The Definitive Guide
to Becoming a
Successful Animator

Your guide for a successful career in the amazing animation industry.

ROCKET SKY
3D ANIMATION SCHOOL

www.rocketsky.ca

Our professional Opinion.

The following is simply our collective professional opinions regarding the Animation Industry and the Animation Education Industry.

We are a group of professional feature film, TV and video game animators who are quickly approaching our second decade of working in the Animation industry. Our personal journeys through school, our teaching experience and working with various studios as pro's have given us keen insight as to what it takes to be a successful professional animator, and what good studios are looking for when they search for talent.

When we created Rocket Sky, it was our goal to give passionate, career-minded students the best education possible, and ultimately the demo reels to showcase these skills. Why is this important? Because the demo reel is like a resume for animators. It's the most important aspect for any aspiring animator, as it showcases their talent and reflects who they are as professionals.

This 'Success Guide' will assist committed, passionate people who are interested in a long career the TV, Feature Film or Video game industries, in making their career dreams come true.

PART 1. Is Animation for you?

Ask the right questions and you'll get the right answers.

Figuring out what you really want can be achieved by asking yourself the right questions. Why do you want to become an animator? What industry would you like to work in? TV, Feature Films, Video games? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years? What is it about animation that appeals to you?

It's very important that you have a very clear idea of the type of job you would like to have. This might change as you go along as you're exposed to different aspects of the industry, but it is very important to have a distinct goal and to commit to achieving that goal.

Which leads to the most important question…

Are you passionate about animation?

Passion leads to commitment. Commitment leads to dedication. Dedication ensures success. Sounds pretty obvious, but the truth is most students fail because they don't have a clear idea of what they truly want and in most cases this is caused by a lack of passion for the art. With passion, one will develop that clear image of themselves; that DREAM of who they want to be. This passion will create the commitment necessary to dedicate themselves to making sure their dreams come true. Passion, commitment and dedication will lead to success.

So the most important question you can ask yourself is, "Am I truly passionate about becoming an animator?"

Get Informed.

Where does your passion lie? Do you want to be a part of the team that makes your favorite video games? Or is it the character animation of TV and Feature Films that really interest you? Learn about the jobs that are available in the different industries and the skills that are required by each. The term "animator" is very loosely thrown around these days and some studios will even advertise for an animator when it's really a modeler that they're looking to hire. Modelers model, rigging artists rig and animators animate. And good studios today are more interested in specialized skills than the 'generalist' skills most schools teach, world-wide. Animators 'breath life' into the characters you see in your favorite shows, movies and video games, and it's our belief that it's the ultimate job for artistic expression.

"If Salvador Dali were around today, he'd probably be an animator."
- Richard Williams, Master Animator

The Video Game Program Myth
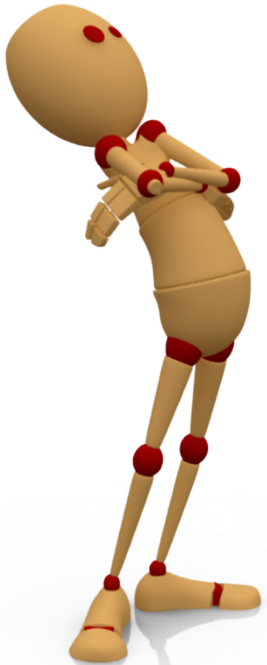
Many, many students around the world have been taken for a ride. It's a terrible truth within our 3D animation education industry. In the past twenty years we've seen an entirely new demographic emerge wanting to become animators. Video games have opened the door to thousands and thousands of eager game players who dream of a career working on games they love to play. Schools around the globe began marketing for them specifically with programs like, 'Animation for Video Games', or 'Game Animation'. To an excited game player this sounds incredible- too good to be true. And it is. Animation is animation, regardless of the medium. To be a professional Character animator one must learn the basic fundamentals and the 'Art' of animation. There is no such thing as 'animation for Video games'. With great animation skill based on classical principles one can work in the TV and video game industries with ease and eventually the Feature Film industry. It's just sad that thousands of students ended up with no chance to enter these great industries because they were enrolled in programs that were not focused on the right aspect; the Art.

Now you know.

PART 2. Keys to becoming a successful Animator

## 3D Computer Animation vs. Classical Animation

Being an Animator means having a career doing what you love, bringing characters to life for a specific production. If your passions revolve around drawing, or if you're a fan Classical Animation then perhaps that's the medium for you. If you're more modern and prefer digital art and a more technical approach, then 3D Computer Animation may be right for you. But here's the deal; Compared to just 15 years ago the amount of classically animated productions has unfortunately dropped significantly with the emergence of 3D animated productions. It's a sad reality. Classical animators get paid less as well. But what most people don't know is that classical animation and 3D animation when produced at the highest levels are essentially the same, artistically. In one there are drawings and in the other it's a series of poses. Both are typically 24 frames per second. But most people are under the impression that they are two completely different mediums and that simply isn't the case. Others believe that the computer itself does a large portion of the work and that modern animators are 'driving' the computer as it animates, which is preposterous.

The truth is the 'art' of animation really hasn't changed since the 1940's. The techniques and practices performed by the great animators of old are essentially the same amongst the great animators of today. The computer is not a pencil, but it is an artist's tool, and all 3D software programs perform the same functions making it easy to learn another once you get familiar with one.

What is the Ultimate goal for an Animation Student? The Demo Reel.

Most schools around the world offer **generalist programs** teaching students modeling, rigging, texturing/ lighting, and animation- but specializing in none of them. This approach leads to unfocused and scattered demo reels lacking in clarity, individuality and ultimately, skills. Top studios world-wide look for specialized skills. When they need someone to rig character models they look for good rigging artists. When they need someone to model sets or characters they look for good modelers and when they need someone to bring their models to life they look for good animators. So in order to gain employment working in any of these jobs one must learn the skills involved and create a demo based on individual skills rather than showcasing a little of bit of skill in many different areas. Ultimately to become employable working as an animator one must focus solely on the art form and ultimately create a demo reel that showcases these particular skills and reflects and represents that person as an artist and a person, and if one can do that, he or she will be successful.
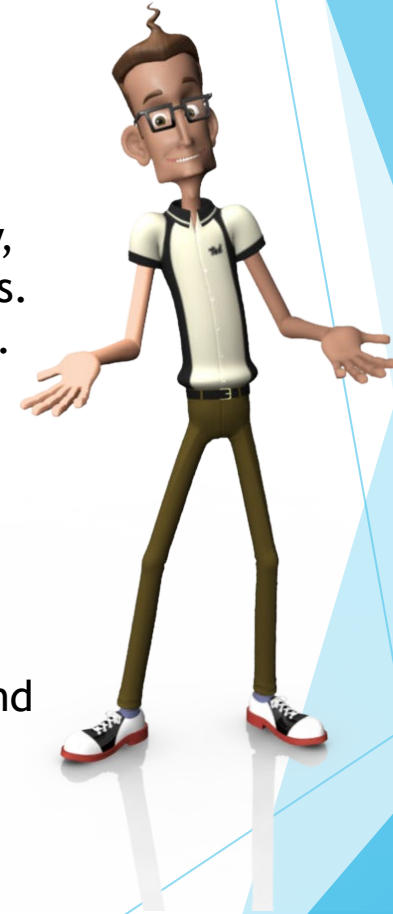
Is a degree or a diploma important to a professional animator?

Good studios don't care where you went to school, what your grades were, if you graduated or if you went to school at all. They search for the best 'artists' when looking for talent, and they do this by reviewing people's Demo Reels.

A good Demo Reel represents and reflects the person as an artist and a person. It should showcase the classical fundamental principles of with an emphasis on the most important aspect in animation: **Performance**. Animators are ultimately actors, we breath life into the characters we're animating. Whether it's action or acting that you're interested in, the reel should be about 1-2 minutes in length and contain only your best work so when someone views your reel they can see immediately who you are and what you represent as an artist.

A good school will help you to develop strong, fundamental skills and ultimately guide you through creating a Demo Reel to represent these skills.
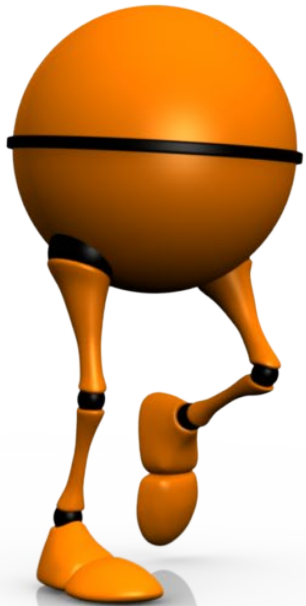
About
Rocket Sky Online Animation School

Rocket Sky is an online mentorship and life-long animation club that trains and develops passionate, career-minded artists into professional-quality character animators.

Our team of mentors and instructors work for some of the world's leading studios. Our collective professional experience in the gaming, TV and movie industries along with our one-on-one, mentor- style learning model is what sets us apart from the rest.

Rocket Sky was born out of years of professional production experience, and years of professional education experience. We focus on classical animation principles and basic fundamentals and apply them within the 3D software. This simple approach develops the art and the artist. Repetition is the mother of skill, and by utilizing our unique methods for developing talent, Rocket Sky students become skilled in all the facets of this allusive art form, and ultimately will be able to produce the highest quality portfolio, or 'Demo Reel', work to showcase these skills.

For more information visit

www.rocketsky.ca

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