



SYDNEY ACM SIGGRAPH PROFESSIONAL CHAPTER HINTS FOR JOB SEEKERS

ACM SIGGRAPH'S MISSION

Our mission is to promote the generation and dissemination of information on computer graphics and interactive techniques.

ACM SIGGRAPH'S PURPOSE

Our purpose is to foster a membership community whose core values help them to catalyze the innovation and application of computer graphics and interactive techniques.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE

The purpose of this resource is to provide basic information and hints to people who want to work in the computer graphics sector in the greater Sydney area. This resource will be extremely relevant to people who are seeking careers as 3D animators, digital effects designers, digital media artists and designers and game developers; these are amongst the most popular options for graduates and people currently working in design or computing who may be seeking a career change.

With a few context changes, the information contained in this document will be equally relevant to people seeking a career in other areas of computer graphics, including architectural / interior / industrial design visualisation, web design, broadcast design and interactive media development, to name but a few.

This resource will also be useful for people who are seeking entry into study at vocational or university level in computer graphics. We hope that you find this document useful. It contains not only hints and tips for things like interviews, portfolios and show reels, but also annotated templates that you can use to develop your own covering letters and resumes.

Remember that our intent is to provide hints and tips only! Our way is not the only way! Make sure that you customise and adapt the ideas that we have presented to you so that your applications remain clear and succinct, yet individual and engaging to potential employers and teachers.

GOOD LUCK!

If you would like to contribute any feedback to improve this resource, or any ideas for future iterations, could you please contact via our website (see address below):

Tracey Sernack-Chee Quee
Treasurer and Membership Chair
Sydney ACM Siggraph Professional Chapter

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RELEVANT WEBSITES:

Digital Labourer's Federation website – sign up to their mailing list to receive announcements about jobs in the Digital Media sector. Excellent links pages: <http://www.dlf.org.au>

Sydney ACM Siggraph Professional Chapter – <http://www.sydney.siggraph.org.au>

SAMPLE COURSE APPLICATION LETTER

Use this as a covering letter to send with any applications and/or portfolios.

<Name of Teacher/Director/Admissions Officer>
<Title>
<Department or Faculty>
<Campus – if relevant>
<Name of Institution>
<Street Address or PO Box Office no>
<Suburb STATE Postcode>

Dear <Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms_Surname>

Please find enclosed my documents relevant to my application for a place in the <name of program>.

My portfolio contains a body of work demonstrating my ability and aptitude for a career as a Digital Media designer / Animator and Digital Effects artist. I have also enclosed my Resume, which includes details of my previous (employment and) Training, relevant to my application.

I look forward to meeting with you and your colleagues at an Interview in the near future, and discussing my passion for a career in the Digital Media / Animation and Digital Effects Industry with you personally.

If you need to contact me to make an appointment for an Interview, please telephone me on XXXX XXXX, after 4pm any day Monday to Saturday. Alternatively, I can be contacted at any time via my email address: <your email address>

Regards,

<Your Name>
<Your FULL Address – including Postcode>
<The best phone number to reach you during office hours>

<Date of this letter>

THE PORTFOLIO

Portfolios are often required for entry into creative courses. Make yours count!

What should you include in your portfolio:

- Your name and contact details on the back of each piece of work.
- Samples of your very best work, positioned at the front of the portfolio.
- Work that is **RELEVANT** to your application. If particular items are specified, stick to these – don't add extras.
- About 10 - 20 pieces of your **best** work.
- Examples of free hand drawings – drawing is the basic building block of visual communication.
- A statement of authenticity i.e. a statement that the work presented in the portfolio is your own work.

What you should NOT include in your portfolio:

- Bulky folders or portfolios!! Use A4, A3 or A2 clear books (as appropriate).
- **You should not include originals at any time - get colour photocopies or scans.**
- CDs or DVDs that do not work! If in doubt – use VHS for showreels.
- Too much work – people will never look at it all.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

What do we want to convey at the interview?

- Your personal presentation will speak volumes. You need to research the Institution or employer so you look like you will fit in. If in doubt go for 'neat' but not 'nerdy'.
- Your interviewer will expect you to be nervous, and should try to put you at ease. If in doubt of how to answer, take a deep breath and look thoughtful.
- Character and Personality – “ I can get along with anyone”
- Interests relating to job /course
- Reliability “I will be there”
- Efficiency “No problem – it will be done by 5pm”
- Punctuality – don't be late to interview!
- Dedication – “I am Passionate”
- Initiative – “I have ideas that will make you money”
- Skills and Knowledge “ I am the one”
- Experience “I have done similar work before”
- Communication skills – written and oral
- Integrity – “I will never let you down”
- Competence “ I can use that equipment”
- Commitment “I will get it done – whatever it takes”
- Pro Active – Team player “What if we did this?”
- Normal no drama “I am easy to get along with”

JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PRACTICE

HINTS AND TIPS:

- Be sure that all answers to interview questions are positive in nature
- If the obvious response to a question is negative, turn it into a positive. For example – look at question 11 “*You’re very young aren’t you? How do you expect to get this job over a very experienced applicant?*” You can turn this around by saying “*The fact that I am young means that I will have fresher and more innovative ideas.*”
- All answers should sell yourself and your skills. Remember that your attitude is important and is reflected in everything from your verbal responses to your body language.
- Be confidential and professional about previous employers. Do not make derogatory or inappropriate comments about previous employers. You never know who knows who, and word does get around!
- Be as honest as you can be – remember – you have to work with these people. If you are asked about a technical matter or a software application you are unfamiliar with, say so. But also point out any prior experience that you have had with alternative applications, as well as your willingness to learn.
- If you get a bad vibe in the interview and decide that you don’t want to work for this company, still try to be pleasant and professional during the interview as your reputation will follow you
- Watch out for stress questions *– these are the ones that are designed to get you angry, and see how you cope with confrontation. If interviewers start asking you stress questions, this means that you have really impressed them! Take a deep breath and answer as best you can without seeming fazed.

JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO PRACTICE continued

Practice the following questions on your friends:

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What do you know about the company? (and you had better know heaps!)
3. Describe a typical day in your working life.
4. How is your work performance appraised in your current position?
5. Tell me some problems that you have had with previous employers?
6. Tell me about your strengths?
7. Can you work under pressure?
8. Tell me about an experience at work that really challenged you
9. Tell me about a situation where your work was criticised
10. Why aren't you earning more at your age?
11. You're very young aren't you? How do you expect to get this job over a very experienced applicant?
12. What are your weaknesses?
13. Do you have any problems dealing with people?
14. You have had a lot of job changes, haven't you?
15. What salary are you expecting?
16. Why have you been out of work for so long?
17. Where do you want to be in five years time
18. *We have someone else that we think is better for the job. What is your response to that?
19. Can you work for us unpaid for a trial period? (Don't do this!!!!)
20. You have five minutes to impress me – start...now.

SUGGESTED RESUME FORMAT

Note: Use a large clear font that scans well e.g. Arial, Helvetica or Verdana. The template is formatted in Arial 11 point. The table format helps keep everything in line.

NAME:	Your <u>full</u> name
ADDRESS:	Your <u>home</u> Address
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	Not work number, preferably mobile or daytime contact
EMAIL:	Your e-mail contact details
EXPERIENCE:	list your experience from the most recent backwards list your duties and responsibilities in each position list achievements you made in each position e.g. your work secured a particular client
EDUCATION & TRAINING:	List from the most recent backward List only <u>relevant</u> training and education for each application
AWARDS:	List any relevant, high profile awards or achievements. Delete if not relevant.
CONFERENCE & ACADEMIC PAPERS:	Ones you have presented at - only if relevant. Delete if not relevant.
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS:	e.g. Membership of Siggraph, AIMIA, DLF or other relevant association
HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:	LIST ONLY IF THEY ARE RELEVANT Tends to annoy most employers as this is not relevant to job
REFEREES:	Give names and Telephone numbers of at least two people Written references are not valued as much as verbal ones
WEBSITE:	Give employers the URL of where they can view your work if relevant. Delete if not relevant.

- You can send applications to an employer by e-mail, either as text or as an attachment. Use a format that they can't tamper with e.g. PDF or at least a format they can open easily e.g. RTF
- Adapt paperwork for each Job Application
- Add new relevant information e.g. further training, work experience etc
- Don't send unsolicited applications, resumes or e-mails to a company unless you know the name of a contact person, so you can follow it up
- Don't submit original concepts or original artwork with your application or resume
- If you send a copy of your DVD or showreel, keep a record of who you sent it to
- Follow up your enquiry by phone or e-mail
- Don't be too annoying or "too cool" – be professional at all times!!

SAMPLE JOB APPLICATION LETTER

**Tailor this letter to suit you and the job that you are applying for!
You can also send a less formal version as an email with attachments.**

Name of Addressee
Position
Name of Company
Street Address
SUBURB STATE POSTCODE

Dear,

I am writing in response to your posting on the DLF list serve of <date> seeking an Assistant Animator.

I have recently completed a course in Digital Media / 3D animation at <insert name of institution>, where I achieved outstanding results in every area of my studies. Prior to commencing this course, I completed other studies in graphic design and small business operations. I have a successful track record as an employee with several high profile employers in the Graphic Design industry.

My technical strengths applicable to this position include:

- 3D modelling and animation using <insert name of software>
- Digital Compositing using <insert name of software>
- Page Layout using Quark Express
- Web Design using Dreamweaver

You may also be interested in my previous experience in dealing with high profile clients, and the management of complex projects.

Amongst my personal qualities are creativity, a capacity for seeing jobs through to completion, good interpersonal skills in dealing with work mates and clients, and knowledge of the importance of good workflow in relation to profit maximisation.

I have enclosed my Resume, together with details of referees <and URLs of Web Sites where you may view examples of my work>. You can contact me during the daytime on 0418 888 888, or at any time via e-mail at fabulous@hotmail.com I look forward to discussing with you the contribution I can make to the further growth of your company.

Regards

Your Signature and Name

Date

ADVICE ON SHOWREEL DEVELOPMENT

The following information was sourced from <http://www.thscratchpost.com/features/nov00/features1.shtml> on 20/10/2006 at 11:05:52 AM

DEMO REEL DO's and DON'Ts

Written by: [Pamela Kleibrink Thompson](#)

A demo reel is a vital marketing tool for animators. The purpose of the demo reel is to get you an interview with someone who can hire you. Prepare your demo reel with care and have someone else look at it and get feedback on it before you send it out.

As a recruiter, I have seen many demo reels. Here's how to make sure yours does the job--to get you that job.

DEMO REEL DO'S

Emphasize your strengths. Make sure your demo reel is relevant to the job you want. If you want a job as a character animator, don't show only compositing work on your reel. Focus on your strengths. If you are not good at modeling, get stock models and concentrate on animation.

Keep your reel short--no longer than 3 minutes. Quality is what counts, not quantity. An animator was hired at a major studio on the merits of his 15 second reel. It had only one shot--but it was incredible. Make sure yours is amazing too.

U.S. companies want VHS reels in NTSC format. Everyone knows how to run a VHS cassette player. Many people don't have the latest and greatest computer so often they are not able to view CD Roms and other media. Not everyone has a DVD player or 3/4 inch machines. VHS in NTSC format is still the preferred format for everyone.

ALWAYS include a resume and a reel breakdown/credit list with your reel. A demo reel breakdown sheet is mandatory and should clearly spell out your involvement with each piece. The breakdown sheet should include a title/description of each shot, what the applicant was responsible for, software used, and any special extenuating circumstances. However, never include "works in progress." You will be judged based on the work on your reel, not what someone might conjecture you can be capable of. A demo reel breakdown is simple with a short sentence for each shot. For example, Shot 1: Project: Wizard of Oz feature film- Modeled melting witch with Maya. Animated witch melting using Softimage. If you did everything on the reel, enclose a note stating that. If you worked on a group project, be clear about your specific role on each shot.

Always include your name, phone # and an email address on your resume, reel and reel breakdown. Include a head and tail slate with your name and phone number and email address on the reel. Make sure your tail slate is at the end of the reel or people will eject it and not see the stuff behind the end slate.

Start with your best work. If you don't impress the viewers in the beginning, they will move on to the next tape.

Customize your reel to the job and company you are applying to, if possible.

Divide your reel into sections and label them with a brief slate: "Character Animation", "Modeling", "Logos", etc.

Include life drawing or other fine art work such as sculpture, painting or photography at the tail of your reel. (strong traditional art or photography, tending towards representational styles with an excellent understanding of 3d form, perspective and quality of light and texture is a plus)

Update your reel every six months and remove old work.

Don't expect to get your reel back. Never send your only copy to anyone.

DEMO REEL DON'TS

Never send masters or originals.

Don't put your best stuff last. The viewer may never get to it.

Don't do a chronological work history. We don't care how you improved.

Don't include early tests or tutorials.

Don't include mediocre work.

Don't use loud, obnoxious music or elaborate sound. Many people turn off the sound when they view reels.

Minimize erotica, satanic and violent material. It limits the companies you can submit to.

Don't include live action film without animation or computer graphics.

Don't send work in progress.

Don't ask for feedback by phone.

Fancy packaging is unnecessary.

Don't shrink wrap your reel. Color bars are not necessary. Don't do countdowns between each shot. Don't repeat shots unless you are showing a "how to" (how elements were added to the shot)--there is a rewind button on the cassette player so don't repeat. I repeat. Don't repeat.

Don't ask prospective employers to view samples or a resume on a web site or email images. Don't send them a web address if you want them to see your resume. Don't make them do the work to give you a job. If you want them to see your resume, email it to them as a message rather than a download. Better yet, fax or mail it to them.

Don't expect your reel to be returned.

Don't send the exact same reel in 6 months later.

We have very good visual memories!

Further information about how to develop your Demo Reel may be accessed at:

http://www.proscenia.net/pronews/discussion/060103_demo_reel.html