

ANIMATION Rules!

52 ways to achieve creative success

written and illustrated by
STEVE HICKNER

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BRIGANTINE MEDIA

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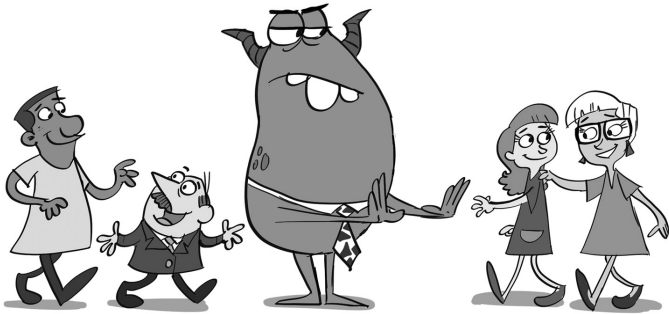
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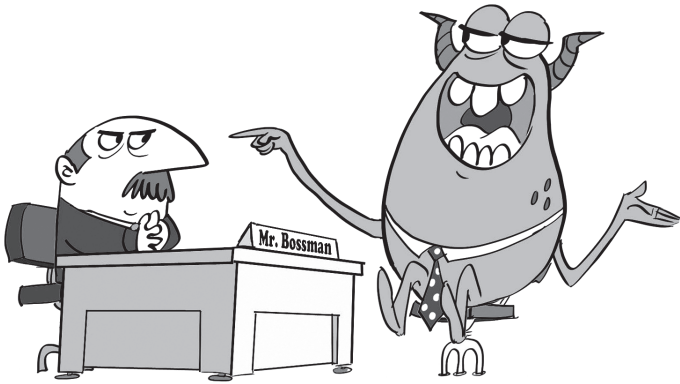
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PART ONE

Do the Right Thing





Put in your time before you take someone else's time.

SUPPOSE YOU WERE a major league pitcher. Would you make your opening pitch without studying the opposing batters? If you were the starting quarterback for an NFL team, would you take your first snap from center without studying the other team's defense? Not if you wanted to stay in the major leagues.

Start your job hunt by first researching the employers.

As an artist looking for work, you need to be selling what the buyer is buying. Make sure your sales pitch lines up with the employer's needs by knowing the kind of product the employer makes and the kind of people the employer hires. Learn about the

companies you are interested in working for.

On too many occasions, young people call me seeking advice about getting into the animation business, and it is obvious that they haven't done their homework about the industry. I no longer try to educate them. Now, if they haven't studied the animation industry, I quickly end the conversation.

You don't get *my time* until you have put in *your time*.

Soak in where you are.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE commencement, I visited a large university where I met a graduating senior who admitted to me that he didn't have a portfolio or demo reel. I couldn't believe it. How could he study animation for four years and end up with nothing to present?



At another college, a student asked if I would mentor him while he made his student film. I agreed to help and encouraged him to send me his work. As it turned out, it was the easiest mentoring job that I have ever had. I never heard from him again.

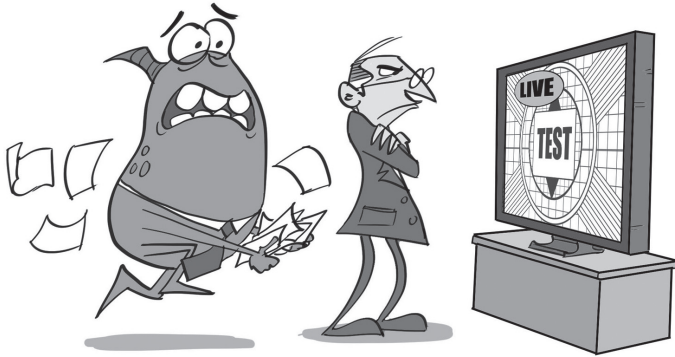
On a big animated feature, I remember a storyboard artist who was new to the studio, and was working with a group of seasoned professionals. The

artist was offered the opportunity to pair with a more experienced artist, but he declined. He also turned down the chance to attend lunchtime story classes and drawing lessons. When he was laid off, he blamed others, not himself.

Life is not a merry-go-round where you have repeated chances to grab the brass ring. Don't allow once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to pass you by. If you are in school, savor every moment. You will never again have so much free time to devote to learning. If you are at a job, take advantage of everything your workplace offers.

Unlike a movie, life has no retakes.

RULE 3



Never miss a deadline. No exceptions.

AS LONG AS there have been college assignments, students have turned in their work late. And their usual penalty is that their grade is lowered.

That is college.

In the working world, there is no lowering of a grade. There is hitting the deadline or not hitting the deadline. And people don't care why you missed the date. They just want the work finished. If you can't hit the target, they will find someone else who can.

RULE 4



Whatever your job, do it well.

LOTS OF SUCCESSFUL people in the entertainment industry have had simple beginnings.

Before George Shapiro was the agent for comedy heavyweights Jerry Seinfeld, Carl Reiner, and Andy Kaufman, he worked in the mailroom at a talent agency. So did entertainment industry scions David Geffen, Barry Diller, and Ron Meyer. Michael Eisner, Ted Koppel, and Regis Philbin started their careers as NBC pages.

Everybody starts out at a low-level job. But smart, successful people use that job to show how good they are.

If you want to advance, follow this credo: Do your job so well that the person who follows you will have an impossible time measuring up to your standard.

Don't just show up. Participate.

I WENT TO a series of meetings with a well-known film personality, and at each gathering, the number of people varied. His collaborator told me why: “He doesn’t like it when people don’t talk in a meeting. If they don’t contribute, they don’t get asked back.”

If you don’t participate in meetings, there is no reason for you to attend. Participate and offer ideas. Your suggestion may not be the one that is implemented, but it might be the piece of information that leads to the eventual solution.

Contributing to meetings is a chance for you to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject, that you have done your homework, and that you are interested in helping the company.



YOU GOTTA KNOW THE **Rules!**



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by Steve Hickner



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by Kevin Coupe

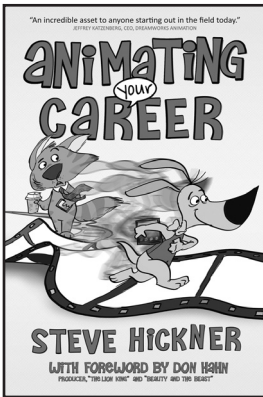
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Animating Your Career is a valuable guide to navigating the journey of a career in the creative fields—from getting your foot in the door to directing a project involving hundreds of artistic professionals. The book is filled with practical advice from Steve Hickner and the many top creatives he has worked with over the years.

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