

“DEMO REELS”

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Models have portfolios...Actors have demo reels. A demo reel is a showcase of your work and is THE best marketing tool professional actors can have. It is a must for career actors who are serious about their craft. A good demo reel will open doors for you to agents, managers, casting directors, producers, directors, and anyone else looking to hire actors in the entertainment industry. A high quality demo reel is guaranteed to give you the competitive edge over actors who do not have one.

Technology has changed the way demo reels are distributed. We live in an instantaneous viral society which has made VHS tapes, CDs and DVDs a thing of the past. Reels have gone viral allowing a digital file to be viewed at the click of a button on your website or to be sent via e-mail, saving hundreds of dollars in DVD duplication costs and postage, not to mention the positive impact it has on the environment by not having your DVD's end up in a landfill.

Amateur footage on your reel will hurt more than it will help you. If you do not have professional footage don't waste your time putting a demo reel together. Start by compiling your footage until you have enough for a demo reel. High quality student films will work as long as the lighting and technical aspects are on par with the professionals.

Tips For Putting Together A Demo Reel

- Start by compiling copies of your on-screen work. Select footage in which you are prominently featured and which showcases your best work. This may include copies of television, films, commercials and industrials. Every time you work, find out who to contact for a copy of the project and establish the best way to contact them after the project is completed.
- When compiling your footage be sure the selected clips feature you, not other actors. You might need to have your scenes edited so your reel is all about you. Scenes with well-known actors are important to feature first because even though they may be short, it lets your next potential employer know you were cleared to work opposite bankable talent. Be sure your footage is of good quality. Do not select scenes with poor lighting and sound. Try to pick contrasting scenes for your demo reel.

- Avoid putting old work on your reel. Your reel needs to be a current reflection of you, not of how you looked 20 pounds or 20 years ago.
- Do not hesitate to get a variety of opinions as to which scenes to use and in what order they should appear before making the final decision on your reel.
- If you are not qualified to edit your reel, hire a professional to do it for you. Keep in mind you get what you pay for. A poorly edited reel will not do you any favors. There are companies who specialize in demo reels for actors.
- Choose scenes that showcase you at your best and start with your strongest material. This will grab the attention of whoever is watching your reel. It will also raise the odds that they will watch your entire reel. Don't use stage performances or a monologue unless you are using it to pursue theater.
- It is best to have separate theatrical, commercial, industrial and spokesperson reels.
- The ideal length for your reel should be between 3 – 7 minutes, depending on how much footage you have. The shorter the better. Industry professionals are busy people. Show them respect by having a concise, professional reel that will make them want to watch it all the way through to the end.
- In addition to a long reel, one-minute reels are very popular as they are more likely to be watched due to time constraints. One-minute reels are a "hook" to get your foot in the door, just like a commercial sells us on the idea of going to see a movie or trying a new product.
- Start the reel with your name. You can also open with your headshot. End your reel with your contact information, which should include your name, agency, website (if applicable), and contact number and/or e-mail address.

After Your Reel Is Done

Be sure your reel is readily available by sending it your agent and posting it on your Actors Access page. You should also make sure the casting directors for whom you wish to audition for have access to your reel. If possible have your reel available on your website. If you do not have a website you can e-mail your reel if it is under 13 mb. And, don't forget – Demo reels are like your resume; they will need to be kept updated!