

Working Towards Professionalism

[Re-printed with permission of the FAB, Florida Actors/Models Book]

- Be **RELIABLE**. Get an answering machine, voice mail, a pager, an answering service! Be **AVAILABLE**. If an agent cannot leave a message or you don't return pages, they won't call you back and you will not work.
- **DEVELOP** a journal. Keep a notebook or log of agent calls and contacts. Check out and learn the requirements for your Federal Tax Return Schedule C and the available deductions. Keep accurate records of mileage, expenses, etc. Record all those trips to classes, auditions, photo sessions, anything you aren't being paid to do and it's a deduction. Check with your accountant or tax preparation expert. If they aren't familiar with deduction for entertainers, find a source that is. It's to your advantage.
- **LEARN** your trade. Read books, trade publications, etc. Understand that you need to network, train, and market yourself to get work. Talent is not the magic key. You have a lot of competition and the more you prepare yourself to meet it the faster you will realize success. You must find the most effective way to market yourself, get yourself known, develop your skills because your job-hunting doesn't stop with your first shoot. You will always be looking for a job and every person you meet is an interview.
- **BEGINNERS**: Check out your options as you proceed and invest accordingly. Treat this as a business!
- **ALWAYS** take your headshots to an audition. Always have them with you, in your car, your briefcase, at your job. Your headshots are your most valuable marketing tool so carry extra. It is not uncommon to hear that talent still show up to audition without a picture! The pictures your agent keeps are for her (his) submissions. The agent does **NOT** supply the casting director with the picture your audition. You do that.
- Be **EARLY** to the audition - 15 minutes minimum. You need time to prepare and shake off the 'traffic tension'!
- **NEVER** call a casting director. Besides not getting pictures at an audition, this is the No. 1 casting director complaint. **DO** send a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) when you submit your headshot. It is a courtesy that just may be put to use. Casting Directors prefer not to foot the bill for the postage to correspond with you, like requesting you come in for a file-tape interview.
- **CHECK-IN** with your agent(s) often. Find out when is the best time to call in, when their calling volume may be low and when they'll most likely welcome your call. Or, they may have a regular time set aside that talent can use for calls or drop-in visits. Find out from your agent if they prefer weekly check-in calls or cards mailed to them. Also, do they object to drop in visits?

Excerpts compliments of FAB the Florida Actors/Models Book

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When it's busy, calls tie up the lines and leave them no time to talk to casting and production people. When it's not busy, you'll most likely hear "Nothing now".

- **PICTURE POSTCARDS** - Agents love them, producers love them, casting directors love them. Postcards are simply the best way to keep in touch versus calling in every week. Setup a mailing/marketing schedule for the upcoming year. Postcards put your face on their desk and also enhance your professional image by showing a higher level of commitment to working in the business. Use the cards to market yourself, get your name and face out there, and bring people up to date on your activities and training. Namely "I just completed...", "Just finished...", "Taking a class with...", "Will soon be opening in...", etc. Use old pictures as large postcards. You have more room to write more and you've already paid for them. (This is not advised if they just don't look like you at all anymore.) Also, have you gotten business cards with your picture on them, yet?
- **LISTEN** to any directions given you in an audition and follow them. It could be a test!
- Get **TRAINING!** When not working, the actor is expected to be training, either in a workshop or on stage. You should be training as long as you are in the business. Training is still the best networking venue. Work in a location state, like Florida, is usually uneven and training keeps you involved and motivated. It's your responsibility to keep the instrument fine-tuned and ready to work.
- **ATTITUDE** is EVERYTHING! Are you helpful, willing to learn, cooperative, friendly, and easy to talk to?
- **PREPARE** for your audition. Preparation is the key to successful acting. Take three outfits with you. Anticipate different character needs. Put your imagination to work!
- Learn to play the **GAME** - it's a **BUSINESS!** Learn marketing and business techniques and develop professional standards and accurate record keeping.
- It is suggested that you do not **FAX** your headshots. The quality is terrible and a professional package should be mailed, not a quick fax. Leave the fax to business communications between casting and production. Besides, I've been told it really turns them off and will alienate you. Unless you are specifically requested to fax a picture, do a mailing and don't forget to include your agent's name/address.
- If you are preparing your **HEADSHOT** for viewing **ONLINE** or for **EMAILING**, please size it appropriately. The recommended size is 640x480 and can be viewed on the monitor easily and is under 1MB for emailing. There are many photo-editing programs out there to use.

FAB hopes these tips and suggestions help you work more and smarter! Over 1/3 of the FAB is filled with suggestions and help with your career. Get a current copy today. Visit us online at www.fabactor.com.