

# Demo Reel Suggestions

Duration:

- Student reels should be around 1:00 long. Once you have a couple professional projects under the belt, you should be targeting 1:30-2:00s long

Title Cards:

- Title card needs your name, your (desired) role, and your email
  - This information should be on both the front and back title cards
- You should have your title card at the start of the reel and at the end
- Start title card should be :10 seconds- or enough time to read the entire thing three times at an average pace.
- End should not fade out- so your title card stays up when the movie finishes playing.
  - If, by some strange twist of fate you are actually putting your reel on a DVD or BluRay, add another minute to the title card
- Your title card is your chance to show some personality- it should show **some** personality. It should not be overly flashy.
  - Well chosen, simple fonts with minimal animation are perfectly acceptable and preferable to an FX heavy extravaganza.
  - The point of this is to be legible and get your information out there.

Content

- Your reel should be targeted to a limited number of roles
  - If your reel says Surfacier/Modeler/Lighter/Compositor no one knows artistic work in the reel to pay attention to
  - Did you do all the surfacing in this shot, all the modeling, all the lighting?
- **Reels should have your best work first, and your good work which shows range and diversity of skill last. NO OTHER ORDERING CONSIDERATION.**
- Do not put your most recent work first.
  - If you structure your reel this way you'll be hosed if your most recent work is forced to be bad by schedule, vfx supervisor, etc.
- Do not group a single movies or project all together on your reel unless they're the EXACT same quality.
  - If you ignore the above, and put a movie/project together on the same reel, do not put it in chronologically.
- Do not show entire sequences, show your shots and your shots alone.
- If you did 6 shots on a movie and they're all of Will Ferrell and they all look pretty much the same- only show one.
- Do not show your entire student film as your reel.
- Do not put work stolen from a company on a reel.
- The proper order for a before/after in the reel is: After, Before, After. Always play the after again after showing a before.
  - Not having before/afters in the reel is not a dealbreaker. Most studios with over 50 people have the policy of only allowing Final Work
- Check your reel for shots that might be offensive or NSFW.

Audio

- Do not use the movie/Project audio. It sounds cut off and gimmicky.
- Include some music.
  - While most reels are reviewed with the sound turned off, if the sound is turned on, you want there to be something to hear.
- Do not edit to the beat of the music. Let the shot play out naturally. Once a shot is "over" it's okay to cut on a beat- just don't let it dictate your pace or duration of shots.
  - Most reels are reviewed with the sound turned off
- Pick non-offensive music. Ideally no lyrics, but if lyrics, simple. No metal, grunge, trance, house, techno.
  - Bland and vanilla is the goal for the music

Additional Materials

- A breakdown pdf should accompany your reel when you're a professional
  - For each shot it lists the shot, what you did on it, what studio you were working for on it, etc.

When it comes to getting shots for your reel after you're working professionally:

- DON'T STEAL STUFF OFF THE NETWORK. Don't hook up your laptop, thumb drive etc and start grabbing frames. There's very little upside and a lot of downsides to this. You will be fired and essentially banned from working in the Industry.
- Aggressively watch for your shots in trailers, behind the scenes previews, etc. It is 100% legit to grab a before or breakdown of your shots from these sources.
- Learn how to rip Blu rays. At the very least, you need a high quality final image. This is how you get one without your studio putting a watermark on it. You do not owe your employer that watermark, so unless they give you the final images before the Blu ray release (or if they give you before /breakdowns) don't even bother asking them for anything.
- Don't forget to rip behind the scenes shots from those Blu rays.
- Write a breakdown sheet listing every shot on the reel and what YOU did.
  - Share credit where credit is due.
  - Employers notice when the same slot is on multiple reels and listing credit appropriately shows you are a team player.
  - Not listing credits makes them doubt your entire reel.
    - Ex: Another compositor and I tag teamed on a shot and we both applied to ILM. ILM let us know they noticed and that the breakdown sheets saved us both.