that the computer won't confuse the characters.
- List your skills. Be specific. Don't say: "a variety of software packages."
- Avoid huge blocks of type.
- If your résumé is more than one page, put your name, phone number, and email address on each page.
- Use paper that copies well (white or off-white). Don't include graphics or artwork on a gray scale behind the type. It doesn't copy or scan well. It's OK to attach sample art work to a résumé. Always include your contact info on attachments.
- Proofread to eliminate typos and spelling mistakes.

### PORTFOLIOS AND DEMO REELS

If you are an artist, an outstanding portfolio and demo reel are essential. Show your best work, and keep it short. The demo reel and portfolio should be relevant to the job you want. If you want a job as a character animator, show mostly character animation work on your reel.

Your demo reel should contain only your best work, and it should be:

- Representative of your recent work, and it should summarize your skills and talent.
- Of high caliber and quality.
- No longer than three minutes, and it can be much shorter.
- Irresistible.
- Labeled with your name, phone number, and email address. Also include slates on your reel with this information, in case the label falls off.
- A VHS cassette in NTSC format. This is the format almost all companies in North America can view.

Remember: Your audience sees lots of demo reels and portfolios. Keep it moving. Put the very best segment first.

Don't expect your work to be returned. Never send your only copy to a prospective employer, or anyone else.

Include slates or a written breakdown sheet that describe each scene and what you did for that segment. If you did everything, include a note stating that.

A portfolio of life drawing, illustration, photography (if you are interested in lighting), sculpture (if you are interested in modeling), character design, or color design is a big plus. If you have a fine art background, include some of the work with your reel (only your best work).

Whether you submit a demo reel, CD-ROM, portfolio, or all three, remember to always include a résumé and breakdown with it. Before submitting a CD, contact the company to find out if that format is acceptable for submission.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is a career coach and recruiter for such clients as FrameStore, Digital Domain and Walt Disney Feature Animation. She speaks at colleges and universities about animation and computer graphics careers. Her production background includes features such as "Bebe's Kids," the Fox television series "The Simpsons," and the original Amazing Stories episode of "Family Dog." She writes for Animation Magazine and Animation World Network on careers and animation.