
THE

ULTIMATE GUIDE

TO YOUR NEXT

**ANIMATION
PROJECT**

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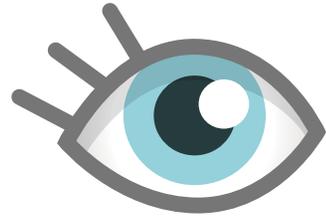


CHAPTER ONE

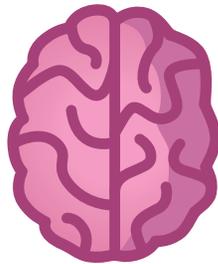
— WHY ANIMATION? —

UNIQUE. EXPRESSIVE. CONCISE.

In a world filled with visual media vying for your attention, making an impression that resonates with your target market is priority #1. Animation is on the rise because of its expressive nature and ability to quickly communicate your brand's essence.



Animation has incredible impression power - it is virtually un-ignorable. With the flood of photos and live action media that people see on a daily basis, animation offers a chance to do something different and grab attention in a new way.



Did you know visual learners make up 65% of the population? Animation is a great way to quickly and concisely share concepts. Whether it's educational content for kids or teaching adults how to use a money management app, animation can be an incredibly valuable tool.

THE VALUE OF STRONG VISUALS

A whopping 87% of U.S. companies reported an increased marketing focus emphasizing a social media strategy and tactics with reflective budgets. It's not news clients want to stretch these budgets. They are certainly watching for best practices in multi-purposing assets across platforms in their visual campaigns. Who can blame them with data like this supporting their decisions:



67%

B2B brands using visual campaigns (film, animation and motion graphics) get 67% more qualified leads per month than those who don't.



78%

Companies with strong visual campaigns have 78% higher click-through rate for their websites.



73%

Strong visuals stand out with a 73% higher impression rate on social media.

“GAME ON” FOR TOP NOTCH CONTENT

Recent data supports a strong case for agencies and brands to continue to fund and produce high quality visual assets for their campaigns. What’s become even more clear is the role this high quality content is playing in the numbers they are getting. Developing quality pieces for your clients, brand or internal clients is no longer negotiable - it’s “game on” with top notch visuals.

In this ebook, we will walk you through the fundamentals to getting your animation project off the ground without a hitch, while reaping the benefits of this valuable medium.



CHAPTER TWO

— PROJECT WORKFLOW —

AN IDEAL WORKFLOW

So what does a typical animation project look like? With constantly changing budgets, schedules, topics and needs, this can be a tricky question to answer. The graphic on the next page will give you a quick rundown. From there, we will do everything we can to give you the best tools, tricks and tips for the navigating the process and ending up with a project you can be proud of.

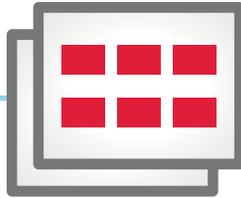


START!

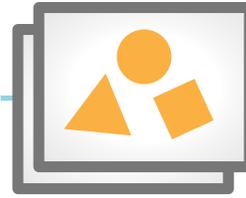
Pre-production



Script



Storyboards



Styleframes

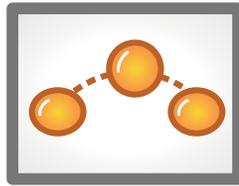


Gather Assets/Establish
Schedule

Production



Animatic



Rough Cut #1 -
Primary Motion



Rough Cut #2
- Polish



Pre-Final - Final
Review



Finish and
Delivery!



CHAPTER THREE

— MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT —

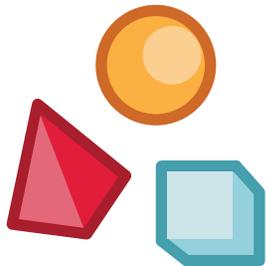
FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

In today's creative market, the animation medium is more accessible than ever and business should consider making use of these powerhouse assets. Whether your goal is to sell or educate, animation can deliver dramatic results. As you continue using this ebook, please remember that form follows function and substance precedes style; so developing THE message that resonates with your audience is the best place to begin.

SCRIPTWRITING

TIPS & TRICKS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

The first step in any creative marketing process is to make sure the message you're putting out there is the right one. It can be quite intimidating having that blank word doc staring back at you... where do you begin? Below are a few ways to help get you started.



THINK VISUALLY

What symbols and imagery are important to your brand? To your message? Start thinking of this now.



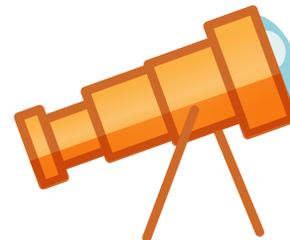
CONSIDER THE LENGTH

180 words per minute is the average rule for voice-overs. It's important to include a little breathing room in there as well. Keep this in mind as you're writing.



TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are they? What kind of content do they enjoy? What do you need them to do in order to consider this video a success? Answer these questions.



EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

Animation is a limitless medium. Quick searches on Vimeo, Dribbble, and Behance will give you tons of inspiration for your piece. Be sure to bookmark your favorites!

SCRIPT EXCERPT

| Visuals | Voiceover/Audio |
|---|---|
| MS of Jane against a white background (she transitions into frame - stands smiling) | Meet Jane |
| Co-Op town transitions in around her, crash zoom out to establishing shot of Co-Op Town. The building titles appear one by one as they are called. | Jane owns an electric utility, a credit union, a convenience store, an insurance company AND SOON... a grocery store! |
| Motion comes to a “screeching” halt. | Wait a minute! |
| Ostentatious items transition into the frame and on to Jane. (Diamond ring, Rolls Royce, designer handbag, keys to a private jet) | Is Jane a billionaire? |
| All “billionaire” items drop off the frame. Jane holds up a “co-op member” card. | Nope. She’s just your average Jane. And co-op member. |
| Cut to motion graphics on white bg - what is a Co-op? | So what exactly is a co-op? |
| Cut back to Co-op Town - Establish Jane with fellow townspeople in front of the “going out of business” grocery store. Cut to MCU of Jane looking concerned, then she has an idea. | Co-ops start with people who join together to meet a need, not to make money. |
| Cut to WS - tracking a co-op cab that reads “Co-ops are Worker-Owned” - the cab stops in the front of the grocery store and Jane hops in. The other townsfolk wave as the cab departs. | People who use or deliver the co-op’s services are its members. |
| Transition to Credit Union with cab still framed in shot - the cab stops. Cut to MCU of the door with a sign that says “Financial Advice FREE” as Jane enters. Cut to MS of Jane shaking hands with the Financial Advisor, both standing. Cut to MS of Jane leaving, pausing by the door which has a sign that says “Run for Credit Union Board” before smiling, nodding, and exiting. | Since members own and democratically control the co-op, their knowledge and how they get involved are key to its success. |

| Visuals | Voice-over |
|--|---|
| MS of Jane against a white background. She transitions into frame and stands smiling. | Ex: Meet Jane. |
| Co-op Town transitions in around her, crash zoom out to establishing shot of Co-op Town. | Jane owns an electric utility, a credit union, a convenience store AND SOON... a grocery store! |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

SCRIPT TEMPLATE

[DOWNLOAD](#)



CHAPTER FOUR

———— STORYBOARDING ————

STORYBOARDING

TIPS & TRICKS FOR VISUALIZING ANIMATION

Once the script has been approved, it's time to move on to storyboarding. A storyboard is a sequence of images that follow the script. This process of pre-visualizing a script has been around since the 1930's and is used in film, theater, advertising, and video games. Below you'll find some tips and tricks to help guide you through this stage.



MAJOR MOMENTS

Start with the major scenes first. Secondary scenes and transitions will come naturally if you are working off of a strong base.



EXPERIMENT!

This is the most flexible part of the animation process. Try out new ideas and see what best delivers your message. Be fearless!



PRESENT IN PERSON

Storyboards are usually paired with descriptions. However, this is no substitute for presenting boards in person. Presentations leave little room for misinterpretation and help everyone feel involved in the creative process.



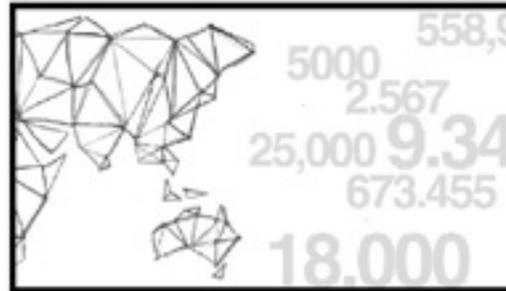
CLARITY IS KEY

Crazy drawing talent isn't a requirement, but clarity in your drawings is. A lot can be understood from a few well placed lines and arrows.

STORYBOARD EXCERPT



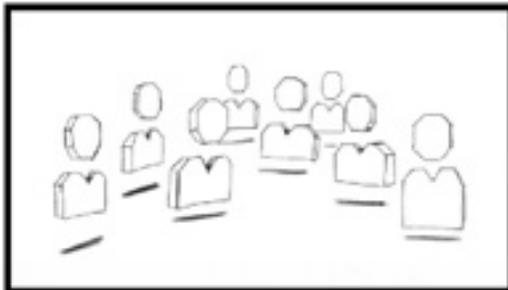
Triangles grow on the screen forming a map of the world. The camera pans across to the right.
VO: Engage your world...



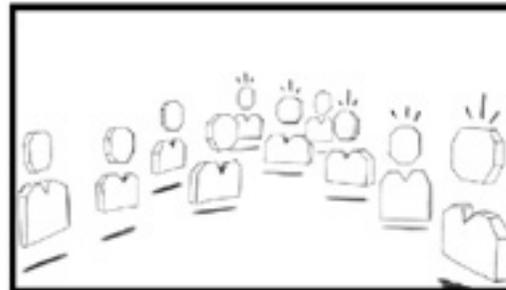
Triangles start to form numbers that move across the screen at various depths.
VO: ...create measurable results.



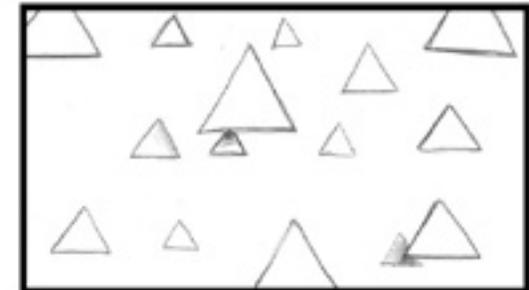
The numbers move off to reveal the BI WORLDWIDE logo.
VO: That's our mission at BI WORLDWIDE



And reveals a crowd of people icons.
VO: ...a global engagement agency

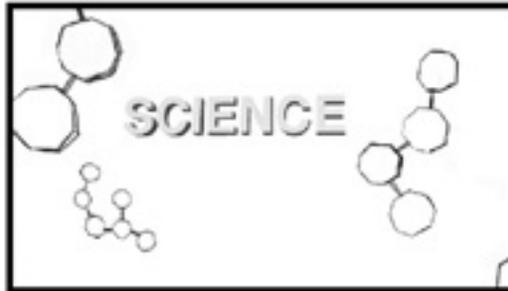


Rays pulse out from the top of their heads showing that they all become engaged. Triangles fly by the camera follows them up.
VO: ... that understands how to...



The triangles fly close to the camera and flow upwards like arrowheads.
VO: ...generate a return on investment.

STORYBOARD EXCERPT



The arrows then form into molecule like shapes. "Science" enters frame.

VO: *We dig deep into the science...*



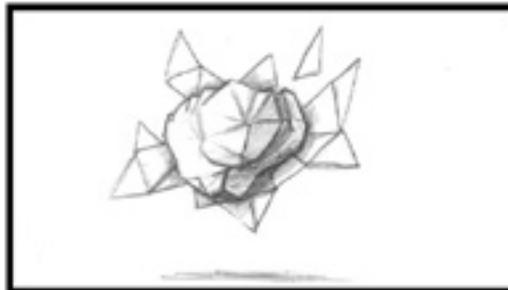
A formation of triangles rise up from the bottom of the screen to create an upward flowing graph."Behavioral Economics" text enters the screen.

VO: *...of behavioral economics...*

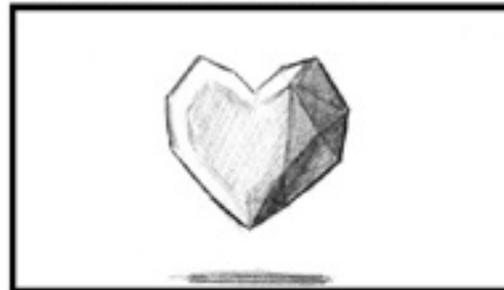


The text leaves screen and the graph lowers away. Triangles move in from behind camera and form the shape of a brain.

VO: *...to discover...*

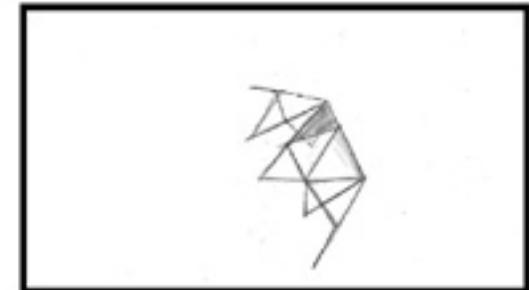


Triangles move out from behind the brain and wrap around it.



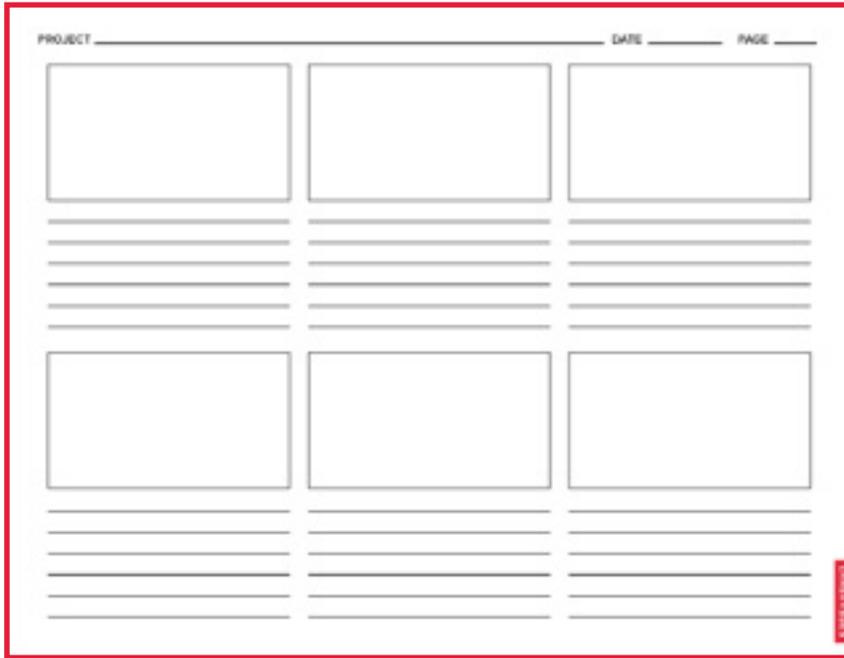
They form a heart shape.

VO: *...what really motivates people*



The heart moves off screen and a wire frame cube begins to draw on like a blueprint.

VO: *Then, we design...*



DOWNLOAD

HORIZONTAL STORYBOARD TEMPLATE



DOWNLOAD

VERTICAL STORYBOARD TEMPLATE



CHAPTER FIVE

— ESTABLISHING STYLE —

STYLEFRAMES

TIPS & TRICKS FOR DEVELOPING THE LOOK

Styleframes are a way of playing with and approving a style for your video before jumping into animation. Usually 2-3 key moments from the storyboard are taken and fully visualized with complete color and detail. Ideally, these styleframes represent (or come very close to) the final look of your video.



KEEP BRAND IN MIND

Make sure that the style is appropriate for your brand and message. Remember your brand standards. This video will be representing your organization and will need to feel cohesive with the rest of your marketing assets!



REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE

Similar to crafting your message, it's important to keep your audience in mind when developing your style. What will capture their attention? A little research into your audience will go a long way.

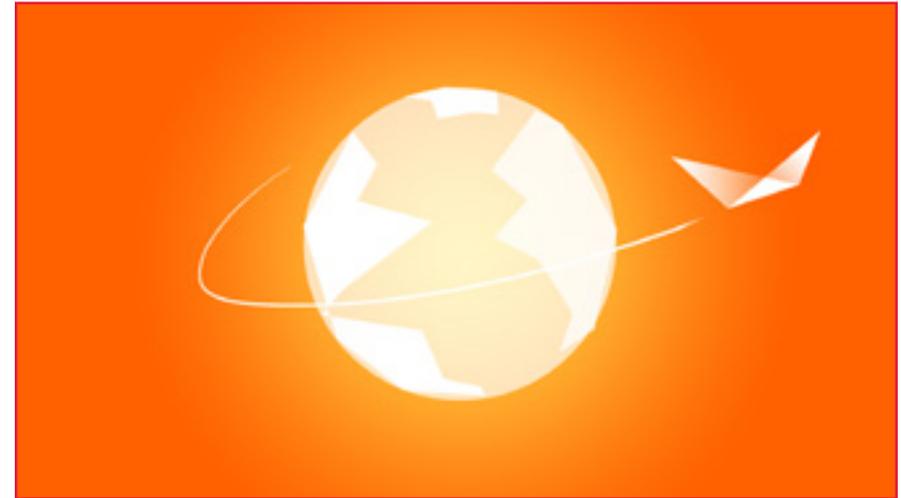


EXPERIMENT!

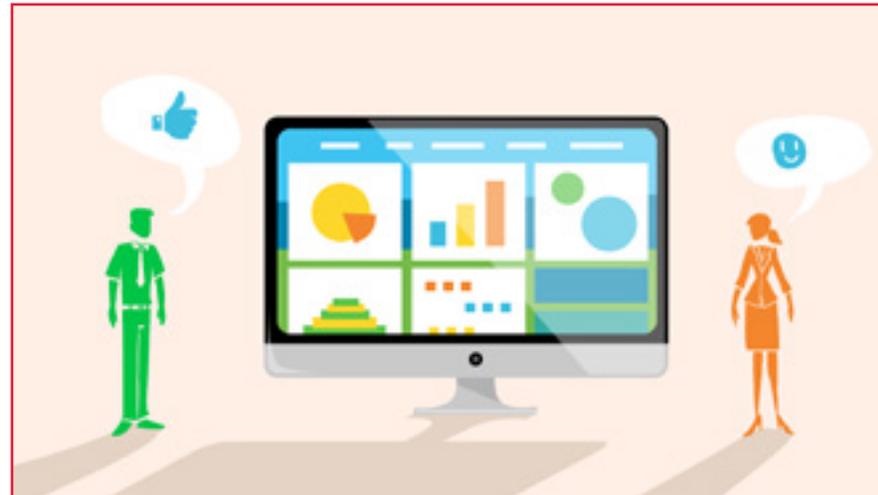
Just like in the storyboarding process, this is the stage of the workflow where your project is the most flexible. Try things out!

STYLEFRAME SAMPLES

FIRST ROUND



For this project, we proposed a variety of looks. Motion graphics, 3D, and character animation were a few different approaches we explored. Here are some styleframes from the first round of visual development.



STYLEFRAME SAMPLES

FINAL ROUND



After our initial exploration, we began honing in on the final look. Here is where we ended up. If you'd like to compare these styleframes to the final video, click [HERE](#).

CHAPTER SIX

———— GATHER ASSETS ————

ASSET CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist to help you organize the things you'll need to make sure your project runs smoothly. Make sure to have all of the necessary assets before moving on to production!

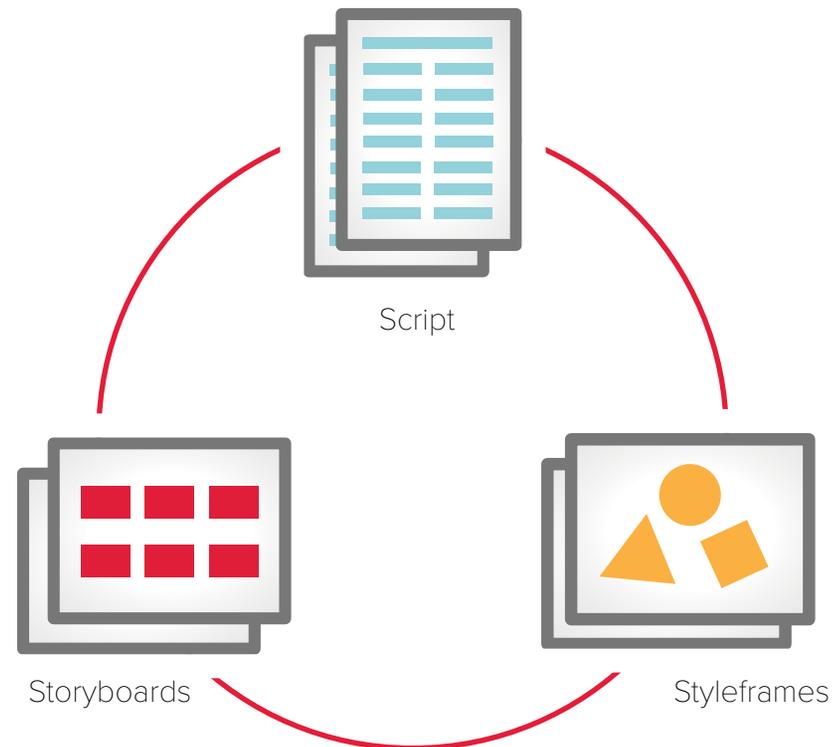
- Current Brand Standards Book
 - Vector logos - .eps or .ai files
 - Brand colors - rgb or hex codes
 - Brand fonts - .ttf or .otf font files
- Any Additional Design Assets (If applicable)
 - Website or app screens - .ai files preferred
 - 3D Assets - .obj, CAD, or .fbx files
- Photography (If applicable)
 - Signed releases, rights and usage
- Stock Footage (If applicable)
 - Correct Releases, Rights and Usage
- Audio Files
 - Voiceover
 - Music
 - Sound design
- Talent Contracts
 - Approval across all necessary media platforms

CHAPTER SEVEN

—— PRODUCTION ——

A ROADMAP FOR PRODUCTION

Once you have a script, a storyboard, and styleframes you will have a roadmap for production. Animators and motion graphics artists rely heavily on these three things throughout production because unlike film, everything in animation needs to be created from scratch. *Be sure to get sign-off on these elements before moving forward with production.*



PRODUCTION

TIPS & TRICKS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Now that pre-production assets have been approved, it's time to move forward with production! This stage of the process requires clear communication between your producers, animators and clients. Below are some tips and tricks that will keep everyone on the same page and the project moving smoothly.



ESTABLISH A CALENDAR

Work with animators and clients to get a calendar approved and in writing. This helps set expectations for everyone on the team right away. Be sure to include all major deadlines including when client feedback is due.



GATHER APPROVAL TEAM

Who do you need approvals from? The earlier they are involved in this process the better. Trust us. Those late-to-the-game comments can lead to some serious overages.



USE A PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOL

Basecamp and Mavenlink are two examples of project management tools. Even a shared Google Doc can go a long way towards keeping your team organized. Try to avoid email chains since someone is bound to be left out. Consolidating all of the feedback into one place cuts down on contradictory comments and confusion.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Animation timelines are influenced by a variety of factors. The first thing to factor in is the style of animation. Is it 2D, 3D, motion graphics, or a combination of all three? Next, think about complexity. Are there a lot of objects and characters to create and animate? For example, a simple graphic style will take less time than fully rendered 3D environments. Finally, consider your resources. Are you working with a freelancer? Or an entire animation team?

STYLE. COMPLEXITY. RESOURCES. Each of these make a serious impact on timelines and how quickly your team will produce your video. We recommend having conversations with your production team to be sure the schedule hits your deadlines and is realistic for the quality of work you are looking to achieve.



CHAPTER SEVEN

REVISIONS

WHAT DO I LOOK FOR?

Animation is a layered, iterative process, with each draft of animation adding more and more complexity. It can be confusing for a client looking at early drafts. Often times you will be interacting with simplified assets and rough animation. On top of that, each workflow can vary significantly depending on the style. How do you know what to look for? Below is a general list of things to think about at each stage of production.

STAGE 01 - ANIMATIC

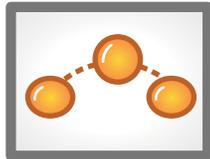


This round of animation is very simple - it takes the storyboard frames from earlier in the project and matches each frame to a 'scratch track' (temporary voice-over or music). The purpose of an animatic is to help determine the general timing and pacing of your finished piece. At this point, you might notice that the VO is too long (or too short) when matched up with the visuals, or you might notice that there are not enough visuals (or too many) to fit your voice-over. Keep in mind that the visuals will still be rough at this stage. A finished look isn't a priority here - the overall timing and pacing is.

ANIMATIC CHECKLIST

- Do the visuals make sense when paired with voice-over?
- Does it feel too fast or too slow?
- Does the animatic hit your desired length?
- Are there any long, awkward pauses that need to be filled?
- Does the order of the animation make sense?
- For technically-oriented animations, is the procedure or process documented in the correct order with all steps accounted for?

STAGE 02 - PRIMARY MOTION



The next step in animation is to add ‘keyframes’ or the major action points. The animation might not look completely smooth, but it should convey the right visual concepts and emotions. This animation might not look like your ‘styleframes’ just yet. It might be at half-resolution, use simple shaders or temporary backgrounds. By this step, your voice-over should be recorded and delivered to your animators. It is especially important for character animation, as characters need to be ‘lip-synced’ (matching the animated characters lips to the dialogue being spoken).

FIRST ROUGH CUT CHECKLIST

- Are my characters believable? Do their actions or poses convey the right emotions?
- Is the timing of the motion correct? Should anything be moving faster? Slower?
- Is the camera framing and composition correct? Do any objects need to move in the scene?

STAGE 03 - POLISH



The final step in animation is to polish it all up. All the feedback from the last round will be incorporated. Movements are smoothed out, colors are added, and any extra effects (such as special effects, physical simulations, or text) that were not in the previous version, will be added. For 2D animation, this can involve adding in-betweens, secondary motion, line cleanup and color. For 3D animation, this involves 'rendering', a process by which the computer takes a mathematical approximation of a 3D object and turns it into a final frame. At the end of the polish phase, your animation should look complete.

SECOND ROUGH CUT CHECKLIST

- Has my feedback from previous drafts been incorporated?
- Are all the colors correct and on brand?
- Are all logos and provided artwork correct?
- Is there anyone else whose feedback or approval I may need?
- Double check! Run through this list again.

STAGE 04 - FINAL REVIEW



At this point, your animation should be 100% finished - but once in a blue moon something might slip through the cracks and now is the time to catch it! This is your absolute last chance to provide feedback, because after this the project is considered 'complete' and changes will incur overage charges.

PREFINAL CHECKLIST

- Is everything polished?
- Have I gotten approval from every part of the team?

Revision Checklist

Project Name:
Date:

Animatic Review

- Do the visuals make sense when paired with voice-over?
 - Notes:

- Does it feel too fast or too slow?
 - Notes:

- Does the animatic hit your desired length?
 - Notes:

- Are there any long awkward pauses that need to be filled?
 - Notes:

- Does the order of the animation make sense?
 - Notes:

REVISION CHECKLIST

DOWNLOAD

CHAPTER EIGHT

— DELIVERY & FINISH —

WRAPPING EVERYTHING UP

Now that your animation is finished, you need to get it wherever it needs to go. YouTube? Internal marketing? Digital cinema? Where is the 'Master' (high quality version of the file) going to be stored? Does the delivery destination require closed captioning? Make sure your animation is converted to a file format optimized for the device on which your audience is watching.

DELIVERABLES

COMMON FILE FORMATS



QUICKTIME PRORES (.mov)

The ProRes format for Quicktime is very common in production / post-production workflows. This format almost perfectly preserves video information but has a larger file size. These files are typically used as 'Masters' - the original file that subsequent copies are made from. Due to their large file size, they are not streamed or shared across the internet - that is better left to one of the formats below.



MPEG4 (.mp4)

MPEG4 is a very commonly used format on internet video sites like YouTube. These files are playable by almost all modern devices such as mobile phones, ipads and tablets and Laptop / Desktop computers. An MPEG4 file can be played by Quicktime, Windows Media Player or VLC. There are many ways to optimize an MPEG4 file - it's not necessarily a one-file-fits-all. You may want different optimizations for viewing on a streaming mobile device, tablet, and desktop.



WINDOWS MEDIA VIDEO (.wmv)

Windows Media Video is a format developed by Microsoft. It is very easy to play on PC's with Windows Media Player. The WMV format is most often used internally by large corporations (where the majority of the company is on PC's). WMV is not often used for internet distribution as it can be difficult to play this format on devices that are not Windows PC's.

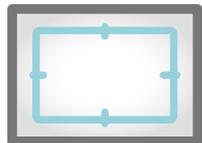
DELIVERABLES

COMMON FILE FORMATS



DIGITAL CINEMA PACKAGE (DCP)

This is a special format used by movie theaters. It is very large in size (DCP's are often delivered via Hard Drive instead of sent over the internet). DCP's can also have additional security options to prevent piracy or playback at non-approved theaters.



A NOTE ON BROADCAST SPECS

When sending an animation out for broadcast television, there are specific requirements relating to size, framerate, audio levels, loudness, encoding and framing (title-safe and action-safe). If you plan to send your animation to broadcast, you should be aware of these limitations early on as they can influence many parts of the production process.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

— AND OTHER RESOURCES —

AN UNLIMITED MEDIUM

After reading through this ebook we hope you've found the tools to unlock this truly limitless medium. With a clear message, great design and purposeful placement, animation can be an incredibly effective way to capture and retain your audience - a necessity in today's world.



PROJECTS WE LOVE

SOME INSPIRATION TO GET THOSE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING

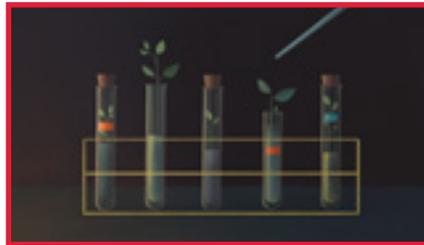
FiOS QUANTUM INTERNET X



[\[Click to View\]](#)

This slick piece from Verizon features incredibly appealing design and an empowering message. They set up the problem and offer a solution all within a solid :30 seconds. A good reminder that less is more, especially when paired with crisp visuals.

NATURE'S PATH



[\[Click to View\]](#)

A gorgeous combination of 2D and 3D animation with a message about buying organic. This subtly branded content piece from Nature's Path does an excellent job of catching viewers' attentions without hitting them over the head with a hard sell.

GATORADE FIERCE



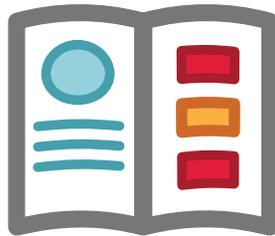
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This spot for Gatorade utilizes cel animation composited with live-action footage for an action-packed final product. The effects animation adds an eye-catching pop of color that takes this piece to a whole new level.

DID YOU LIKE THIS EBOOK?

Feel free to share it! Also, we would love to see your finished project - post an image with a link on the CRASH+SUES Facebook. Good luck on your next project!

COMING MARCH 2016



The Ultimate Guide to Creating Fabulous Marketing Videos on a Small Budget

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ABOUT CRASH+SUES

We are a small but fearless band of storytellers who help ad agencies and businesses create meaningful connections with their customers and employees. Whether that's a broadcast spot, web video, corporate video or branding help, CRASH+SUES executes brilliant, visual ideas.

ANIMATION REEL



[\[Click to View\]](#)

SIZZLE REEL



[\[Click to View\]](#)

COLOR REEL



[\[Click to View\]](#)