

#Nine9er

The Ultimate Modeling & Acting Handbook

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NINE9
THE UNAGENCY

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CORE VALUES

Family Values

Puts others before themselves
Treats others how they want to be treated
Holds high moral value

Hates to Lose

Gives their all
Prepares for success
Focused on winning

No Nonsense

Is extremely disciplined
Direct and to the point
Not influenced by distraction

All In

Committed to success
Passionate about their efforts
Uplifting in their enthusiasm

Compassionate

Understanding of situations
Cares about others
Looks to assist and enable

Figures It Out

Is resourceful in nature
Looks to learn and grow
Never accepts failure

Dependable

Takes obstacles as an opportunity
Looks for reasons not excuses
Can always count on

Does The Right Thing

Always chooses good
Is proud of their integrity
Holds themselves to a high standard

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Succeeding in the Entertainment Industry

You must make a choice to take a chance or your life will never change. You've come to that proverbial crossroads and are ready to take a leap of a lifetime. You've always want a shot at being a star, and now's the time.

Your mind is likely reeling with questions. What do you need to do to set things into motion? What's the process and what do you need to do in each step to make sure your dreams become a reality?

Well, you've already conquered the first step by deciding to take action and change your life. Now, you'll have to hone your marketing skills by putting together some materials that will help you stand out from the crowd. Once these are in hand, take a deep breath, and put yourself out there!

Finding Your Niche:

Consider Who You Are and What You Want

Before you get started, it's important to consider who you are and where you're going. These may seem like silly questions, but they are anything but trivial. Truly understanding what your entertainment career goals are will help you understand which steps you need to take to achieve these goals.

The first question to ask yourself is: What am I most passionate about?

We tend to take on many things in our lives that are semi-interesting in order to become content overall. In other words, in our pursuit of happiness, we piece together a bearable life. Sometimes this is out of necessity – we have to work a

desk job before landing our breakthrough gig. Other times, however, it's derived from either a lack of motivation or chosen simply out of fear. Taking on things we find semi-interesting can be safe, after all. We don't have to work as hard and we have less to lose should these pursuits not pan out.

You must ask yourself before diving head first into the entertainment world what you are passionate about – a concept that could seem foreign at first. You are asking yourself to dig deep before answering and be unafraid to fulfill your most daring dreams. This is not a commonplace task.

If you have always wanted to pursue high fashion modeling, commercial acting, or be cast as a lead in feature film, these are your passions. They're all viable options (depending on a few factors, covered in just a minute) and it's important to consider which option or options will make you most happy.

For inspiration, here are some potential avenues you may choose as you consider the type of modeling and/or acting career to strive for. This is far from a complete list, but should get the juices flowing, so to speak:

Modeling

Commercial/Print
Fitness/Swimwear
Glamour/High Fashion/Runway
Pageantry
Parts (i.e., Hand, Foot, Hair, etc.)
Plus-sized Model
Promotional Model/Brand
Ambassador/Spokesmodel

Acting

Background/Extra
Character Work
Commercial
Film Improv
Stage/Theatre
Stand-up
Comedian
Television Series
Television Host/Broadcaster
Video/Web
Voiceover

Once you've identified your passions, ask yourself, Do I have the means to pursue my passions?

This question is tougher than the first. There are a few scenarios in which you may not be able to pursue your first choice or even your second, and the ability to be honest with yourself is essential. If you're not honest with yourself in the very beginning, you'll risk wasting effort – time is money.

If you have always wanted to be a high-fashion model, but you're 5'2" you'll have to consider alternatives. There are plenty, but you'll need to be open to these. If you've always wanted to have a starring role in a feature film, great, but know you'll likely have to work very, very hard to land that role. Be mindful that smaller roles are simply stepping stones to the big screen.

You'll also need to consider certain circumstances in your present life that may hinder your journey to the top. Can you travel? Relocate? Work flexible hours? Change your physical appearance at the drop of a hat if asked? There may be certain lifestyle restrictions that are simply unaccommodating.

Once you've considered exactly what it is you want to do, and you've identified any obstacles, ask yourself: Is there anything I can do to eliminate obstacles that are keeping me from realizing my dreams?

If the answer to this question is yes, wonderful! Start working on eliminating those things that are holding you back. However, there may be some significant components that define your life which cannot be easily thrown by the wayside. You'll have to figure out how to work around these or you'll have to focus on other pursuits.

What is My Type?

Now that you know a little more about what you want to do and how you're doing to do it, you'll have to take into consideration who industry professionals are you going view you as. Models— what products or services would you do best representing? Actors — what are your most believable roles?

If you are a woman in your late-twenties to early-thirties without an overtly rebellious, rock star demeanor, you might be great model for ads related to mothers and children, and you could be placed in variety of ads related to this topic, including work-from-home programs, daycares, baby products, and even ads for public service announcements. A woman of this demographic may also be used as a fitness model, in a corporate ad, a brochure for a new SUV, or in many other types of gigs.

As an actress, the same woman might play a concerned parent, physician, counselor, patient, teacher, business owner, or a wide range of other roles, the limit to which could simply stem from talent's interest. However, it would be tough to envision a conservative woman in her early thirties in high fashion modeling or in an ad for a tattoo parlor. The first just wouldn't happen, given the industry's required specs, the second is a stretch.

Creating a list of believable options will help you to narrow down which career path to pursue. From there, you can create marketing materials focused on these goals.

So, what's next? To help figure that out, let's ask Nine9's Cassie DeMay about what it takes to get started and be successful in this competitive industry.

Chapter 1 – Industry Interview:

Cassie DeMay, New Faces Director, Nine9 The UnAgency

We caught up with Cassie DeMay, a graduate of University of Southern California with over ten years of live performance experience as a Michigan talent. Cassie has also worked in major markets such as Washington DC, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. During her time with Nine9, she has helped hundreds of talent get started in the industry.

Q1: What does a talent need to get started in the industry? What type of personality? Materials? Know-how?

A: Starting is not difficult. There are so many opportunities for beginners. The real thing to keep in mind is that you have to pay attention to what is being asked of you for projects. If a client is asking for your headshots, contact information, availability, and measurements, you need to provide all four as quickly as possible. Keep in mind that you may lose out on opportunities or frustrate the client by failing to give the required information to them, so paying attention to detail is critical.

A go-getter personality will help you start and maintain your place in the industry and if you don't know what marketing materials are or are unsure about some of the terminology a client is using, look it up! Ask for help from someone you know or do some research online. There are so many useful companies and online sources to help beginners, but you need to be willing to seek them out and put in the work.

Q2: What is the number one mistake most talent make when they're just getting their start?

A: Not matching up their expectations with reality. Too often do I hear inexperienced talent talk about their expectations, only to be let down when they get started. Auditioning is so exciting and getting booked is even more exciting, but the reality is that not all jobs are paid, and it isn't unusual for people to build their resume a bit before making the money they were hoping for from the beginning.

It is also hard for talent who apply to some companies and agencies thinking they won't have to pay for anything at all and that an agent will pay for everything. The

reality is that not all agencies make you pay upfront, you simply accumulate debt for the services and materials they have provided. It is up to you to book work and pay them back. If you are open-minded and do your research, you'll be in a much better starting place.

Q3: What can a talent do to win you over when they come into the office?

A: Be genuine and show me some positivity! Even little things like coming to the interview on time, looking your best, and following directions goes a long way. If someone comes in

late or comes with a poor attitude for their first meeting with us, I am not likely to give them the opportunity to meet with our clients. It is our responsibility to provide quality, dependable talent to our clients and first impressions really do make a difference.

Q4: What is one tip you would give aspiring talent who are feeling discouraged by rejection?

A: The fact is that you have to keep trying. If you are feeling discouraged because you haven't booked anything in a while, take a moment reflect on your recent auditions and ways you can improve. Some people could do better at their auditions simply by picking opportunities that are better suited to their look and type. If you are regularly auditioning for a look or type that other people don't view you as a fit for, you will probably find yourself frustrated and bewildered as to why you aren't getting cast more often. Consider getting more training or getting better marketing materials and above all, continue to go to auditions and network with the clients and company members you find yourself working with. Who knows? They may end up referring you to a client down the road!

Q5: Why does Nine9's proven process work?

A: The company's services have been used since 2003, so there are years of data and feedback from successful talent reflecting what works and what doesn't. Those who were successful had a clear path and dedicated themselves to it. The process has been working for years, and the proven process is a clean and easy-to-follow path for newly signed talent to follow. They have the advantage of using these proven steps right away, which are the result of years of experience from Nine9's staff and the success of other Nine9 talent.

Q6: What do talent need to know about trying to make it on their own in this industry?

A: I encourage anyone doing this to reach out and make connections as soon as possible. Even if you don't plan to use the services of entertainment companies or talent management, make use of the resources you do have. Surround yourself with like-minded people, meaning people who are driven and ambitious – people who are also pursuing the industry and better yet, people who want to see you succeed. Maintaining those relationships will help you build your web and encounter additional opportunities.

Q7: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: Spend time trying to identify your strengths and skills and utilize them! Embrace who you are and let clients benefit from it. You'll both be thankful!

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Marketing Yourself

Regardless of the type of career you're pursuing, learning to market yourself properly is extremely important. Marketing yourself in the wrong way, or refusing to do so at all, is a recipe for failure. You must understand which materials are essential, how to manipulate these in a way that'll get you noticed, and always keep them with you.

There are very specific materials you'll need to use to attract the right attention in the entertainment world and you will need to ensure these are both professional and well put-together, so you can land the roles you're looking for. If you compile what you need and present these things in just the right way, you will have a leg up on your competition. If you create your marketing materials half-heartedly, however, you will quickly be eliminated from consideration.

So, just what, exactly, do you need and how can you ensure your putting your best foot forward? There are a few documents that are universal, but in general you need to understand which type of project you're going for and what is needed for that project. Some tools you may need to generate over the course of your career are a headshot, a comp card, and a resume. After you've gained some experience, you can add in a reel or tear sheets.

You will also want to establish an online presence early on that depicts who you are or are aspiring to be professionally. This means, it's important to consider creating a webpage and streamlining your social media. The days of generating a website from scratch, thankfully, are over. There are sites that will guide you through the process every step of the way. Let's take a look at each piece of your portfolio in turn.

Your Headshot's Your Shot and Your Comp Card is Key

Having an effective headshot that you can use to submit to castings and take along with you to auditions is essential, and it's important to understand exactly what an effective headshot is. You'll need to know what separates an effective one from an ineffective one, and this distinction should be clear to you before the image is ever finalized.

It's important to note that all types of people get booked for all types of work. You don't have to have supermodel features or be over or under a certain age to get entertainment jobs. You can be young, tall, and thin, or 90 years old, overweight, have an impairment or disability – it doesn't matter. There are acting roles and modeling opportunities for you.

In fact, if you have a unique feature outside the stereotype people generally think of when they consider what constitutes a "model" or an "actor," taking a shot and deciding to put yourself out there will prove to be the best decision you've ever made. This is for simple fact, believe it or not, the industry doesn't discriminate, your competition is limited, and chances of getting booked into a role designed for your unique disposition are high.

So, Who Are You?

You may feel you already know, and hopefully you do. But, it's important to know who you are to casting directors. How do you present? If you are a 6'2" male with commanding features, such as a prominent jawline, five-o'clock shadow even after shaving, and piercing eyes, you're less likely to be immediately successful trying to portray yourself as a kind-hearted florist than you would be a professional boxer. This doesn't mean you'll never be able to play the florist role – anything is possible with wardrobe and makeup – but this is not your go-to.

Casting directors want to see your go-to. They want to be able to look at your portfolio and say, "Yeah, I can see that." They don't want to be confused by what you're presenting. Make sure to include your go-to in your photos. Then, if you intermix with this a shot or two that shows versatility on your comp card, or composite sheet, great.

Once you've figured out your type and the roles that best fit you, you'll want to make this believable enough, so industry decision-makers can easily envision you in the parts you're vying for. This means, you'll have to figure out a way to come across as believable in front of the camera, on the stage, or before the casting crew to successfully sell yourself in your photos. There are a few tricks that will help you create believability.

Expressing Who You Are

First, try to find images of the look you're going for in already printed ads. Flip through a couple of magazines you have lying around at home or while you're at your next doctor's visit and pull out those you feel resemble the parts you're hoping to project. Remember, you don't need to look like the people in the ads (although you could), but you want to recreate the same type of image they're presenting.

So, for instance, who is our big and burly character with a five-o'clock shadow to directors? Is he the handyman that would show up to fix your furnace? Maybe he's a firefighter, a policeman, or even a convict. Maybe he is the guy who worked in coal mines his whole life and now suffers from black lung disease; he needs to do an ad for a pharmaceutical company – which by the way, is one of the most lucrative industries. If you include at least one mock pharmaceutical ad on your composite sheet, this will greatly increase your chances of getting booked.

In any case, once you understand why you're a coal miner and not a florist, and you have a decent understanding of what shots you're hoping to produce, practice creating these shots in your spare time prior to heading to the studio. Place an ad or editorial spread near you, hold up your cell phone, and try to recreate it. If you are attempting to recreate an emotional shot, you must master the desired emotion, so practice until you do.

For instance, if you are studying an ad for a grief counseling services, because you've decided you have a therapist-like look, and the therapist in the ad is placing her hand on a client's shoulder in an empathetic way and looking saddened by the client's circumstances, you'll need to ask yourself if you can recreate sadness and empathy. If you are studying an ad for a dating website, can you recreate genuine love and happiness? If you are hoping to land an exercise campaign, can you look exhausted, yet determined to keep going?

One of the best ways to create believability is to internally summon memories of events in your life that evoked similar emotions, pull yourself back to these moments and remember how you felt. Close your eyes if you have to and allow your mind to reel you back. The circumstances don't have to match those in the ad exactly, of course. If you're a therapist, great, you can easily recreate empathy. If not, though, maybe you think of a time in which you sat with a friend who was going through a tough time.

Once you feel you are emotionally ready for the shot, look at the camera and shoot. Do you see the emotion in your eyes? Is the shot believable, or do your eyes look despondent and your face expressionless? Practice until you believe you've really sold the role.

Attention to Detail

There are a few technical directions to remember in order to take the perfect headshot and comp card images. First, you'll want to focus on what you're wearing before heading to the studio. For your headshot, you'll want to wear something subtle enough to allow your face to stand out. You want casting directors to notice your features first, rather than anything else in the shot.

Avoid choosing busy patterns or anything that will easily distract from your face. Some photographers suggest wearing the color you feel most confident in so this confidence shines in the shot. As a general rule, though, you'll also want to stick with a color that is complimentary to your features. Those with fair skin and blonde hair should steer clear of yellow or pale colors and consider more vibrant ones instead, such as red or blue.

Consider wearing a sweater or dress shirt with a v-shaped collar that will aid in framing and drawing attention to your face. Wearing color-contrasting layers can also add interest to the shot.

Nowadays, you'll want to steer clear from doing any black-and-white headshots, even if the photographer suggests doing one. The industry has moved away from this, because color shots are now much more affordable than they once had been. Remember to wear generic clothing and to stay away from any brands, logos, distracting artwork, or writing on your wardrobe.

Never wear a hat, headband, head scarf, or anything else that is only going to cover up your features. If the casting director can't see your hair length or color, that's a problem. There are many hair shows that require models, and your hair type needs to be evident in the shot to be considered. You'll also need photos that reflect your most current cut and style – never present an outdated look.

The backdrop you choose is important, too. You'll want to pose in front of something that allows your features to pop. You don't want anyone viewing the photo to become too curious or enthralled by the background, focusing on trying to figure out where you are rather than who you are. You can blur the background if you chose to slightly to make your face stand out. However, keep in mind that sometimes blurring actually adds interest. Again, you don't want to keep directors guessing about what was blurred out rather than focusing on your face.

Make sure to always look directly at the camera when you're getting a headshot, center yourself, and square your shoulders. Some photographers like to crop the images a bit too much, so your best bet is to ask for your neck and hairline to be included before the shot is taken. Whether or not you decide to smile can depend on the type of role you're going for. If you can easily play happy-go-lucky, show your teeth. If you're looking to be cast in darker roles, you may opt for a more serious pose.

Your Written Resume

You can create an acting resume even if you don't have a whole lot to work with – or, at least you think you don't. If you have yet to land a few roles, think of some fascinating facts about yourself that would help you to stand out from the competition. Have you been doing gymnastics for years and are a high-beam extraordinaire? Do you win every drop-in dance competition you enter? Can you play the saxophone, juggle, or cook better than Bobby Flay? Don't just throw those things on there, lead with them. These are interesting facts that will stick in the minds of casting directors who may just decide they want to “see that.”

Make sure you include your name and contact information at the top of your resume, with a few exceptions. Never list your home address or your social security number. And, if you want to be extra cautious, you may want to look into using a Google auto-generated phone number that will connect with your cell. Just visit Google.com/voice. This way, interested parties can dial the auto-created number and you'll receive the call without having to disclose your direct line.

Again, having an online presence is vital in today's digital world. List any relevant links (emphasis on relevant) including a website or reel. You can also include social media handles if this is a requirement for the position sought. However, never pass along sites that are going to contradict your efforts. If you have not created professional social media sites or converted your personal ones to professional use, beware of what you are posting if you choose to share.

Sometimes, including a small version of your headshot in the header of your resume is also helpful. This way, anyone reviewing it can easily reference your visual features while reviewing your background and experience, placing a face with the name at the top. Doing so can also help them to envision what it may be like to see you juggling, cooking, or playing a musical instrument. It can also help them determine whether this person would be a good fit both physically and skills-wise all at once. Including your stats – hair color, eye color, height, weight and shoe size, if applicable, at the upper left is also helpful.

Remember, listing incorrect stats in your marketing materials is a sure way to fail without ever really having a shot. Sometimes, though uncommon, casting directors will book sight-unseen without a face-to-face audition or interview. Even booking remotely by conducting a Skype or FaceTime interview makes it difficult to determine whether the individual's stats are spot on. Casting directors have no choice but to trust what you have written down. If you show up to work and you look completely different, this will not only cost you that specific job, but will mar your credibility for future positions.

The other reason you want to make sure your stats are accurate is so that you can book roles for which you are truly a good fit. If you are twenty pounds overweight

and feel the need to cringe as you put this number on your resume, rest assured that there may be a weight-specific role for which casting directors are searching only within your range. Lying will only cause you to lose out on an opportunity. If you really, really, really want to model but you're only 5'2", you can still book gigs. But, you're not going to if you say you're 5'8" and clearly can't even make it to that height in your tallest heels. You'll be sent home.

Your resume also needs to be formatted in a certain way that will make it easy to follow. Casting directors oftentimes go through boatloads of submissions for each role they're looking to fill. Those hoping to book models are often looking for a very specific look and skillset. You'll want to do everything possible to ensure your submission isn't immediately cast aside simply because it's too daunting.

Avoid any lengthy statements or paragraphs, using short, bullet-pointed lists instead. Stick to one page if possible and don't use fancy fonts or include pops of color (other than your headshot in the upper right). No one wants to print multiple resume pages or waste ink on unnecessary added color, particularly when time is money. Consider placing all of the content included into three separate categories and creating a bolded header for each.

Unless you are submitting over and over again for almost the exact same opportunity – and never to this for the exact same opportunity – you'll want to modify and tweak your resume for each position you're interested in. Having a diversified skillset can be appealing to those doing the hiring, but you can save your more elaborate stories for the interview. The resume is designed to get your foot in the door, and the information displayed needs to be relevant and to the point.

If you've done both modeling and acting, consider having a separate resume for each. It's great to be versatile, but sometimes listing both paths on one can be detrimental, unfortunately, due to existing stereotypes. If a casting director sees a modeling-heavy resume, he or she will assume the individual can't act. It's also a known industry stereotype, in general, that models can't act. (Again, only a stereotype.) If the resume is predominately about acting, a modeling agency may assume the candidate doesn't have a genuine interest in modeling, that acting is at the forefront and modeling is only secondary or something this individual does in their free time.

If you have any modeling or acting-related education and workshop experience, make sure to include this. You can also list entertainment-related degrees, if applicable, such as Media Arts, Theatre, or Fine Arts. Make sure to be as specific as possible, though, so there is no guessing as to the type of modeling or acting you have experience in. For example, instead of simply listing "modeling workshop," include the skills learned (i.e., walking the runway). Actors can list "improv," "stage acting," "cold reading," "vocal acting lessons," etc. List any degree-

related concentrations or specializations. You can include your final GPA for graded classes or degree programs, but this isn't a necessity.

Also, if you took vocal acting lessons, don't simply specify that you can do a "British" or "Southern" accent – be more specific. List that you can do a "Texan" or "Georgian" accent, or you can do a "Liverpool" accent. Just like there are major differences between the Spanish language spoken in Madrid, Spain, and in Cancún, Mexico, there are also major differences between accents and dialects depending on the region one is in.

It's important to remember that the majority of successful models and actors pursue training, even well into their careers. Not only is there a large range of topics available, but practice makes perfect. Ever hear the saying "the more I know, the less I know"? This easily translates to the entertainment world. Just when you think you are done learning, you realize there's a new piece you've never studied.

Polaroids

If you are pursuing a career as a high fashion model, you will need to have Polaroids. To clarify, in this day and age, a "Polaroid" is a snap shot that is included in your portfolio and very rarely, if ever, taken from a Polaroid camera.

High fashion is a very specific niche within the modeling industry and models need to meet very specific physical requirements in order to pursue this niche. Female high fashions models are between the ages of 14 and 24, 5'9"-5'11" (5'8" if they are on the younger side) in height and have a dress size between 0 and 4. Males are 16 to 26 years old, 6'-6'2" (5'11" only very rarely) and have a jacket size between 36 and 42.

Of course, there are exceptions to every rule. Supermodel Kate Moss is only 5'7". However, you will need to excel well beyond what is normally required or be born with especially striking good looks to make it big if you do not fall within these requirements.

Polaroids show off the body type and facial features of high fashion talent. These are very natural shots, so industry professionals can see what you actually look like. Again, not all modeling is so intensely looks based with regards to attractiveness. This is only one piece of the puzzle.

In order to take a proper Polaroid photo, men should be shirtless, wearing tight pants or boxers, and have their hair styled as naturally as possible with little to no product in their tresses. Absolutely no hats or jewelry should be worn, and if a model has piercings, these must be removed before the shot. Tattoos are generally not permitted, but small ones can be covered up.

Women should be wearing a bikini top paired with skinny jeans, just a bikini, or a tight shirt and skirt. They must wear little to no makeup and keep their hair down

initially, then pull back hair (for longer locks) in some of the shots. Any piercings and jewelry should be removed, and nothing should be worn to distract from the face or hair. Tattoos are generally not permitted for females, either, but small ones can be hidden.

The 'Reel' Deal for Actors

An acting reel is a great way to showcase your work. This is a compilation of video clips displaying roles you've landed and your performance in these roles. Reels can be especially important if a talent is being considered for work in a location other than near the actor's residence, so a casting director can book him or her based on past experience.

There's only one problem – you have to have work to showcase your work. This means, you will need to have some experience before you consider putting together a reel. The good news is that the reel doesn't need to be highly professional anymore. This means that you can start building yours using small roles in short or independent films, webisodes or web-based commercials.

You should research local productions to see if you can be cast in order to begin building a demo tape. One great avenue to consider pursuing is participation in a student film – this will likely be unpaid but is a great way to get footage. If you only have one clip and are still working on building a tape, this can be forwarded to casting directors in the interim.

Remember this rule of thumb – no reel is better than a bad reel. If you've participated in a few projects that you don't believe truly showcase your abilities, skip adding them. You'll also want to avoid putting together content from a situation that you left on bad terms. There is a chance that others who worked on the project with you will be contacted and negative feedback could be taken into consideration. This is also why it's so important to avoid burning bridges, especially in the who's who world of entertainment.

Sometimes, casting directors won't accept submissions without reels. You'll need to be considerate of their wishes and bypass submitting if a reel is required and you don't have content to generate one. While reels are becoming more and more important, they have yet to be required for every opportunity, and chances are there is still a multitude of gigs available to reel-less actors for which you can submit. The same goes for any job opportunity that requires a specific degree or license. If you don't have it, you wouldn't want to waste the hiring manager's time (or your time) by submitting an application anyway.

It's important to understand that once you've worked on a project, the chances of you receiving footage for your reel right away is slim to none. There can be a whole host of reasons for this, but there is typically a delay because generating footage

takes time and most production crews don't want to release footage until the final product is delivered.

Either way, after the project is cut is the best time for an actor to request footage. If there are contractual reasons for delaying its release, sometimes a talent will need to wait until the initial lifespan of the project is over. For example, you may have been featured in a film's trailer, but were not cast in the film itself. So, you are required to wait for the trailer to air, then for the film to release, and perhaps even after it's out of theaters and ready for distribution before you'll receive your footage.

In general, reels should be between one minute and a minute and a half in length and showcase your very best work, leading with your best credits. Casting directors don't have a lot of time. They are not interested in watching the entire film you starred in or six episodes of the series you were involved with. Just as your resume should be condensed to one page whenever possible, your reel should also be kept short and sweet. Make sure the footage is centered on you and properly showcases your talent. Try to avoid covering other actors or crop out only the scenes in which you are the central focus.

If you've participated in a variety of projects with varying role types, make sure to include different genres that will display your versatile skillset. Slate at both the beginning and end of the film, looking into the camera and stating your name and contact information. Many actors also choose to include text in these portions of the reel, so directors can easily take notes. You can even include a clickable link, so they can be taken directly to your site.

Make sure to include your reel in your online presence, sharing it on YouTube or Vimeo, then adding it to your website and social media sites. Keep it current by periodically updating it as you receive more credits, just as you would your resume. Once you've landed a role, the reel becomes less important than your presence on the project, of course, but you'll need to keep it in your back-pocket to book your next gig.

Modeling Tear Sheets

Tear sheets are pages of print work in which you are prominently featured. A model can "tear" these from the print product and place them in a portfolio to help them land future gigs. You should never simply grab hold of the page on which you appear and quickly tear out the spread. This makes it all too easy for your feature to damage. There is a very specific way to ensure the print work stays intact.

First, grab the publication by its binding. Locate a section a few pages away from the page or pages you need and rip away the bind. Carefully tear out each section page by page or just a few pages at a time until you find your spread, then gently

remove. This way, the work will be left without tears or ragged edges. It'll remain clean and intact after the binding glue is no longer an issue, so you can easily place it in your portfolio.

Secure several copies of the publication just in case you need more than one, accidentally tear the page, or its exposed to weathering. You can also ask the photographer, art director or client for a digital file. This way, you'll be able to print as many copies as you desire (as long as you receive permission to do so). Having a digital version also makes it easier to reprint for a card without worrying about pixelation issues.

Using Cyberspace as Marketing Space

You'll need to be comfortable in your own skin and motivated to market yourself to the world in order to succeed in entertainment. Don't be afraid to celebrate your uniqueness, your own style and outlook. And, dare to broadcast this individuality to everyone else in cyberspace.

It's easier than ever to draw attention to your cause, if you're motivated enough to spread awareness and willing to put in the work. The days of snail mailing comp cards and hoping for the best are a thing of the past. Nowadays, casting your net on the 'net will yield a much greater return.

You can draw significant attention to yourself simply by being motivated enough to get the word out online. This means, coming up with a website and utilizing social media to let the world know who you are. As far as your social media presence is concerned, the four sites that every talent must master are LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Believe it or not, these sites are regularly visited by talent scouts and casting directors looking for new faces. Social media is easy and, for the most part, free to use, so it's accessed on both sides of the fence to help connect talent with industry professionals.

The important thing to remember when you're using social media for marketing purposes is that you're using social media for marketing purposes. You should stick to posting only your best photos and content relevant to your end purpose – getting noticed. Be selective, and while you'll likely choose to post some personal content to convey accessibility, skip posting about stuff that's irrelevant or can be viewed as disengaging or immature.

When you choose to integrate digital platforms into your overall marketing plan, you have to make sure you stay active on these sites, so the content stays current. Look into using a site that allows you to build up content ahead of time and publishes it to your pages on a regular basis.

You should link an email to these sites and consider using one solely for your entertainment pursuits, so you can ensure you don't miss an important message.

Make sure to adjust your account settings so messages from those not yet in your contacts list don't get filtered to spam.

Most importantly, always remember to put your safety first and do your research before meeting anyone new in or out of cyberspace. Casting a wide net can be very beneficial but marketing yourself online comes with a risk of soliciting the wrong type of attention. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

Networking

Once you become entrenched in its inner workings, you'll quickly realize that everyone in the entertainment industry is interconnected to some extent. This means, networking is essential for success, as is maintaining a certain level of professionalism. You must be constantly ready to make and maintain connections with like-minded industry professionals. And, never discount a connection. Brushing off a brief encounter or chalking up a conversation as fleeting and unimportant can prove to be a big mistake.

Creating a presence and showcasing your brand, or the image you wish to present to others, is very important. Make sure to attend events you're invited to, no matter how large or small, as well as any open to the public. Of course, watch out for hidden fees or those that just don't seem legit. There are plenty of free events or those with upfront entry prices that aren't astronomical and truly well-worth every penny.

When you're at an event, don't be a passive bystander. Rather than just showing up, introduce yourself and engage with others, whether industry insiders or other talent like yourself. Take mental notes regarding everyone's names, titles, and positions, collect contact information if you are able, or suggest that you instantly connect over social media if it seems right. This way, you can begin to build your contacts list.

Take the time to reach out to the individuals you meet after the event, too. Make phone calls, send emails, mail thank you cards if you've been offered an opportunity. Printed cards are somewhat of a lost art in today's fast-paced world. Yours just might be the only card the client receives, and this simple token of appreciation may be your ticket to more opportunities.

Networking accomplishes several things. Besides helping your brand gain visibility, acting as a platform for you to hone your social skills, and ensuring you stay in the know, getting out there and meeting new people may accomplish a more specific purpose. For example, attending events and scanning the crowd can help you to identify and interact with potential clients. If you're looking to land a gig, it'll provide you with the opportunity to get in front of industry leaders and do an elevator interview. This basically means you might have a minute or two to meet

face-to-face and pitch your effort. Meeting face-to-face is always more effective than submitting to opportunities remotely, so long as you are confident and present well.

It's important to remain visible in entertainment and maintain an active presence as much as possible. You may have to crawl out of your comfort zone a bit to dig in your heels. In the beginning, you may feel less confident, and even awkward and lost, but rest assured, it will only get easier with time. It takes persistence and perseverance to get your name out there. Then, once you're in, you're in.

Reaching Out Directly to Ad Agencies and Other Businesses

Reaching out to ad agencies and the marketing departments of businesses in your area is a great way to begin networking and to see if talent is needed for upcoming campaigns. You should do so only after you have all of your marketing materials in place. Visit your local Chamber of Commerce and ask for a list of related businesses in your area, or simply Google search. You'll want to get an accurate, up-to-date list of marketing or advertising decision-makers, however, which is not always guaranteed from a simple search engine query.

As you create and review this list, note you are looking specifically for those in the visual arts – mainly, art directors or creative directors. You're looking for decision-makers who are responsible for putting together a company's ads. These are the individuals responsible for model and actor selection, and they know what's in the pipeline.

You can determine which type of businesses are most lucrative in today's economy, and/or consider those that interest you the most and reach out to any that have in-house marketing and advertising departments. Those in the pharmaceutical sector, publishers, medical supply companies, or hospitals are great, and there are many, many others. Don't be afraid of picking up the phone and asking how a company is structured. You never know unless you try, and if you're abruptly hung up on, oh well. Better luck next time.

Professional Memberships

While researching, pull up professional associations for art and design and see if there are member lists available. These organizations are typically full of industry leaders in the field, and some may just be looking for you! If you're able to join an organization or two, this is even better, as you will have full access to its resources and be able to put your membership status on your resume. Some will allow you to join, and others will not – again, it's simply a numbers game.

Facebook has a seemingly unlimited number of pages and groups related to the field, too. If you feel your profile is industry-friendly (i.e., you've taken down any

incriminating content, including any far-too-personal posts or photos), start adding yourself or liking these pages. You may or may not be “let in” to a group if you don’t yet have any experience under your belt, but it’s certainly worth a shot.

It’s important to join like-minded communities on social media, in general, including modeling and acting groups. It’s particularly helpful to join communities that post upcoming events. Oftentimes, you won’t be able to see posts made to the group until you are accepted in. Once you’re a member, you’ll be able to view casting details, model calls, and a whole host of other important information. If you know anyone who is already a member, the quickest and easiest way to join more exclusive groups is to ask them to invite you in.

Chapter 2 – Industry Interview:

Just Ask Aaron: Aaron Marcus, Commercial Actor

We recently sat down with Aaron Marcus, a well-known, full-time actor with over 30 years of experience in the industry. He has been booked over 1,200 times and has a highly diverse portfolio. Aaron has also written and published the book, *How to Become a Successful Actor and Model*, and has hosted his “Book the Job” acting and commercial print workshop over 600 times spanning three continents. He is widely viewed as an industry go-to for aspiring talent.

Aaron is a knowledge powerhouse, and we wanted to tap into this a bit by asking him how he got to this point in his career and where he plans to go from here. He shared invaluable tips for actors and models looking to get their start.

Q1: Please describe your career beginnings. What was life like and how were you feeling when you decided to pursue entertainment?

A: I took a different route than most people who know they want to be in entertainment from an early age. It never crossed my mind until I was 28 and planning to get a degree in physical therapy. I was in college taking prerequisites, and just happened to meet an actor. I needed job to support myself and thought that sounds like fun – what a great part-time job for a full-time college student.

So, I started on my own and it was a tough start. I didn’t know what I was doing. I didn’t know any of the terminology. I found a local agent and was asked to read “copy”. I didn’t even know what the agent meant. So, I went on basic instinct. Then, I was told to get a headshot and asked for the names some photographers.

I didn’t have access to many auditions or know how to put together certain materials. I spent years doing things by trial and error, and really wish I’d had a mentor. You see, agents are not really in the business of teaching you step-by-step. They want you to be ready.

Eventually, I decided I'm going to try this for one year full-time, and that was over 30 years ago.

Q2: Did/do you have any entertainment idols who have inspired you?

A: I never had an idol, per se. I find that even if you're a movie star, you're human like everybody else. But, I appreciate the people I've met on set who have been really kind and nice. I wouldn't say I idolize them, but it's just a nice way to live your life. I have respect for people who have attained real success and continue to live their lives like human beings. Just working is success, not being a star.

Q3: What is the number one thing you did to book as many gigs as you have?

A: Like I said, I did things kind of backwards in my career, using my natural instincts to audition and try to get work. But, that only took me so far. I eventually realized if I wanted to work in this industry, I needed to learn how to do it.

After a couple of years of using my instinct, I started studying. I needed to get some techniques under my belt, so I started studying with other people privately and in small classes. I discovered there really are steps you can take to help you have a successful audition. All of a sudden, this mystery was uncovered for me. I read books, took classes, talked with people, found people in industry to consult with and put together an effective headshot.

Sure, you can wing it and hope for the best. You may make it. There are also those who hit the lottery. It does happen, but pretty much anyone who's had success and sustained it has studied.

Q4: What tips can you give aspiring talent hoping for their big break? What will get them noticed?

A: Always remember you can't take anything personally. When you don't get representation or a booking, I know it can be hard but it's not a personal statement against you. People build their self-worth on how well you're doing and that's no way to live. If you're not getting bookings and you're a good person, you're still a good person. There are a million and a one reasons why you do book a job and don't book a job, and many times it has nothing to do with your audition. Other factors come into play that you have no control over. For example, if you're auditioning for the role of a dad, the kids have already been booked and you look nothing like them, you probably won't get the part. Maybe you're too good-looking for a particular scene. Maybe you remind director of someone he can't stand. There's just so many reasons you do and don't get booked.

What I like to do is – I don't try to book any job. That just adds more tension.

Instead, my number one goal, always, is having a good time. Go in there with that frame of mind, and you'll be more relaxed. You won't look desperate, and you'll exude confidence. Also, never apologize. If you did something and got lost, got nervous, it doesn't matter. Always walk out of an audition like you did a phenomenal job.

The second thing I do is analyze the audition after I leave the room. Did it go the way I wanted it to? Did I take direction? How can I do that differently next time?

Remember, no doesn't mean 'never'. You might be submitting yourself to an agent today, they say no, but who knows what will happen when you submit yourself again. Also, read books, take classes, watch videos, be proactive. Make sure you have the right materials.

Q5: What do you feel makes you most successful?

A: Being a professional. Showing up on time, being prepared, being honest with people. Being someone people can count on. Someone that the agent can trust. When you do a job with someone, it's like going out on a blind date. Why wouldn't they want to hire you for future projects if you did everything right?

I also like to put myself in someone else's shoes. We're working as a team. If there is someone I can do to make your job easier, I'll do it.

Q6: You have produced a ton of great content for talent to reference. Doing your best to summarize, what do you think is “the recipe for success”?

A: Have the right materials – a resume and the right shots. Be trained properly so you know exactly what to do when you're called on. If you're looking to do voice over work, have your reel together and know what to do in front of a microphone. Connect yourself with organizations and companies that will help promote you. Be proactive and align yourself with a company or agency that will help submit you for projects. They know more about what's going on and what opportunities are legitimate.

Q7: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: If you have any kind of interest in acting and modeling, don't dream about it, talk about it, fantasize it, then refuse to give it a shot. There are always going to be all kinds of reasons why you shouldn't do it. Go after it. If you're not in a position to do it full-time or live in a small market, do it part-time. I can honestly say I can live without success, but I could not have lived with myself if I hadn't at least given this a shot.

3

Finding Work

There are several ways to go about finding work as you head out into the wide world of entertainment. There are so many different project types you can become involved in, and there is no need to limit yourself, particularly when you're just starting to build up your resume. The sky's the limit! The route you ultimately choose to take is up to you. Let's take a closer look at the various options available, so you can have a better understanding of which path is right for you.

Workin' It: Finding Your Niche

Modeling

There are all types of models who are very successful. Because there is such a wide range of products and services out there, clients need a wide range of model types. If you fit high fashion standards, great, but you don't have to in order to make it big. There are plenty of other options. So, keep an open mind and don't get discouraged if your dream is to make it in modeling.

Commercial/Print Modeling

Most models find work in the commercial print industry. These models can be any age, body type or have just about any look. They pose for images used to advertise products and services in magazines, digital ads, retail catalogs, television commercials, and other mediums. They are the models you would spot on the sides of public transportation, at business stations, on billboards, and on product labels.

While most people can find work in commercial modeling, some restrictions apply for modeling retail clothing. Adult commercial models hired for these

gigs are normally required to fit into the industry's standard sample size, which fits slim women 5'6" to 5'11" and men 5'9" to 6'2". The purpose of having these standards is so clients can easily gauge the measurements of those hired to market their clothing for wardrobe purposes and visualize how the ads will present. Children's heights and sizes vary by age.

Commercial models aren't held to the same strict standards as high fashion models, and the opportunities available to them are plentiful. However, it's important to remember that all modeling is looks based because it all depends on the look a client wants and is competitive. You may not have to have the measurements high fashion models do, but you do have to have the look a client is searching for in order to get booked.

Fitness/Swimwear Modeling

If you are in great shape, you might consider fitness or swimwear modeling. Fitness modeling isn't limited to a specific age range or height, either. These types of models are often in their 20s and 30s. However, publications like Prevention magazine look for models that will better speak to their demographic and hire those 40 and older. Again, it all depends on the client.

While there aren't specific statistics for fitness and swimwear models, generally clients will only hire those who have proportional body types. This means, their shoulders are proportionate to their waist, which is proportionate to their legs. Having a more disproportionate frame, such a longer torso and shorter legs will limit a model's ability to work.

There are generally two different paths to take here. Either a model is a fitness competitor with large, defined muscles that would be better suited for publications such as Flex or Muscle and Fitness or they have fit, lean bodies and go more mainstream, posing for Men's Health and Women's Health, Shape, or Healthy Living. Of course, the latter option is more popular and will generate the most work.

Many agencies looking to represent fitness and swimwear models are scouting those who are what's considered aspirational. In other words, readers or viewers (because there is often a digital component as well, such as a YouTube video) will aspire to look like these models and their physiques actually seem like they're achievable. Aspirational models generally don't have distracting muscle sizes. They are low in body fat and have more of a "shredded" appearance that allows their muscles to pop for the camera in different lighting.

A lot of models are personal trainers or avid gym-goers, although this is not necessarily a requirement. Having experience at the gym helps with ensuring the model is able to perform for exercise demonstration spreads, that they know the

particular techniques and stances they will be portraying. If a model is being asked to demo a workout routine, it is essential for this individual to come to the shoot prepared. This means, they should make sure their muscles have been stretched so they aren't too tight, and they're prepared to work without risk of injury.

Glamour/High Fashion/Runway Modeling

High fashion modeling, also commonly referred to as glamour modeling, or runway modeling (even though this is just one aspect), includes a small subset of models who meet very strict criteria measurements-wise. Female high fashion models are between the ages of 14 and 24, 5'9" to 5'11" (5'8" if they are on the younger side) in height and have a dress size between 0 and 4 (approximately 90 and 120 lbs). Males are 16 to 26 years old, 6'-6'2" (5'11" only very rarely), have a jacket size between 36 and 42 and are typically between 120 to 170 lbs.

High fashion models are often used by designers to market their clothing lines on the runway. They can also be hired by boutique designers looking for thin, lanky models to show off their wares. The idea is that this particular body frame enables fabric to drape freely and flow, creating visible interest.

Some of the publications that scout these types of models are Elle, Glamour, Vogue, Teen Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, In Style and GQ. Normally, a high fashion model will be picked up by an agency, such as Ford, Elite, IMG, Click, or Wilhelmina. All models must maintain their appearance once signing with an agent, including their weight and body type. In order to get noticed, aspiring fashion models will take snap shots, referred to as Polaroids, which show off their bodies and natural beauty.

Pageantry

There are pageants and beauty competitions for practically all ages, including children and seniors. Of course, the most well-known are the Miss World and Miss Universe circuits for women. These are highly visible and publicized, and what many women interested in pageantry choose to pursue. Children's pageantry has become the center of some hit television series as of late, as well.

Beauty pageants are all about displaying the best aspects of yourself – not only looks-wise, but your talents and public speaking skills. You want judges to see how great you look, interview, and perform. There are typically a few practice rounds behind the scenes, and very specific wardrobe requirements. Many competitions are held in three wardrobe phases – casual, evening wear, and swimsuit. Winners are awarded a sash, crown, and various monetary-based rewards.

Those with intimate knowledge of the pageant industry know exactly which types of dresses and swimsuits best accentuate a contestant's features. Much like runway models, contestants practice the way they present to the judges and audience – including the way they walk, turn, pose, focus their gaze, and where on the stage to pause. There are more technicalities to these techniques than what at first meets the eye.

Making it to all rehearsal rounds and practicing at home, including rehearsing one's talent and potential interview responses, will help to give a contestant a leg up during the competition. It's better to be overly prepared amid stiff competition than not prepared at all.

Parts Model (i.e., Hand, Foot, Hair, etc.)

Some models have exceptionally beautiful hands, feet, legs and other body parts that are perfect for displaying products in ad campaigns. These three are the most requested for both sexes, but there's also significant demand for attractive mouths and teeth, eyes, hair, abdomens, and even ears.

In some cases, you can secure a job as a parts model with relatively "normal-looking" parts, if doing a commercial ad that requires it. For example, you might be booked for a pharmaceutical spot in which your hand is emerging from a grave or your foot is "kicking a habit" to the curb. The ads that generally require more well-groomed parts are those for jewelry, cosmetics, grooming products, and the like.

To be booked as a parts model, you'll need to be able to work them for the camera. You have to know how to hold your hands, how to position your leg or foot, and you may be required to hold a part in a particular position for a lengthy period of time.

If your career depends on your perfect part, you'll have to take extremely good care of it, too. This may mean lathering with lotion fifty times a day, exfoliating your hands and feet regularly, wearing only closed-toed shoes, or wearing gloves whenever you leave the house, and avoiding day-to-day tasks such as cooking and cleaning in order to limit the chance of cutting your hands or drying them out. It's still a job, after all, and you have to be willing to meet the requirements of it.

There are other requirements for each type, too. Hand models must be able to fit sample gloves or common jewelry sizes. Hands typically cannot be hairy, have scars, moles or freckles, and must have slim, straight fingers. Foot models should have slender feet free of hair and blemishes. Well-groomed nails and toenails are, of course, a requirement. Ear models shouldn't be sensitive to earrings. Legs have to be in great shape, free of veins, blemishes, hair or stubbing, and should always be waxed and moisturized. Both men and women cannot have overly muscular legs for most ads.

Plus-Sized Modeling

The plus-sized modeling industry has exploded in recent years with woman between the sizes of 10 and 12 getting the most work. Famed plus-sized model, Catherine Schuller, says the key to being successful in the industry comes down to the five P's – you must be pretty, photogenic, proportionate, have personality and know how to persevere. You also must be tall – 5'9" and above. Typical measurements for woman include a 38 to 40 bust line, a 35-36 waist, and over 40 inches at the hips, with the most common hip measurements being 43 to 45 inches.

The industry is very client-driven, meaning each client knows exactly how they envision marketing their products or services and will be searching for a very specific look. Sometimes it may just be that 10 to 12 size range, or they may be looking for someone a bit smaller or larger. As a plus-sized model, you must package yourself as efficiently and effectively as any other model ensuring all of your material materials and stats are up-to-date.

Promotional Modeling/Brand Ambassadors

A promotional model, also known as a "promo model" or brand ambassador, is a person hired to provide direct interaction with event-goers who are potential consumers in order increase the demand for a product, service, brand, or concept. These models must be outgoing, friendly and love interacting with the public.

Product knowledge, personality, and presentation are essential to be a successful promotional model. Clients are tasked with filling in the gaps prior to the presentation if models aren't familiar with their brand, and therefore, prefer to hire those who are already familiar with their products. This is particularly true of clients with electronics. They tend to hire only tech-savvy models.

Promotional models can be hired to represent a very wide range of products from all different companies across numerous industries. Some of the most common industries that regularly hire promo models include beverage companies (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), car companies, electronics manufacturers, millennial-geared consumer brands, energy drink providers, and cosmetic companies.

Promotional models might be required to demo a product, hand out samples and flyers, and engage with consumers, signing them up for subscriptions or marketing opportunities. Usually, the client will provide a specific wardrobe for the model or, at the very least, tell the model what the clothing requirements are ahead of time. This way, the brand will present well. Promo models should also expect to be working alongside other models at the gig.

These models must have an attractive physical appearance, as their image reflects on the brand's image and the company being represented. There are no industry standard height or weight requirements. However, many brand ambassadors are over 18 (or 21 if selling alcoholic beverages) and slim. Taller

and/or proportional models tend to command more attention, and therefore, many clients hire these body types. In general, the models must be approachable, have excellent people and communication skills, and be able to speak intelligently about a product while maintaining a professional demeanor.

Education-wise, a high school diploma will be required by most companies and many clients prefer to hire models who either have a college degree or have obtained some college course work. Some ask for basic computer skills or experience with administrative work, and often, those with prior experience in customer service jobs are preferred. A client could require the model to use their own cell phone at the gig, so this could be another must-have.

Once a model is active in the promotional modeling world, it can become very easy to find consistent work as long as they are aggressive in marketing themselves and accepting new opportunities. Promotional modeling generally pays an hourly rate. Sometimes models will receive cash at wrap or they will be put on the payroll if the opportunity is more long-term. This type of modeling most closely matches the stereotypical 9 to 5 job, although work hours vary and often gigs run on 10- to 12-hour shifts. It has the potential to be extremely lucrative.

Spokesmodels

Spokesmodels can be chosen for an endorsement or to deliver a public service announcement (PSA). Generally, celebrities are chosen for these roles because they have a familiar face that garners instant recognition and trust. However, this is not always the case.

Clients may want to hire a spokesmodel who appears friendly and approachable, yet informative. This is someone a customer can relate to. If the individual is trusted, it's much easier for the product or service to do well.

Spokesmodels can be asked to endorse a particular brand on their social media accounts or in their choices of clothing. They can be asked to model for print, video, magazine, and television commercials, and infomercials. These models, therefore, are almost a model-actor cross-breed, as they can be asked to memorize lines for their appearance or a company's tag line.

Wherever the services or products are advertised, a consumer will notice the model's picture so as to reinforce the image that the company is trying to create. The whole purpose of the model's appearance is to put a face to the brand. Therefore, these models might also appear in person for product demonstrations, launch parties, interviews, and other public relations events, particularly when a product is just getting off the ground.

Sometimes a company will also hire spokesmodels to do interviews on its behalf. The company will set up various interview opportunities at media

events that spokesmodels are required to attend to represent the company. The spokesmodel will be asked about the product and their affiliation with it. This is an excellent opportunity to generate a lot of positive media attention and bring awareness to the company.

Acting

Background/Extra Work

Many actors get their start working in the background of feature projects. These are the individuals who walk by on a crowded city sidewalk, are shown at a far-off table eating lunch in a restaurant scene, or they're cheering in the stadium. Background roles normally do not require line memorization and they offer actors a great way to learn what it's like to be on set. They're able to be a part of a project's inner workings and sometimes are able to brush shoulders with Hollywood A-listers.

Background talent is needed in practically every project, from television series, to films, commercials, and webisodes. Think about how many people you may encounter while out and about on a daily basis and that'll give you an idea of how needed these roles truly are.

Of course, working background comes with its limitations. For one, you may receive a check, you may not. Sometimes, if you get to work in a really cool project, you might get refreshments and experience, but the opportunity is unpaid. In larger productions being cast by well-known directors, background talent will usually make a set rate, although not extremely high, based on the number of hours on set.

Background actors should not expect the same perks that come with having a featured role. You will likely need to provide your own transportation, travel expenses, and accommodations. You could also be asked to wear clothing you already have in your closet and be required to do your own hair and make-up.

Extra work is similar, and in some cases identical to background. The terms are interchangeable. Other times, actors who are extras in projects will be given a line or two, which provides for differentiation between the two. Roles could include a waitress in that restaurant scene asking to take an order or an especially enthusiastic fan at the ball game who yells a particular line at the third strike. Rates will vary for extra work and are normally based on the expectations of the part.

These minor roles are excellent career-starters. They allow actors an opportunity to mix and mingle with industry professionals and other talent, while learning what it's like to be behind the scenes. Each role, even if it's simply "Restaurant Patron 1," can be put on a resume. Just being able to list involvement in a well-known project will help boost recognition.

It's important to remember that extra work is a job, just like any other, and must

be taken seriously. Actors are expected to show up on time and be prepared to stay until they are no longer needed, whether paid or not. They are also expected to follow all of the client's directions while on set.

No-showing, failing to wear the specified wardrobe, or acting unprofessionally will be career-damaging. Also, never, ever ask a big-named star for an autograph while shooting! This is incredibly distracting and many casting directors have a strict policy against it, vowing to never allow an actor back who does so while on set.

Character Role-Playing

There are more opportunities for character work – which is just that, working in character – than what at first meets the eye. Not only are we talking about Disney theme park characters, but these actors are widely needed for parties, particularly children's birthday celebrations and corporate events. Magicians, mimes, and clowns would all be lumped into this category.

There are numerous destination-based locales that require character actors, including holiday-themed parks that are either open year-round or only during peak seasons, renaissance festivals, destination towns such as Holland, Michigan, or Frankenmuth, Michigan, and Branson, Missouri. Sometimes actors accept traveling jobs where they travel all over or are located in a specific spot for a specified amount of time before returning home.

Normally, character actors play stereotypical or idealized roles, wearing the traditional garb of the character they are depicting. For instance, they would dress in historic, war era costumes, or like a Dutchman, a sailor, or a ship captain. Sometimes, they depict fictional characters, such as Disney princesses. Other times, they represent famous people, past or present. In all cases, they are "in character" representing whomever they are supposed to be, costume, accent, mannerisms and all.

There is quite a bit of character work for those interested only in playing princes and princesses for children's parties or dressing up as clowns or magicians. Sometimes actors will also be booked on cruise ships, enabling them to travel to fun destinations while performing. The key to successful character work is making your chosen character as believable as possible for your intended audience.

Film

If you want to be a film actor, you'll have some tough competition. Film can be extremely lucrative, but it's important to note that only a very small percentage make it to Brad Pitt or Sandra Bullock status, reeling in millions.

Making it in the film industry often includes accepting many milestone steps and building one's resume on the way to the top. This means, film actors generally

get their start on low paying or no-pay projects to build experience, while also investing in acting classes and attending many workshops.

Film work, like any other profession, requires a certain skillset that is derived from experience, and there are a few fundamentals aspiring actors must know in order to hone the skills necessary for success in the film world.

If you've scheduled an audition you're probably extremely excited and a bundle of nerves all wrapped in one. You want to nail it. This could be your ticket to the top. But, you can't go in there sight unseen without any preparation and expect to walk out a Hollywood A-lister.

Your audition will also be referred to as a screen test. The director will likely have you prepare for a more difficult scene from the film's script, performing while being filmed to see if you have what it takes. You must know intimately the character you are playing, who is in the scene with you and how you feel about them. What is the purpose of the scene and your interaction with the other actor or actors in it? Every scene is purposeful and moves the story forward – what is the end goal of this particular scene?

An important aspect of becoming a film actor is the ability to ignore the camera. This means, even when the production crew is zooming in for a close-up or the camera is otherwise awkwardly right in your face. You must learn to focus on the other actors, speaking directly to them as if you are engaging in real-life conversation. Look them in the eyes when conversing and when listening, ignoring the urge to turn your attention to the camera.

Don't get too worked up by the presence of all that equipment, either. You'll have to learn to relax. An actor relaxes by concentrating on the task at hand and realizing that everyone in the room is in this together with a common goal and that is to create a successful project. Everyone is on your side, and if they offer critiques, it's only because you all want to walk away with a masterpiece.

You will also need to get comfortable with identifying where your marks are and ensuring you stand where you're told to stand. A mark is an indication of where you should be on the floor of the film studio, usually tagged with black tape. A camera is set to focus at a certain depth, which makes it extremely important that you pay attention to the marks and place yourself there. If you're standing too close or too far away from the camera's lens, it's impossible for the filmographer to achieve proper focus and you'll be blurry in the footage.

Study the movement of actors in films prior to showing up to an audition. Note their facial expressions, body language, mannerisms, and gestures. Feel free to copy from the best while also creating your own. This is a great way to learn. Once you're well-prepared, landing film roles should begin to get easier.

Improv Acting

Improvisational acting, often called improv, involves unplanned or unscripted interactions, usually comedic in nature. When one's thinks of improv, often the famous television show *Who's Line it is Anyway?* comes to mind. This series involved short-form improv skits intermixed with game show elements (without stakes or prizes up for grabs), and was popular first in Britain, then the United States. Drew Carrey was a central star in the Americanized version, which had a live audience belly-laughing at one-the-spot comedy. As an interactive performance, a total of four actors skilled in improv would ask audience members to offer up topics to act out.

In its true, organic form, improvisational theatre, including the dialogue, action, story, and characters are created collaboratively by the players as the story unfolds in present time. It is sometimes used to develop projects behind the scenes and is a great way for actors looking to gain experience to test the waters and see where they're at skills-wise. It helps actors develop communication skills, a team mentality, and creative problem-solving. Thus, improv is often the focus of acting workshops.

Other Stage and Theatre Acting

According to famed playwright, William Shakespeare, *All the world's a stage!* This can be taken quite literally, suggesting that regardless of the environment we find ourselves in, we can interact and perform. In the world of acting, there are also many different platforms that might be considered "a stage." There is a variety of theatre opportunities, including Broadway, Off Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, local theatres, student-run theatres in school settings, murder mystery events, escape rooms, and church-based performances. As Shakespeare so wittingly put it – a stage can be created just about anywhere for just about any purpose.

Stage acting is a unique art that takes effort to master. Line memorization and the ability to deliver to live audiences is key. Voice projection is a must, so actors should practice enunciating and speaking at a higher pitch, building a believable stage character.

Attending performances will help aspiring talent study the behaviors of seasoned stage actors. This will help with understanding how a performer uses certain expressions, gestures, and tones of voice, usually far more pronounced than in average interaction, in order to captivate an audience.

Getting involved in acting workshops is also important, and there are many available. Actors can also sign up for classes, which often have an end performance to prepare for. Attending as many auditions as possible will help to build experience and enable an aspiring stage performer to better understand how to prepare and how to deliver, while closely observing the skills of others.

Practicing your lines in front of a mirror or video camera at home can also be helpful. Stand far enough away to note your posture and movements, ensuring these are on point. Practice shifting emotions abruptly, too, so you know what it's like to express each state in front of an audience. Timing is everything, and poor timing will look scripted.

For those interested in going the Broadway route it's important to understand the differences between On Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Off-Off Broadway. The distinction between the three comes down to the size of theatre itself, location, contract, and ticket cost.

On Broadway performances, in which many stage actors are hoping to one day appear, are held at venues with 500+ seats, all plays are commercial – meaning, they generate funds – and tickets run \$75 and above. Broadway musical tickets can be much more expensive than others, depending on the popularity of show, and can easily cost more than \$160 and above based on the location of an audience member's seat. Note, Broadway plays don't actually have to be on Broadway Street in New York City, but if they are not, they're held in the nearby vicinity.

Off-Broadway plays are held in theatres with 100 to 499 seats. About half of the performances are commercial, and tickets generally cost \$45 and higher. Most are held in Greenwich Village or in the upper west side of New York City.

Off-Off Broadway plays are performed in locales that seat up to 99. The tickets are much less expensive – usually \$20 or lower and these plays are generally noncommercial. Many times, writers have an idea they really want to share with the world and have to do so with little funding while still trying to build a name for themselves. They opt to go the Off-Off Broadway route with the hope that their work will generate positive feedback and attention, so they can work up to going commercial.

Off-Broadway and Off-Off Broadway plays tend to be far more collaborative and great resume builders for all involved. If you're not prepared and have yet to gain much experience with auditioning and acting, it is better to start small and work your way up than decide to go directly to a Broadway audition and make a fool of yourself, more or less.

If you have a go big or go home philosophy and decide to head straight for the top, chances are you are in for a rude awakening. Botching a Broadway audition will leave everyone with a bad taste in their mouths for quite some time. It's simply just not worth the risk.

The key is to continue to learn and focus on developing your strengths while getting coached on your weaknesses before trying out for a top role. BroadwayWorld.com and Playbill.com are great ways to find opportunities, and there are also numerous stage gigs posted on BackStage.com, StageandSet.com, at colleges and universities, church websites, and on social media.

To prepare for an Off-Broadway or Off-Off Broadway production, submit your picture and resume to an available opportunity and wait to hear back. If there is an interest in your submission, you will hear back. Patience is a virtue. In the reply, you will be told when and where auditions are being held and what to bring with you.

Stand-up Comedian

Making it as a stand-up comedian takes more than being quirky and witty. You have to have a creative mind and the ability to write your own jokes regardless of where you're at in your career. So, grab a pen and paper or fire up your device and start pulling together your thoughts.

The most successful comedians write clear and to-the-point setups. This is the part of a joke that informs an audience of any background information before the punchline, or crux of the joke. The setup needs to be short, sweet and to the point, so you don't lose the audience before delivering the actual joke. Normally, you'll hear a comedian say something like, "So the other day, I..." This is the setup. The comedian is setting the stage for delivery.

Once you've set the stage, a clever and original punchline follows – this is what will make the joke memorable and send audiences into an uproar. Those that master the punchline are the most successful. It is critical to master timing. Jokes are all about timing and your delivery of this line needs to be spot on.

You will also need to understand when to speak, when to pause, and when to stop altogether and allow the audience to respond before moving on. You don't want to prematurely stop your audience from laughing. Mastering this will come with practice.

Write every day, making sure you allow yourself to step away from the comfort of home and interact with others. This is where you will get your material from. Think about how often you think some sort of interaction in your day is funny. Make a mental note of these funny moments and start sharing your reaction to them later in your social circles. See if you can't get a few belly laughs. If you do, write down what happened and keep this material close.

Television

There are many different television-based acting opportunities. Some of the more popular project choices included series, reality TV, hosting gigs, and broadcasting roles. These opportunities each demand a specific type of talent, although an actor can transition from one to the other over the course of his or her career.

There are certain techniques you'll have to master to make it in television acting. On set, there are multiple cameras angled every which way and newbies tend to get confused where to look when they're reciting their lines. They also need to know what the term "frame" means. This refers to the area a camera's lens is capturing.

It is important to understand, as well, there are four types of television roles one could be booked for on a show. The first is a series regular, or a main actor who is part of a permanent cast. Actors in recurring roles are under contract to appear in multiple episodes. A co-star is a small speaking role typically used in just one episode. Finally, a guest star is a larger role than a co-star role, and the character is often the central focus of the episode.

In order to successfully audition for a role, you may need to ask for a variety of materials ahead of time, including a sample of the script and more information about the character you are reading for. You should be given sides, or a sample of the dialogue for which you will be responsible, as well as a breakdown, or description of the character you will be portraying. This way, you will have a solid understanding of what is expected of you and you'll have a chance to dress the part if you choose to – some actors do, and some don't.

If you choose to get into character, this may help the client envision you in the role. However, you don't want to overdo it. A few key wardrobe picks or style choices, such as slicking your hair to one side and wearing a sweater for the part of male professor will do. You may also dress the part for an audition tape, then simply dress professionally for subsequent in-person interviews.

If you'd like to become a television host or broadcaster, know these roles are particularly competitive, so while they don't require specific special qualifications, per se, having some won't hurt. If you have a communications, public relations, marketing, advertising or similar degree, great, and if you have any related extracurricular experience, you can note this on your resume as well. But, ultimately, whether or not you will be brought onto a show or given your own depends on your performance on camera.

Thousands of viewers will be tuning into your show and you have to have a charismatic and energetic personality to get them from changing the channel. You'll have to know a thing or two about how to speak like a presenter, including certain pronunciation and enunciation skills. You'll need to present yourself as warm but confident and authoritative. If you have guests on your show, you will need to know what to ask and when, how to allow enough time for them to respond, and when to ad lib if necessary. You may also need to know how to share a stage with some big names who have a commanding presence.

Television Commercials and Web-based Ads

Acting in television or web-based commercials is also highly competitive. There is a lot of work to be had, but there are also a lot of different types of people hoping to make it big in commercial acting. As long as you have genuine acting talent, however, this is a great option for garnering recognition.

People are often cast in commercials based on the way they look. These spots are so short, they will require a person to be immediately identifiable as being

a certain character or role. Commercial actors should think about what the commercial is selling and consider whether they are able to play that part. Are you a good fit for marketing that product or service?

For example, you'll want to be the athletic-type if you are playing the part of a student athlete starting the day off right in a cereal commercial. Or, you'd want to look like a mom if you're vying for the role of the responsible mother, serving breakfast to the athlete in the same commercial. If you hate the thought of being around cereal, this probably isn't the best opportunity for you.

Commercial actors and actresses must also have a charismatic personality. A big part of getting a role will depend on your personality and how you present yourself. You will want to convey a positive and professional demeanor. Casting directors need to be drawn to you – they need to think you're likeable, reliable, and, in some ways, unique. However, just like in any other entertainment gig, you'll need to have the look they're going for.

Taking some acting classes will give you an edge in catching a break as a commercial actor. There are certain technicalities to this type of acting which must be mastered. You'll need to understand where to stand during a shoot and how to move about the set. You'll need to know how to present and speak, including understanding proper pitch.

Often, casting directors also want to work with someone who is great at being expressive with their face and body movements. If you have to look surprised, shocked, angry, or frustrated, they may ask you to "overdo" it. The final on-camera piece often looks much different than it feels at the moment you're over-performing.

You must be adept at taking instruction and following directions, and you'll need to appear natural and relaxed, creating a believable character. Always stay positive and likeable on and off the set.

Video/Web

Web-based acting is becoming more and more popular now that sites like YouTube are monetizing after a certain number of hits and actors are realizing this type of acting can have sustainable reach and garner a lot of attention. Many actors who choose to go this route are producing films, as well, in hopes that their creations will be discovered and become instant hits.

Web series like *Foursome*, a romantic piece that streams on YouTube Red, have viewers captivated. The explosion of web-based content comes at a time in which viral videos have also taken off across multiple platforms, and the accessibility of the shows is unmatched.

What's great about getting into web-based video production is that having a YouTube channel is free and easy-to-use. Videos are simply shot ahead of time and uploaded

onto the service. These can be shared and grow in popularity very quickly.

Voiceover

Voice actors, or those who do voiceover work, are used in a variety of projects, including radio shows and television productions, filmmaking, theatre, and many other types of productions. Voiceover is read from a script and often voice actors are versed in a wide range of accents and dialects and can speak more than one language. They can manipulate their voice extensively, switching from one to another on cue.

Synchronous dialogue, where the voice talent is narrating some type of action occurring at the same time as he or she is speaking, is the most common technique in voiceovers. Asynchronous dialogue, or pre-recorded lines that are placed over the top of a film or video, such as narration in a television documentary or a web-based presentation, is also frequently used.

Voiceover is used in video games, and businesses often use voice actors to record messages when callers are placed on hold. This is called Internal Voice Recording (or, IVR for short). Voice actors are also needed in many television commercials, movie trailers, pre-recorded public transportation messages (i.e., “We will be arriving at your destination shortly...”), and for narrating audio books.

Voice actors may have an appealing voice, an authoritative voice, a desirable accent, or an ability to record an important message in multiple languages. Think Tim Allen in the Pure Michigan commercials. The could simply have a “guy next door” or “girl next door” voice, too, which is increasing in popularity. This voice is very conversational and has been widely popularized in Apple and pharmaceutical commercials. It is discerned by listeners as trusting and knowledgeable.

I Know What I Want to Do and I’m Ready to Get Started!

Now that you have a better idea of the direction you want to head in, here are some tips for getting started, which will get some work under your belt in no time!

Research Available Projects

If you are a member of Nine9, make sure you are staying active in your Nine9 account. Time is money, and your monthly service fee goes toward allowing Nine9 staff members to take the guess work out of finding and verifying projects available to you. Anything open to you will be emailed to your primary email address on file. You will also be able to view your castings matches and use the search form to view additional castings in your area or across the United States, if you are willing to travel.

You can also subscribe to reputable sites such as BackStage.com to find work. Note, it is up to you if you want to invest in this service. Actors Access is another

valuable site you can use to submit yourself to projects, and Playbill is a great site for stage actors.

Join all relevant groups on Facebook and keep your eyes open for castings on Instagram and Twitter. You can search free sites such as Craigslist to find opportunities in your area but be mindful of the reach free sites have. Competition will be fierce, and you may wait for long periods of time before being seen. You must also exercise extreme caution, knowing there are scammers and predators out there. Make sure you have thoroughly done your research before meeting up with anyone you interact with on the Internet. Never, under any circumstances, send money upfront for a gig, and always trust your intuition – if something feels off, you're probably right.

Research Casting Directors and Agencies

While you're pulling project information from the Web, think of some casting directors and producers you admire or some modeling agencies you'd love to be affiliated with. Gather contact information and don't be afraid to reach out with a personalized note, always including your marketing materials. This is why Nine9's digital comp card and resume are so valuable. You can easily bypass excessive printing fees and submit professional materials online over and over again.

It's important to remember that casting directors and agents are very busy. You won't hear back from everyone, but if you can create a large enough list you'll give yourself a shot at hearing from at least someone. And, whether you go right to this individual or navigate the inner workings of a company through contacting a gatekeeper depends on the way the company is structured. Get a good feel for the layout.

Start Small

Contact local theatre clubs and universities with film programs. Indicate you are eager to work and would love to get involved in a student production. You will likely have to start by accepting unpaid work in order to gain experience and build up your resume. Just as you might accept an unpaid internship as part of a degree program, this is valuable experience that looks great on paper and will ultimately help you to further your career.

Many student films actually garner recognition from reputable industry leaders. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences started the Student Academy Awards back in 1972 to support and encourage excellence in filmmaking at a student level. Past winners have gone on to receive almost 50 Oscar nominations and have won or shared eight awards. Some big-name recipients have included Pete Docter, Robert Zemeckis, Trey Parker, and Spike Lee. Never underestimate the skills of a student filmmaker. Everyone has to start somewhere.

Create Your Own Project

Yes, it really can be done. If you have enough industry savvy and know a few like-minded people willing to put together an independent piece, this is a great way to get started. The project doesn't need to cost a lot of money, but you will need some funding. You can try posting to [Kickstarter.com](https://www.kickstarter.com) or [GoFundMe.com](https://www.gofundme.com). If enough people believe in your vision, the project could gain some backing.

Pick up the phone and see if your friends would be interested in joining you in your venture. Keep in mind, unless you are a jack of all trades with unlimited time in your schedule, you will need to get a few different people with a few different skillsets involved, including a writer, director, producer, set scout, actors, and others. If your project is well-crafted and you market it just right, you can draw a lot of attention.

Hone Your Craft

Not only will you be able to put classes, workshops, drop-in improv sessions, and the like on your resume, but these are excellent resources for getting you to feel comfortable pursuing your craft. The more confident you are in your talent, the more confident everyone else will be in it. These opportunities can help you prepare for your next audition, while providing invaluable networking opportunities. You never know who's going to be hosting the next workshop in your area or who will be in attendance. You can mix and mingle with actors willing to collaborate and put together a project or hone your acting chops with an industry bigwig who pulls you aside and casts you in their next feature.

Play Nice with Others

In the cut-throat entertainment industry it's very easy to get a chip on your shoulder after being rejected time and again and it is only human nature to begin to feel resentful if you've worked very hard and have yet to catch a break. Yet, it is absolutely essential this attitude doesn't come through in your auditions. Acting and modeling are both all about role playing. So, play the role. Learn to separate your inner feelings from those you are projecting in an effort to land a particular part.

This also means you will need to be acutely aware of how you are treating both fellow colleagues and your competition. Remember, entertainment is a who's-who industry and you cannot burn bridges. Often, you will run into the same talent time and again at auditions or be attending auditions held by the same casting director. You simply never know when you are going to see someone again.

Test your emotional state by inviting others along with you to auditions. This is tough, right? You are essentially allowing someone to have all of the details they need to get the same role as you. But, by paying it forward, perhaps this same person will throw you a bone at some point down the line. If the invited actor gets

the part, is signed and makes it big, you may just get a phone call asking if you're available for a larger-than-life project. It's a long shot, yes, but in this industry, you need to take every shot you can.

Keep Working Your Day Job

It's important to understand chances are your career aspirations won't be met with instant success. In the entertainment industry, like any other, you'll have to work your way to the top, gaining experience and continuing to learn. Honing your craft is a never-ending task and booking a job or two should never be taken for granted. Wake up each day knowing you still have work to do.

That being said, you will likely need to keep your day job until your entertainment dreams become a reality. You'll need to be able to fund your aspirations. This can be difficult, because making it to the top takes a lot of time and effort.

If you can, work a part-time position or one that is flexible. You'll need to be able to submit for work, attend auditions, make it to models calls, open calls, and go-sees, and get involved with groups consisting of like-minded people, such as workshops and classes. What's more, you may be asked to travel or be booked on a job in a completely different locale for a certain amount of time. Land a job that allows for some time off.

It will get harder before it gets easier, and life will be a bit of a juggling act before you are fully able to transition. This is a necessary pain, however, and it exists to keep you motivated. You'll need to stay motivated and determined even when you feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and are "this close" to giving up. The end result will be worth it!

Get Paid

When you start to get your feet wet and you're booking projects, you're certainly going to want to understand a few industry terms regarding payment, and there are many. Having a solid understanding of the terminology will help you determine what you should and shouldn't accept.

First of all, you'll want to know whether you are going to be paid hourly or receive a flat fee or day rate. A flat fee refers to a specified amount for completion of the entire project. A day rate is just that – the rate you'll receive each day you're booked. If you're going to be paid by the hour, you'll want to know what your hourly rate is, the minimum number of hours you are required to be on set, and whether you will get paid overtime after eight hours.

You'll also want to know up front whether you will be paid by cash or check at wrap, or if there will be any lag time before payment is issued. Be aware that some projects aren't payable until after several weeks. If you have any trouble getting paid, you'll want to know who to speak with about it, so make sure you

have the name of the individual or production company that will be compensating you as well as the proper contact information.

Often, in addition to your rate, you will be offered a per diem amount, stipend, a commission percentage or travel and accommodations reimbursement – but, not always. This largely depends on the job type, and casting or production company. You may also receive meals, snacks, beverages, gift cards, product and service discounts, and other perks.

If you are working on a “time for print” (commonly referred to as TFP) photography shoot, this means you will not be compensated for your time, but you should receive image files. In turn, the photographer will use your images in his or her portfolio. Make sure you ask for final edited images in digital format whenever possible. If you don’t ask for edited copies, it’s likely the photographer won’t retouch them. Also make sure it’s very clear how you can use the images and whether you’ll need to credit the photographer every time you use them.

TIP: If you notice a casting with a rate quoted as “100/8 + 10%,” or similarly formatted just with different numbers, this typically means \$100 for eight hours of work plus a 10 percent commission for your agency. If the percentage is a commission pay out for you to pocket, more information regarding this will be provided (i.e. 10 percent of...what?).

Non-Disclosure Agreements

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is a legally enforceable contract that creates a confidential relationship between a person or business that has classified information and a person who is given access to that information. This document is also commonly referred to as a confidentiality agreement (CA), a confidential disclosure agreement (CDA), a hush agreement (HA), a proprietary information agreement (PIA) or a secrecy agreement (SA).

The NDA outlines confidential material, knowledge, or information shared between two or more parties. It limits the access of such information to any third-parties. NDAs are commonly signed when new employees take positions in which privileged information will be shared during the course of their employment. They are very common in the entertainment business and are signed to keep project information from leaking before it’s presented to the public.

If a talent has signed an NDA, getting copy of their work for a reel may take longer. They will not be able to release any information until the end date specified on the contract. For example, if a voice actor participated in the creation of a film trailer, there is a chance that he or she may legally be bound to a contract that specifies the trailer work cannot be used in marketing materials until after the film is released or even after the film is available for home purchase.

Now that you have a better understanding of what opportunities are available to you and what to do to get started, let's get an industry insider's perspective on finding work.

Chapter 3 – Industry Interview:

Patrick Hartz, Freelance Casting Director and Co-founder of Spinboi Films

Patrick Hartz has been in the television industry for eighteen years. Originally from Pennsylvania, he earned a degree in television production from Kutztown University before relocating to New York City. Patrick began his career in daytime television, working alongside Sally Jessy Raphael, Ricki Lake, and Montel Williams. He was in the heart of daytime talk show programming when it peaked in popularity during the '90s.

Eventually, though, Patrick began to consider making a change. He met and married Jason Fine, who was also entrenched in the entertainment world, and the two decided to create Spinboi Films in 2010. Still freelancing, Patrick shifted his focus to reality TV and began casting for well-known networks, including HGTV, ID, A&E, WeTV, and TLC, to name a few.

Spinboi Films continues to regularly pitch projects to networks, including reality and ensemble concepts. Patrick is both very busy and very successful and loves what he does. Here is what he had to say about finding work in the industry and some tips he has for new talent.

Q1: What is your process for finding and booking talent?

A: It's a niche, what I do now. For crime shows, you have to find a story and have to find the people connected to it. There's a certain formula for crime. You have to interview investigators and then the victim's family. I wasn't sure about it at first, but I enjoy the emotional, story-telling aspect, with its focus on motive and plot twists and turns.

As far as for Spinboi, I feel I am always on the look-out for something new. It's all about finding a unique concept and developing a show around it. I used to chase people who I felt would be great, but I don't do that anymore. They have to want it, and we shouldn't have to feel like we need to chase them down.

Q2: What will help a talent get booked?

A: You have to pitch talent first, always, then the concept. Lead with the talent. So, we'll plan out the questions we're going to ask and do a Skype interview with them. Then, we'll put together a reel and see if the talent pops within two minutes.

When the camera comes on, you have to pop. Don't try to be something you're totally aren't. Many people have on-camera personas and that's fine. But, you have to be yourself and just have what it takes.

If a talent doesn't pop, we'll know, and we'll have to let them go, because chances are the network will let them go even if they like the concept. They'll ask us to get someone else, anyway. I'm always honest with talent up front so they have real expectations.

Q3: What will guarantee a talent will not be booked?

A: Two things that stand out to me as far as in reality TV – one is doing adult film, because of ad sales at networks. Advertisers will pull out and the network will lose money. So, there needs to be nothing in someone's past that's going to come out. Also, they can't be Neo-Nazis, racists, or have any other extremist point of view. Secretly doing something that has to do with White nationalism is a big problem. A network will research your social media, and they're just not going to go for it.

On a more personal level, I will not pitch a talent who is bullying anyone. If they are acting like a diva and only want things done their way, that's not okay. You can't come into this, without a show even created, and act like that. No one will want to work with you.

Q4: Can you please talk a little about your day-to-day and why “time is money”?

A: Time is a big thing, of course. I have to constantly balance my time between my full-time job during the day and the Spinboi stuff. I tell people, I can answer emails more readily, but definitely don't call me hundred times a day. I have a job to do. Luckily, I can divide things up with my husband.

Q5: Do you often use the same talent over and over if you have enjoyed working with them? If so, what is your process of rebooking talent in future projects?

A: Yes, not to the point where it's obnoxious, of course. We've worked with Sally [Jessy Raphael] a ton because she is a pop culture icon. I also like to work with those who are “smart for a civilian,” so to speak. They get the industry even if they haven't worked. But, sometimes, you pitch certain people and they're just not right, so you learn. We've also learned that some people are great for a segment, but not for their own show. Who we rebook and how just depends on the person.

Q6: What does it take to be successful in entertainment?

A: Without sounding cliché, you have to think outside the box. So many people (when it comes to development and developing new shows), believe a network will want this. So, they find some random talent and pitch them. If you don't look at things from a different angle, the project will end up in a pile on someone's desk and get lost. You need something that pops, that's different. Not everything has to be a

game-changer, but you need to have something that will cause them to ‘perk up.’

Q7: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: If you want this, you have to put the time into it. I’m not saying drop everything and relocate or switch jobs right away. But, you won’t have someone chasing you. Also, you’re not going to get rich until the show is a hit – in reality TV, anyway. This is usually by the second season, not the first.

4

Proper Preparation

You've landed your first audition! Congratulations! Now what?

In order to nail it, you'll have to do some preparation – a lot of it, actually. From the way you look to the way you present, you have only a few minutes to make a lasting first impression. Every detail counts.

What can you do to ensure you stand out and have a solid shot at landing the role? If you ace the audition, how can you move forward and prepare for the gig? Participating in a project takes a lot of preparation, from the first time you appear in front of the casting director, vying for a role, to the last time you hear “cut.”

Hair, Makeup, Dress

There are essentially two schools of thought regarding how you should tailor your appearance on the day of your audition. If you've gathered all of the materials prior to your slotted time and you've taken the time to review these to truly understand your character, you can decide to either show up in hair, makeup, and attire that fits this character, or you can simply dress professionally.

Some believe that showing up in character is a great way for those deciding who's going to fill the shoes to envision you in the role. It helps take out the guesswork. Others believe dressing the part even before you have the part is a bit overboard. You may want to consider what role you're hoping to land and simply go from there.

For example, if you're presenting for the part of a college professor, dressing in character may be as simple as slicking your hair to one side – if it's a male role – throwing on a pair of fake specs or wearing those you already have, and completing the look with a sweater vest and a pair of slacks. Women can tie

long hair in a bun and wear a knee-length, fitted skirt. If you're hoping to land a role as a Marvel villain, however, appearing in full makeup and costume may be a bit extreme. You could, instead, choose to wear a dark color and focus on presenting sinisterly.

The choice is subjective, and there's no tried and true formula for determining what will be most effective. If you dress to the nines with professional hair and makeup, some casting directors will appreciate it, and some will not. The reality is, everyone's different and every situation is different.

Many auditions and many jobs require actors and models to come "hair and makeup ready," which means you will have to decide in advance how you're going to complete your look. You may even be given some loose guidelines regarding the wardrobe required and need to pull something together at home based on the description.

It is recommended, particularly if you are selected for a role, to consider getting your hair and makeup done professionally, even if you're sure you know how to do it yourself. Not only will you have the trusted skills of a professional completing the look, but this will take away some unneeded stress, so you can focus on memorizing your lines, achieving certain poses you plan to incorporate into a shoot, or simply practicing relaxation methods to present effectively. Think of it as the same as any other big event – a wedding, prom, or corporate party. It's simply easier to have someone else step in and help.

There are a few guidelines you'll want to follow regarding hair and makeup selection before showing up to work, especially if you choose to take it on yourself. First, you never want to try a new product right before the big day. If you decide to dye your hair at home and rather than coming out that pretty blonde on the box it looks orange and rusty, there's very little you can do if you haven't allowed yourself any time for mistakes. Similarly, if you sample a new moisturizer and it leads to a rash or breakout, you'll have to pull double duty trying to cover your blemishes. The moral of the story is it's simple not worth it. Stick to a tried and true routine and do only what you know works.

Skin health is largely based on our day-to-day habits. So, before the big day, make sure to get plenty of rest, eat good-for-you foods, drink lots of water, and try to limit stress. Never drink alcohol the night before a job, and limit caffeine intake as much as possible – both cause dehydration. This will keep any puffiness from your face and eyes. When our bodies are subjected to unhealthy habits, it shows. You'll want to make sure you look rested and ready to go.

Before appearing in front of the camera, make sure you do away with any fly-aways hair-wise, too. As far as makeup is concerned, moisturize first, keep it simple, and limit shiny and shimmery blushes or bronzers. Let your natural beauty do the shining for you.

If there is a dress code and you are asked to supply your wares, follow it. Make sure you start selecting your outfits in advance, so you know exactly what you already have in your closet and whether you need to take a quick trip to the store to complete your look.

If your wardrobe is provided, make sure the production crew or photographer has your proper size and the clothes fit. Never fib about your dress size – you'll look pretty foolish trying desperately to wiggle into a far-too-snug ensemble.

Auditions and Open Calls

You can think of an audition as a job interview. You will be presenting to someone looking to hire you based on your skill level and performance. Whether or not you land the job, an audition is a great learning experience. Practice makes perfect and every time you have the courage to stand before a casting director, you are instilling confidence in yourself and building expertise.

Always, always, always come prepared. This means, it's extremely important to understand what you are auditioning for and give yourself enough time to fully digest the desired role. Actors, if you are not given preparation materials out the gate, ask for them. You don't have to show up without a clue. You should at the very least be given sides and a breakdown. Don't be afraid to ask for these things.

Models – make sure you also have a solid understanding of what is expected. How should you come dressed and what will you be doing during the shoot, show, or event? If you are not given instructions regarding what to wear at a model call, default to the basics. Men should come dressed in a white or black fitted t-shirt, jeans or slacks, and dress shoes. Women should show up in a white or black fitted shirt and leggings or skinny jeans and heels.

Leave yourself plenty of time to get to where you need to be, and always show up a few minutes before your scheduled time or the time of the call. You can rehearse while you wait, and often, if you show up after a certain cut-off point, you won't be seen. Industry professionals are busy people and they can't move on your schedule. Being late is disrespectful and won't be tolerated. You'll have to consider the time and account for any potential delays, especially if you know the weather isn't going to cooperate or traffic will be heavy.

If you are under 18, remember a legal guardian needs to attend with you. If you are 18 or older, come by yourself unless you know someone who is also scheduled to be seen that you can carpool with, or have a parent wait outside. Never bring a family member or friend with you into the casting area who wasn't invited or doesn't expect to audition.

Actors must bring a headshot and resume to every audition, while models must bring a comp card. Staple your resume to the headshot, even if you don't have much, if any, experience. At the very least, your resume includes your contact information, stats, and a mini-sized headshot in the upper right-hand corner, which is some needed identifying information. Make sure to list any and all acting-related opportunities you've participated in, including any classes or workshops. Never misrepresent yourself by including incorrect stats or contact information that is not up-to-date.

Once you've arrived in a punctual manner, you will sign in and wait your turn or you will wait in line to be seen. You will either be seen by one client or a panel of more than one decision-maker. The panel could consist of other clients all looking to make an independent decision, or they could all be part of a single production crew looking to make a decision for a single project. These individuals may include a casting director, producer, director, an actor, the screenwriter or a variety of other people who want to have a say regarding who works on the assignment.

You will start by walking over to the client or clients and handing off your headshot and resume, or comp card. If you are offered a handshake, accept it. Otherwise, simply smile with your greeting. If you are at an open model call, you will allow each client room for a comment or two, if desired, before you keep moving through the line. If you are at a scheduled acting audition, you will be asked to perform the part you've prepared.

Acting Audition: Step-by-Step

If you are auditioning for an acting role, you will need to follow a specific audition format, so you come across as well-prepared and professional. How you present depends largely on the format of the audition and the type of project you are auditioning for.

If you are auditioning for a role on a television commercial, you will read from cue cards. If you forget your lines, you will reference your cue cards, which will be held by a person standing in front of you. Try not to make a habit of this, as it will become essential that you memorize your lines if you land the role. Referencing your cards too much will look like you are unprepared or incapable of line memorization.

When auditioning for a role in a movie, TV show, or theatrical play, you read from a script, or sides of the selection you are responsible for, rather than cards. Hopefully, you were offered or had requested the sides ahead of time, so you've had a little time to prepare. If not, however, it is acceptable to ask for a minute or two to look over the lines before beginning.

Don't be afraid to read directly from the script if you haven't had time to memorize it,

but make sure you get into part and express this the entire time rather than simply reading through the lines. You can ask to begin your read again if you get half-way through and fumble. Just know that it is entirely up to the client whether you will be allowed to do so. During an open casting call or casting audition, another person may read lines with you, playing out a particular scene.

At some auditions, a member of the crew may take your picture with a digital camera before you begin, so the casting director can review all the people present at a later time. Be sure to smile and look your best. Next, someone will tell you exactly where to stand. If auditioning for a television commercial, the casting director may start by asking you to slate before moving into the selection. This just means you will state your full name clearly followed by any agency that represents you.

You may be asked to read from the same script several times with or without direction. If you are asked to do so, though, you will most often be given instructions of what to change from the previous read and this is a good sign. It means the casting director is interested in spending the time to see if you can nail the part.

There are a few basic things you must remember when attending auditions. Never smoke or chew gum. If you bring a small tape recorder to record and then later evaluate your performance after you exit, hide the device so that it isn't distracting and remember you cannot share the audio with anyone unless you are clear you have permission to do so. Your best bet is to limit it to your own private, in-home use.

After you complete your audition, thank everyone. If you read from a script provided to you at the audition that wasn't printed out at home, be sure to hand it back. Sign out and record the time you left, exit gracefully. Never linger unless you are being asked to wait for a final decision to be made.

Landing a Gig: Memorizing Your Lines

If you've aced your audition and receive a call-back indicating you've booked the role, wonderful! Now you'll need to dive into the next round of preparation, ensuring you have the role down every step of the way. If you are given lines, whether it is an acting or modeling gig, one of the most important aspects you'll need to master is line memorization.

The first thing you'll want to do is make sure you are getting enough rest. Research has found that losing half a night's sleep for just one night – roughly three to four hours – can limit your ability to focus and lead to memory loss. If you get an adequate amount of sleep, around eight hours or more, it's believed that the brain shifts memories from temporary to longer-term storage. So, rest up and shoot for

working on your lines during a time of day in which you feel you most well-rested, energetic, and are able to fully function.

Then, script in hand, thoroughly study it line by line. But, only do so in a place where you can relax and focus. You'll want to make sure the atmosphere is free of distracting stimulus, quiet, and uncluttered. Turn off your phone or at least place it on silent. Dedicate this time solely to line memorization.

Do the read-through first, then return to it, adding in your character expressions. This way, you will have the lines down and can shift your focus to making the character pop from the page. It's important to know what the character is supposed to say before understanding mannerisms, idiosyncrasies and quirks, body language and the like. These things are all uber-important, but you need to know what the character is going to say in order to know what movements should accompany the dialogue. Read everything and read it slow, ensuring you can pronounce and understand all of the words on the script.

A tried and true method for memorizing your dialogue is to write down the lines on a blank piece of paper as you begin to memorize them. This way, you'll understand what you have down pat and what you need to continue to work on. Research has also shown that completing an action while you are reading is a powerful way to commit the words to memory. Of course, not all tips and tricks will work for everyone, but this is one way that you can attempt to get each line down.

Creating acronyms helps some people to commit lines to memory, too – such as BANDS for the following line of dialogue: “I came from the beach this morning and I saw the strangest thing. There are two calendar dates, beside which my friend's name was etched in the sand.” The acronym helps the actor memorize the key points of this portion of the script, which in turn, helps his or her mind fill in the blanks.

Another useful trick includes memorizing one line at a time and ensuring it is committed to memory before moving on to the next – if you have luxury of time, that is. Or, you can try singing your lines to yourself, or highlighting each memorized line as you go until the whole script is highlighted.

A general rule of thumb is to have all of your lines memorized at least three days prior to production. From there, you'll be able to skim the script and spot check. Of course, never stop practicing until the shoot is shot to satisfaction.

Mastering Your Presence On and Off Camera

Managing Anxiety

Chances are if you're going to appear in front of a camera, we're going to be a

ball of nerves. It doesn't matter if it's your first time or if you've done in a million times. Although you will likely become more comfortable with some experience under your belt, performing in front of a lens is always going to be a bit nerve-wracking.

As you step onto a set, you could be overtaken with nervousness and anxiety. You're probably excited and unsure of how you're going to perform. Of course, you want things to go well, and there are a lot of people depending on you. You want to leave a good impression, so you can continue building up your resume.

So, how can you embrace this anxiety and make it work to your advantage? How can you harness this unsure energy and use it to your benefit?

There are many different techniques and coping skills used to manage that jitters. Actors employ everything from breathing techniques, to listening to music, to rehearsing their lines and meditating on positive affirmations prior to getting into character so they can focus their energy on the task at hand. It's important to manage your pre-production nerves in a way that works for you. Rather than getting caught up with analyzing the level of everyone else's anxiety in the room and what they're doing about it, you'll need to learn what helps you and focus on this.

Much of your anxiety can also come from feeling unprepared. This is why proper preparation is so essential. If you show up and try to wing a gig, unless it's improv, chances are you're going to fail. You have to know what to expect and what is expected of you ahead of time.

You have to trust in your abilities to make it in this industry, too. If you've done the prep work necessary, trust that this will be evident in your performance and enjoy what you're doing. By the time you step onto a stage or set, it's essentially out of your hands. It's showtime, and whether or not you've put in all of the needed work, the show must go on. Take a deep breath and trust in the process. You have to try to let your nerves go in order to fully showcase your talent.

Harnessing That "It" Factor

Having what it takes to stand out from your competition is often referred to as that "it" factor. Sometimes this is tangible – you have the right look – and other times casting directors really can't put their finger on it, but they know it's there. In seeking that "it" factor, first, seek a positive mindset.

Have you ever heard of the law of attraction? This is the theory that if you think positively, you will attract positivity into your life. If you think negatively, you will attract negativity. So, the goal is to retrain your mind to think more positively.

This philosophy can be used when auditioning and performing. If you believe you

will be successful, you will. Recite positive affirmations and remember that every mistake made is a chance to learn rather than something to dwell on.

The “it” factor takes confidence, and the entertainment industry is all about exuding confidence even though we are our own worst critics. Of course, there is a fine line between confidence and arrogance, and these will solicit very different reactions. Confidence is appreciated, arrogance is not tolerated. If you can master screaming confidence without ever speaking, you’ve nailed the “it” factor.

Confidence comes with comfortability. You must be comfortable in your skin and in your abilities. You must learn to find comfortability in whatever situation you’re in and fake it until you make it.

For example, let’s say you’ve landed a co-star role alongside one of Hollywood’s heavy hitters. Obviously, you will feel somewhat inferior and uncomfortable performing with this larger-than-life personality. Just don’t show it. Focus on your role and find comfort in inevitable discomfort. Later, you can applaud yourself for having the courage to keep it together and perform under extreme pressure.

Finding comfortability also relates, simply, to the temperature in the room, the length of time you have to be standing or holding heavy object, the number of takes. Again, focus and find comfortability amid discomfort.

Another way to ensure you are presenting well is to keep your body language open and engaged. Put your phone away, uncross your arms, get away from the wall and smile at people. Of course, you don’t want to interrupt anyone in prep-mode, but you can still come across as warm and inviting and speak if spoken to. Everyone gets a little anxious working with someone who appears cold and off-standish, annoyed, or disinterested. So, avoid coming across that way.

Giving It Your All

You only have one shot. Let that sink in a moment, then go for it. Give your best performance and hope you’ve got what it takes. That’s really all you can do. In entertainment, there aren’t hard-and-fast formulas. You have to do what feels right to you, put your best foot forward and just go for it. Remember to stay focused and motivated and refuse to give up.

Entertainment is truly an industry in which you will get back what you put in. Practice makes perfect, and no human on earth is 100 percent comfortable in their own skin 100 percent of the time. It’s just not in our nature.

If you are waiting until you are completely 100 percent confident and comfortable to give this your best shot, you will be forever left in limbo. You’ll need to muster up the courage to work through any negative emotions and continue in spite of feeling this

way. You'll need to actively choose to accept and learn from your mistakes, using feedback to your advantage rather than throwing your arms to the sky and giving up.

Workshops and Schools

Attending acting workshops is important, and there are many available. Nine9 offers regular Meet and Greet workshops as part of a member's services. These are great ways to stay informed, tune up one's skills or work on building new ones. Because Nine9 offers workshops to members during convenient times, like on the weekends, it is wise to take advantage of as many as possible. Workshops can be costly and taking more than one at once can add up quickly.

Actors can also sign up for classes, which often have an end performance to prepare for. Attending as many auditions as possible will help to build experience and enable an aspiring stage performer to better understand how to prepare and how to deliver. This will also allow you to have an opportunity to closely observe the performances of others.

Not only will you be able to put classes, workshops, drop-in improv sessions, and any similar experience on your resume, but these are excellent resources for getting you to feel comfortable pursuing your craft. The more confident you are, the more confident everyone else will be.

Classes and workshops help you prepare for your next audition, while providing invaluable networking opportunities. You never know who's going to be hosting the next session or who will be in attendance. You can mix and mingle with like-minded actors willing to put together a project or bring you along with them to their next big shot.

Improvisational acting, often called improv, involves unplanned or unscripted interactions, usually comedic in nature. When one's thinks of improv, often the famous television show *Who's Line it is Anyway?* This short-form improv show intermixed with game show elements (without stakes) was popular first in Britain, then the United States and ran for many seasons. Drew Carrey was a central star to the Americanized version, which had a live audience belly-laughing at one-the-spot comedy.

In its true, organic form, the dialogue, action, story, and characters in improvisational theatre are created collaboratively by the players as the story unfolds in present time. It is sometimes used to develop projects behind the scenes and is a great way for acting looking to gain experience to testing the waters and see where they're at skills-wise.

Extracurricular activities exist for your benefit. They're not necessary but they are a form of practice and will help you get ahead in the industry. So, take advantage of as many of these opportunities as possible – in the end, you'll be glad you did.

Yay, It's Pilot Season! Wait, What?

It's pilot season! Maybe you completely understand what this means, maybe you have no idea. But, what you must know is this is a season of opportunity.

A pilot is one episode of a show that is ordered by a television network as a test. This show is created and tested with audiences and executives in order to determine whether a successful new show could be created from the concept. A traditional pilot season is the period of time between January and April when the studios create samples of new shows.

So, if you're an actor hoping to land a spot on a new episodic series, pilot season can be a very exciting time. It means that if you're cast in a pilot that ultimately takes off, you can become a star in no time at all. In any case, if you land a spot on a project, even if it flops, you can still use the work in a reel and on your resume.

So, how can you prepare for pilot season? First thing's first – take care of yourself. This is a very busy time of year. If you're auditioning for multiple roles at many studios, it can be a difficult juggling act remember where you're supposed to be when and how what role you're supposed to convey. You'll need to take care of yourself even if you can barely remember these details.

Get enough sleep, exercise, meditate and do anything else that helps you to feel at your best. Try to focus on staying healthy and active, avoiding fast food pit stops and a completely-no-time-for-me schedule. Try to knock out a few auditions, then take a rest before heading out there again. Repeat this cycle.

Many actors find it useful to take up a hobby that has absolutely nothing to do with acting – such a dog-walking – while resting and recollecting their energy for the next round. This way, you can relax your mind and return refreshed.

Make sure your marketing materials are up-to-date and ask around about what others in the industry feel is likely to show up concept-wise this time around. Any shows or themes they know of that are being or will be requested? Stay confident and comfortable and give each audition your best.

Above all, realize that pilot season really takes year-round preparation and an unquenchable thirst to position oneself well. You must network whenever and wherever possible and get to know other actors, producers, writers and directors, so you have insider knowledge of what's to be expected. Take the time to put yourself out there well in advance.

Chapter 4 – Industry Interview:

Katie Ludwig, Castings Department, Nine9 The UnAgency

Nervous about what to expect at an audition? Feeling unprepared? These are normal fears that arise as you begin to navigate the entertainment industry. We

caught up with Katie Ludwig who has a few tips for preparing for and nailing your next opportunity.

Katie started her entertainment journey in 2003. She says Anthony Toma, founder of Nine9, taught her to not only have a product but to go after clients and agents, networking to build a business. She learned all about the importance of building relationships in those days, going after casting directors at NBC, ABC, Vogue, and other large companies, and beginning to work with them.

Katie says there was no relationship she didn't want to build. She'd offer clients in-office casting space and held big named auditions, such as those for Fear Factor, always doing everything she could to help. In turn, her clients would utilize Nine9 talent in their projects.

Then, Katie left for a while to open Blake Model Management. She discovered a model named Blake in San Diego, took his Polaroids and began sending him out for opportunities. Eventually a photographer wanted to shoot him for a magazine. Then, a casting director for Abercrombie wanted Blake and agent Chris Forberg agreed to represent him.

Katie built on to her business from there, after deciding to dedicate its name to her first model. She did her own photography, styling each of her models and sending them out. Above all, she wanted to teach talent how to build confidence through photos and she really enjoyed helping others.

In July 2017, Katie returned to Nine9 and felt she never missed a beat, picking up right where she left off by sending out talent and getting agencies to request them. Now, with years of experience under her belt, Katie knows a thing or two about what it takes to prepare for a gig. Here's what she had to say.

Q1: How will talent know if they have been selected to audition for a role, and what should they do to schedule their audition?

A: When talent are submitting themselves for an opportunity or are submitting through an agent, they will be notified if they are selected to audition. If a client isn't interested, they won't be contacted. Most of the time, they'll let the agency know if they're going that route. The casting director will provide instructions for scheduling.

Q2: Should talent ask for anything to prepare for their audition ahead of time if materials are not automatically provided? If so, what?

A: The casting director will provide a breakdown. After submitting themselves, talent will receive the materials from the casting director. The process is like turn by turn driving directions. They'll be given what they need. Asking a lot of questions up front is really not the best solution, but make sure a breakdown is provided.

Q3: What should talent bring with them to auditions? How should they present (hair, makeup, dress)?

A: You'll want to look the part, and the way you'll want to present will be in breakdown for the part. Normally, you'll want to stick with natural hair and natural makeup. So, if your hair is curly, keep it curly. Always go based on what's provided by the casting director. The materials will tell you what they're looking for. If they want you to dress differently, that information will be provided. The casting director doesn't want to disappoint the client, so they'll let you know.

Q4: Why are classes and workshops so important?

A: Today more than ever before, with social media use, people need to learn how to communicate with their mouths and have a personality. If you go to a casting for Calvin Klein, for example, and you're really pretty but have no personality, yet the girl next to you has personality, she's going to win. People have to want to want you. They have to want to work with you. That's what classes and workshops help talent with.

Q5: Why is networking so important?

A: Networking is really important, so people can get to know you. Everything is about building a relationship. If you can't build relationships, you can't be in the entertainment industry. People have to remember you, and they can only remember you if you communicate with them.

Q6: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: One thing that's very important is the ability to read directions and follow them. Now that everything's done digitally, you'll want to read through the instructions provided and be prepared. If a casting director sends out an email to eighty people and they don't bother reading it, that's very frustrating. Also, make sure you keep your photos current.

5

Do I Need an Agent or Manager?

If you're just getting your start as an actor or model, you may be asking yourself whether you need to have a manager, an agent or both. Or, you may be asking yourself what these positions even are. Maybe you had never considered having anyone represent you – you had assumed you would need to go about this yourself. Or, maybe you've always believed you cannot get representation right out the gate, or you have enough industry know-how to save yourself some pennies.

If you are at the very least aware that managers and agents are available to help guide you throughout your career, there is also likely some confusion regarding how an agent differs from a manager, and whether you need to have one, the other, or both. Let's take a look first at the similarities and differences between agents and managers. This way, you will have a better understanding of what each can do for you and make a decision for yourself regarding however you should pursue representation. To do so, we will cover each position in turn.

Managers

If you are approached by an individual who asks you if you are interested in becoming a model or actor, this is referred to as scouting and the person who approached you is likely a manager. It is the job of a manager to locate potential new talent, introduce them to the business, and handle the business end of things throughout the course of their careers.

A manager will generate a contract, which will include a plan for working with the talent moving forward. If the model is a minor the contract will be shared with his or her legal guardians as well. This agreement might be called a variety

of things, including a “general services agreement,” “management agreement,” “mother agency agreement,” “personal management agreement” or “finding agent agreement.” It gives the manager the right to represent the model and introduce him or her to agents, clients, photographers, designers, editors, and other industry professionals. We will take a look at general contract terms in the pages to come.

As the title suggests, a manager essentially focuses on managing a talent’s career, handling the logistics of establishing relationships with others in the industry so the model or actor can get as much work as possible. Managers also handle an array of other things for the talent, including any travel documents, visas, contracts, and appearances. They keep in close touch with agents, when the talent is represented by both, to ensure there is a shared vision for how the individual should be marketed and what types of opportunities are best to further this person’s career.

Managers are not regulated by a governing body nor are they even required to have an active license. In some countries or states they cannot secure employment for models or negotiate on their behalf. This is the job of a licensed agent. Managers are far less regulated than agents.

Agent

An agent works for an agency where they use their contacts to arrange auditions for models and actors represented by the agency. An agency can represent models and actors or just one type or the other, depending on how the business is structured. Because it is the job of an agent to secure opportunities for a talent, it is a good idea to work with an agent in order to get the most of your career.

An agent will market and promote a talent in any venue they possibly can. It’s also the agent’s job to figure out where this individual wants to take his or her career. It’s important for talent to work only with representatives that have their goals and best interest in mind at all times. The agent, therefore, may need to explain to a talent only interested in one aspect of entertainment that he or she may not be able to work full-time. If an actor or model wishes to work many hours, it’s best to have an interest in more than one type of position.

An agent works for a talent agency that is licensed by the state and in some cases, franchised by the union. This gives the agency the legal right to solicit employment on behalf of their clients. It also allows them to negotiate contracts on their behalf. Because they are licensed and regulated by a governing body, there are certain restrictions imposed.

By law, an agent must work out of an office, whereas a manager can work anywhere. An agent can only take a specified amount of commission, too, whereas a manager’s cut is unregulated (although many realize it would be considered a red flag if they’re

gauging talent). In some areas, agents are granted the exclusive right to work with and market a talent, and in others, a talent may be represented by several different agents. Sometimes, an agent will represent a talent without a contract, which is called hip-pocketing.

Although an agent's primary responsibility is to seek out work opportunities for those they represent, they also help to ensure talent are working under safe conditions and assist with navigating the details of various opportunities, ensuring each client is getting the most out of the experience and protecting the talent from unsavory people. This is particularly true of agencies who work in tandem with unions.

What Do I Need to Know About Each?

Because the entertainment industry is extremely competitive, it is a good idea to have as many people as you can in your corner going to bat for you on a daily basis. Many of the things that agents and managers do are similar, and much of this has to do with the fact that managers aren't regulated. Therefore, they aren't as limited in what they can or can't do for their talent.

Be mindful, however, that because of this lack of regulation, you will have to be especially careful to ensure you're not being taken advantage of. Agents can generally only take 10 percent of their clients' earnings as commission, but managers are not restricted to a certain percentage. Most take 10 or 15 percent, but some may try to swindle you into letting them take more.

It's very important to work with individuals who have your best interest in mind. The end goal of both a manager and an agent is to make the model or actor's career as successful as possible, and they are motivated by the commission they'll receive every time you are booked for an opportunity. They should also care about where you want your career to go and help to get you there.

Note, this doesn't mean managers and agents are miracle workers. If you schedule a meeting and tell them you only want to take on promotional modeling projects, but you want to work full-time, they are likely to tell you this isn't possible. Yet, they do want to help you get to where you need to be. Don't bother working with anyone who has a completely different vision. This is a losing situation for everyone.

So, Do I Need One, the Other, or Both?

The sobering reality is that it's next to impossible to get an agent to represent you right out the gate. The chances of securing agent representation early on are slim to none. That's where a manager can help.

A good place to start is to find a manager who believes in you and your talent. A manager can offer support and guidance in the beginning of your professional

career, so you have a better grasp of the industry, and can eventually land a contract with an agent. Agents want to know that you have a general understanding of what you're doing before they will agree to work with you.

A good manager will communicate with you regularly and effectively, answering any questions you might have. This individual can help you find reputable photographers, teachers, and coaches, review your photos – basically provide you with excellent groundwork to advance your career. They will do more hand-holding than agents will. Having a great manager will help you, eventually, secure a great agent.

When the time is right, you will likely want an agent in your corner, too. Although you will need to payout commissions to each to perform their job functions, it's well worth it as they will work to make help guide you toward success. You can choose to only work with a manager but understand that a manager doesn't have to help you find gigs. Some will, but this really isn't in their job description and it's not a requirement. Don't expect your manager to be on the front lines networking for you. They take care of things behind the scenes.

You can only work with an agent as well, but you will have to be business savvy enough to handle the creation of your marketing materials, negotiate contracts, manage your finances and do anything else that falls on the business end of things. Of course, you can have an MBA degree and still not have enough time to deal with managing all of these things. When you're in entertainment, you want to focus primarily on honing your craft and getting your name out there rather than exerting all of your energy managing the books.

Of course, you don't have to have a manager or an agent to work in entertainment. You may choose to represent yourself throughout the course of your career. However, you will have an especially difficult balancing everything to make your career a success, and a much tougher time getting a leg up on the competition and landing larger roles or modeling at well-known venues. Agents are there to make sure you land reputable gigs, and managers will ensure any loose ends are tied up. These individuals can save you a lot of time by doing the grunt work while you focus on showcasing your talent.

How to Get an Agent to Work with You

In order to get an agent to work with you, you'll first need to have a good understanding of what you want to do. This means, as an actor, you'll need to know which roles you're hoping to pursue. As a model, you'll need to know which types of modeling interest you. Have a plan in place before attempting to secure an agent. A manager can help you with this.

There are several ways in which you can get an agent to work with you once

you've ironed out a plan, have created your marketing materials, and have laid the groundwork to appear professional, motivated, and talented. Some actors and models are lucky enough to simply get discovered. The agent discovered an actor after reviewing a completed work that showcased their talent. A model was found at an open call. An individual had some sort of "it" factor that turned the agent's head their way.

Most talent believe this is how they will connect with an agent, and it's great to get out there and build up your portfolio as much as possible. You can research a list of potential agents in your area and find out whether they are hosting an event or open call which you can attend. This is the best route to take. There are other ways, however, to begin working with an agent.

Sometimes, a talent is referred by other industry professionals, including managers who have an existing relationship with an agency. They've likely referred successful talent to the agency in the past, which makes agent open to taking a look. They have also been working with a client and know that he or she is ready for agency representation.

Talent can also be "poached" or "hip-pocketed" from other agencies. If you are already working with someone, but are unhappy with the relationship, you may be snatched up by another agency. You'll need to be mindful, of course, of your existing contract terms before deciding to risk working with someone new. The last thing anyone wants to deal with is a court complaint.

Actors can also contact an actor's union such as SAG-AFTRA and ask for their list of franchised agents. A franchised agent is someone who has entered into an agreement with the union setting forth certain terms and conditions of a member's relationship with an agent. Doing so helps to ensure a talent will not be taken advantage of.

Always make sure your marketing materials are up-to-date and represent how you currently look. This means, photos need to be less than one year old and depict how you look in the present. If you've undergone any major transformations, you'll need to do a new shoot. You can't expect to show up at an audition looking like a completely different person. This is the quickest way to be shown the door.

Sometimes, talent choose to spend the money mailing printed headshots and comp cards to agencies and asking if they would be willing to represent them. It's a needle in a haystack approach and they're taking the risk of finding that needle only after spending a bunch of money. However, if you have the extra funds from building up your portfolio this can work.

If you choose to go this route, make it as simple as possible for an agent to give you a reply one way or the other. This way, you won't be left hanging. Make a

generic note, along with a self-addressed and stamped return envelope, that says something to this effect:

Hi, Agent:

Please see my headshot/comp card and resume enclosed as well as a stamped return envelope. I am interested in having you represent me. Can you please indicate your decision below? I can be reached at (provide contact information).

Interested ____

Not Interested ____

Not Interested, but here is an Agency that might be interested

Kind Regards,

Talent Name

By including this simple note, you are providing the agent with every opportunity to give you feedback one way or another, and if they are unwilling to represent you, they can possibly direct you to someone who you would be a good fit for. Again, snail mailing is a costly option, but it is also a relatively quick way, as long as this message is included, to know whether or not an agency is interested while you're spending your time searching.

You will also need to remember to check your attitude at the door. An agent will be analyzing your every move when you're asked to appear in-person in order to determine whether they'd like to represent you. If you're rude or arrogant, you won't get picked up. An agent will assume this is the attitude you'll have when they send you to opportunities, and if you behave badly, it not only makes you look bad, but it gives the agency a bad reputation. Neither of you can afford that risk.

What Can I Expect to Do on My End Once I'm Represented?

You will still need to play an active role in your career once you've secure representation. You will need to pay for your own professional photos, which you will hand over to your agent, so the agency can market you. You will also need to pay to print the rest of your marketing materials, too, and if you are hoping to take any training sessions or classes, you will need to research these on your own time and they will come out of your pocket.

Just because an agent is willing to work with you doesn't mean they're going to do all of the work. The same goes for your manager. You will get out of the relationship what you put in, and you will be expected to put some effort into marketing yourself and positioning yourself for work to come in. Many agencies will ask that you take a class with them to orient you to the way the agency works and how the industry at large operates, so they can make sure you are on the same page.

However, some agencies will also tell you that they will offer select services to you at no additional cost so long as you follow their program. For instance, an agency might offer to put together a demo reel for an actor if this individual agrees to take and pay for a workshop, required as part of the contract. In other words, there is a trade-off, and in the end, the talent is given additional experience and a key piece of their marketing materials. So, really, it's a win-win.

If you find work on your own, call your agent and tell them. This is professional and respectful and will make the agent want to work that much harder for you. It will help them to notice you and realize that your talent really is in demand.

Even if you have an exclusive contract with agent, you can still market and secure opportunities yourself. It is simply respectful to keep the agent in the loop, and this will put you that much higher on their list.

It can be very exciting to be given the opportunity to meet with an agent. However, don't let your excitement overshadow your common sense. You still need to make sure you have the best representation for you. Choose wisely and never be afraid to ask the following five questions during an interview with an agency:

1. How many clients do you represent?

2. Who will represent me from your agency?

3. What is your vision for me?

4. How will you help direct my career?

5. How should I contact you?

These questions will help you do understand what to expect and decide if the relationship is best for you, or if there is potential another agency that will better serve you. Remember, if you sign with an agency, everywhere you go and in everything you do, you are now representing your agent as well as yourself. Therefore, you'll need to maintain a great working relationship.

Remember, too, that just because an agent denied you the first time you attended an event, this doesn't mean they won't see you again. If you were denied because your performance was only so-so, up your game by attending workshops and classes and garnering more experience. Some agencies will give you another

shot. At the very least, the feedback will be helpful for securing representation at a different agency.

You could have also been denied simply because the agent has too many individuals in their books that fit the exact criteria you're going for. Things can change, portfolios can change, and they may consider you in the future when an opening in this category becomes available

Talent Representation Agreements – What to Look For

The language in representation agreements may seem confusing at first, and it's a good idea, no matter how excited you may be, once you have one in hand to request to review it with your attorney before signing. Here are a few things to be on the look out for.

General Services Agreement

A general services agreement is standard. It is termed as such because it is just that – general. While the agreement will have slight variances state to state, it is largely boilerplate. This type of agreement is commonly used and is often coupled with a union agency agreement.

An agency franchised by the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists or Actors' Equity Association will typically have talent sign the union's agency agreement if this applies. Union agreements are geared toward protecting the actor and are usually more actor-friendly than a general services agreement. The latter details services not provided by union agreements (such as personal appearances and endorsements). In some cases, the general services agreement will be the only agreement signed by the actor. Here are some key terms to look out for, though there are many more.

Contract Length (Term)

The term of a representation agreement is typically between one and five years. AFTRA and Equity restrict the duration of an actor's initial representation term to one year. After that, the term can be longer as long as the agreement is reviewed and there is a desire to renew it. Actors offered general service agreements should consider a common provision in union contracts that states a contract can be terminated if the talent hasn't gotten a minimum number of opportunities or income.

Coverage Limitations and Exceptions

One aspect of coverage that a talent should be on the lookout for is whether a representative has the right to take a commission after a contract has expired. This isn't as black and white as it may initially seem. The representative may

have a stake in certain projects for which terms were negotiated during the coverage period. The agreement should account for this.

Commission

Licensed agents abiding by union-mandated provisions cannot take more than 10 percent of the earnings, while personal managers are unregulated and often ask for 15 percent or higher. If a manager knows that the talent also has an agent, he or she will normally match the agent's commissions, limiting these to 10 percent. Transparency is key.

If you have any questions at all regarding your contract terms, don't be afraid to seek the advice of an attorney and anyone else in the industry who is familiar with the process and what to expect in documentation.

Joining Unions

Unions have been around for quite a long time. However, there was once, early in the 20th century, largely unregulated practices in the entertainment industry and talent were often taken advantage of. There was a need to established protections for these individuals, and unions were eventually established to end many "bad practices" in the entertainment industry. Prior to the formation of unions, there were mandatory contracts and many that were auto-renewed without further review, no limit to the number of hours talent were required to work, and the studios could dictate a talent's personal as well as professional life.

Entertainment industry unions, just as any other labor unions, ensure the wages and work situations of members are fair. There are guidelines in place to make sure talent were treated the way they should be while working on a project, including providing for basic needs such as ensuring they are fed and have a bathroom nearby, and they receive additional pay for working overtime. These are the same standards that are present in many different industries.

Complaints made to the union from talent can be particularly detrimental to production companies. It costs a lot of money to pull a project together, and complaints regarding unfair working conditions can shut down production entirely. Producers simply can't afford it, and thus, they often work hard to ensure things run smoothly.

Different unions have different joining requirements. Fresh faces with little to know industry experience normally cannot join an entertainment union out the gate. You'll need to research the specific requirements of each – based on which type of career you are pursuing – to determine whether your career is at a point in which you will be considered for membership. Let's take a look at a few of the most common unions and what the requirements are.

Types of Unions and Requirements for Membership

First, let's take a look at the most common unions and their requirements.

A complete list of available unions will follow.

Actor's Equity Association (AEA): The most common way to join the AEA is to be part of an equity production. You will need to land an equity role to be considered. Sometimes, a non-equity production will get "picked up" and become a union production. If this happens, all actors become eligible to join.

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA): This is an open union. As long as you can afford the fee, then you can join. You will need to perform a principle role within a year, however, in order to keep your active status.

The Screen Actors Guild (SAG): SAG is a more difficult union to join. If you perform in a SAG production and have a speaking or principle role and receive a paycheck, you can clear it with the SAG office and become SAG eligible. Once you are SAG eligible, you can decide whether or not you want to join.

You can also join SAG by working as an extra and getting three SAG-extra vouchers that are recognized by the union. Basically, while on set, the director will need to ask you to say a line or perform as a stand-in for one of the principals, or the production crew has to be unable to fill their quota with SAG extras and will fill these roles with the first few registered non-union actors – bumping these lucky extras up.

The talent agency booking extras may also be in need of talent who fit specific roles. In order to entice a certain look to work on a project, they will offer SAG waivers to those who meet the description they're looking for.

Here is a complete list of entertainment unions and professional organizations:

- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS)
- Academy of Television Arts & Sciences
- Actors' Equity Association (AEA)
- The Actors Fund
- Alliance for Women in Media
- Alliance of Motion Pictures & Television Producers (AMPTP)
- American Association of Independent Music (A2IM)
- American Cinema Editors, Inc. (ACE)
- American Cinematheque at the Egyptian & Aero Theatres
- American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA)

- American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA)
- American Humane Association Film & TV Unit
- American Screenwriters Association (ASA)
- American Society of Cinematographers (ASC)
- American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers (ASCAP)
- American Society of Young Musicians (ASYM)
- Art Directors Guild & Scenic, Title, and Graphic Artists
- The Association of Celebrity Personal Assistants
- Association of Independent Commercial Producers (AICP)
- Association of Talent Agents (ATA)
- BMI
- California Arts Council (CAC)
- CineStory
- Commercial Casting Directors Association (CCDA)
- Costume Designers Guild (CDG)
- Directors Guild of America (DGA)
- Doculink
- Film Festival Group
- Film Independent
- Filmmakers Alliance (FA)
- Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors (HOLA)
- Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA)
- Hollywood Radio & Television Society (HRTS)
- Horror Writers Association
- The HUMANITAS Prize
- Independent Film & Television Alliance (IFTA)
- Independent Filmmaker's Project (IFP)
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)

- International Documentary Association
- Location Managers Guild of America
- Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)
- Motion Picture Editors Guild
- Multicultural Motion Picture Association (MMPA)
- Music Video Production Association (MVPA)
- National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS)
- National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA)
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)
- National Conference of Personal Managers (NCOPM)
- National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
- New York Women in Film & Television
- The Norman Lear Center
- The Organization of Black Screenwriters (OBS)
- PEN
- Producers Guild of America (PGA)
- SAG-AFTRA
- Scriptwriters Network
- Society of Camera Operators (SOC)
- Stage Directors & Choreographers Society (SDC)
- Talent Managers Association (TMA)
- The Black Filmmaker Foundation (BFF)
- Women In Film (WIF)
- Writers Guild of America (WGA)

Choosing to join a union won't guarantee that you are provided certain protections, but it certainly can help. It is ideal to join a union once your career has progressed to the point where this is available to you.

Chapter 5 – Industry Interview:

Catching Up with Chris Forberg, Agent, State Model Management

Who better to speak with about the importance of getting representation than an agent with decades of experience in the entertainment industry? We caught up with Chris Forberg, who works with State Model Management's L.A. Office. State is a full-service modeling agency based in both Los Angeles and New York, which also represents hair stylists and make-up artists.

Chris has a long history of working with both aspiring and experienced models. Born and raised in Michigan, he attended Michigan State University before heading out to New York City where he spent the next thirty years of his career. In L.A. since October 2011, Chris began a position with MSA – now State Model Management after rebranding and adding an editorial division. He works with models of all types, including those who fit high fashion and those interested in commercial television work.

We asked Chris to give us some insight into the relationship between agents and managers and why agency representation is beneficial.

Q1: What will an agency do for a model? Please discuss the relationship an agent has with a model.

A: Our number one priority is getting them work. Hopefully, we can get them into international markets. We discuss their looks with them, which may include haircuts and that type of thing. We also help set up their finances and work with business managers.

Q2: Is it easy for an agent to work with a manager? Is there overlap between the two positions?

A: Yes, this is an easy relationship. It only gets tricky when a model signs with a mother agent and they step in after the fact. It's really about what the model wants. There is some overlap. We make sure the model gets paid, while a manager will keep track of their schedule.

Q3: What is it important to seek representation?

A: Getting jobs is extremely difficult without an agent. We also help models navigate model releases and manage their money. With the explosion of Instagram, brands are now hitting models directly. However, models are finding they're not getting paid. We make sure they're paid for their work.

Q4: What needs to be done for an agency to want to work with a model?

A: We sign who we like – who is right for the agency. They can have no pics and we just like the way they look in person. They can be extremely photogenic, but not

look as good in person. It just depends. Experienced models are easier to book. But, we can help them get marketing materials.

Q5: Can you please describe your relationship with clients booking projects? How do you connect them with your talent?

A: We send mailings out to clients looking to book models. Typically, a client will want a particular type of model and we'll send packages. In L.A., it's all about who's in town. We'll send them lists of guys and girls who are available and ready to work. We work with certain clients time and again and there are new clients all the time, too.

Q6: How should an agency-represented model market themselves?

A: Models should never negotiate a job. Oftentimes, there is exclusive contracting. We will help the model with marketing. We'll set up photo shoots for models. Editorial spreads. And, they pay the fees, if any are involved, upfront or this is added to their account and they work it off.

Q7: Can a model work without an agent?

A: Yes, they can. But, again, it is extremely difficult, especially in this market.

Q8: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: More and more people who don't look like 'models' are getting jobs. If you want to be a model, you should try to be a model. If you don't fit the norm, we'll hold a meeting to discuss your marketability. We just signed our youngest models yet because they're cute and will hopefully fit the criteria to get lots of jobs in just a few years.

6

Should I Move to a Larger Market?

We've all heard horror stories about actors and models moving to Los Angeles or New York City in hopes of landing a big break only to be stuck working for pennies as baristas and feeling as if they are a dime a dozen. So, is it true? Do you have to move to a large market to be successful in the entertainment industry, or are there opportunities in lesser known areas?

Hopefully, if you're considering making a big move, you already know what type of acting or modeling you want to pursue. You'll need some understanding of the direction you're going in prior to going in that direction. Is your dream to be living in Hollywood with your face on the big screen or is it to become the next Broadway sensation? Do you want to be in the Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition or see an ad with your hand adorned in designer jewelry during your next trip to the mall?

Once you understand where you ultimately see your career heading, you can focus on when and how to make your move. The simple answer regarding whether you should pack your bags is yes. The reality is, you can only take your career so far in a smaller locale. This, of course, is tougher to do when you're still a minor, and precisely why the decision to pursue an entertainment career when you're under 18 is truly one in which the whole family needs to be involved.

Perhaps an even bigger question than if you should relocate to a larger market is when you should take a leap of faith and head toward the big city lights. And, in considering "when," you'll have to remember "patience is a virtue." You are much better off waiting until you've landed a few gigs and are starting to build a solid resume before relocating – assuming there are some resume builders available in your area. You'll want people to know who you are and what you're capable of first.

It's also true that you can only grow yourself so much by staying at home. Your ol' stomping grounds may be comfortable, but you can't grow up and understand the business until you venture away from comfortability. In order to understand your full range, you'll need to leave the nest at some point, struggle, fail, stand back up and keep trying. Nothing will prove to be more character-building than shedding a few tears or feel better than making it among the stars.

Once you've been successful in an entertainment hotspot like New York or L.A., you can safely say you've made it. You will be able to go to nearly every market with such a feat under your belt and find success. This doesn't work in reverse, however. You can't spend the majority of your career landing small-time theater plays or web spots on your friend's YouTube channel and expect to have an adoring fan base already waiting for you in Hollywood.

Why You Must Move

Placing yourself where the action happens will keep your time occupied and vamp up your networking base. In order to be part of the action, you need to be where the action happens, after all. You can't expect to run into Brad Pitt at your local Five & Dime. Although it could happen, it's obviously unlikely. However, you can reasonably expect to find him out and about where he's shooting his next film. The same goes for the rest of the production crew and cast, too.

Because entertainment hotspots attract entertainers, there is a wealth of opportunity for getting involved in acting classes, vocal classes, modeling workshops, and other career-building must-haves, too. There are many more opportunities to build your resume in these areas than in the middle of nowhere (from an industry perspective), and thus, once you have some small-time gigs on your sheet, you should consider heading out.

Many industry insiders suggest moving to L.A. first to become famous, then moving to New York, if you want to pursue theater and be the next Broadway star. It's much easier to ease your way in if you have a few well-known California credits under your belt. Remember, it's much easier to get around the Big Apple, though, transportation-wise when you're heading to auditions. Everything is within walking distance, whereas it's much more spread out on the west coast.

How to Prepare

You may be full of hope and excitement when you feel you've earned the ability to move, but once you land in New York City or another big-name entertainment hub, it's easy to feel deflated quickly. The sheer size of the city and the number of people can be overwhelming, particularly if you come from a small hometown. If you've never visited the market you're now hoping to call home, adjusting to the

flow of things can be tough at first. You'll have to learn to get around before you can jump head first into new projects.

Living in a big city can be expensive, too. Maybe that's an understatement. It can be financially debilitating, especially when you're hoping to pay the bills with a minimum wage 9 to 5. Pack light and don't expect to get a large amount of space. Bringing along brown bag lunches while on the go and choosing to walk wherever you can will also help you pinch pennies and stay in the game longer.

Again, don't take this next step until you have some experience under your belt. If you get in over your head while you're still too "green," so to speak, you'll quickly realize you've made a big mistake. It may be hard to believe, but you aren't the only one who is looking to make it big in the industry. The competition is fierce. Everywhere you turn, the person next to you has the exact same dream. This is why so many would-be actors and models end up busing tables and serving coffee indefinitely. They made their move too soon – they simply weren't ready.

Your best bet is to either stay where you are or get a place that is relatively close to an entertainment market and begin building a base. If you choose to spend some time in a city like Baltimore, Maryland, which is less than an hour's bus ride to New York City, you will have plenty of opportunities for portfolio building before dropping much more than it'll take to commute on your monthly rent.

If you live in Timbuktu, though, where traveling to these markets just isn't feasible, you'll have to see if anything is happening near home. If nothing worthwhile is close by, consider relocating to a mid-sized market first. This is a great way to start working your way to the top.

Be mindful, of course, that sometimes auditions pop up last minute and unless you are close enough to where they're being hosted, it will be very difficult to make it there. Live somewhere where you're in the action just enough to at least know you'll be able to make it to a few.

Don't leap without looking, either. Research the area and try to piece it together in your mind to the best of your ability. Visit first. Get a grasp on the locale you need to be in to fulfill your goals. Check out apartments, survival jobs, workshops, classes, auditions, and photography studios and everything else you feel is relevant prior to packing. And, of course, always have your marketing materials up-to-date ahead of time.

While researching exactly where you need to be, try to position yourself well. You don't want to risk losing out on opportunities simply because of the time it takes you to make it from point A to point B. Want to be a Broadway actor? Live near Broadway Street. Aspiring L.A. model? Live by the agencies. Don't spend unneeded transportation time.

Looking up casting agencies and ensuring you are within a commutable distance

before you choose a spot to land will help. How will you know whether your apartment is near an agency? Get a list ahead of time. Always opt for short-term leases whenever possible, too, particularly if you aren't yet well-versed on the inner workings of a market. That way, if you realize you're too far off the beaten path, you can quickly relocate.

What to Do Once You've Made Your Move

After you've settle in, throw yourself into the mix and start auditioning. If you already have a few credits under your belt and you've done your research ahead of time, you have a much better chance of becoming connected quickly. So, get out there!

It's also best to have a manager and agent working with you once you're in a larger market. This is another reason to have some clout before trying to set yourself apart in the big city. You'll need as many resources on your side as possible, and an agent who is local and well-acquainted with the area is much better positioned to help. Working with these individuals may be your saving grace when you're trying to gain some ground in an unfamiliar area.

Joining a union can also be extremely helpful. Once you're in, you'll be eligible for larger scale opportunities in which travel is often compensated. You'll want to scrape your pennies as much as possible and being able to work on gigs in which you're guaranteed a meal, travel and accommodations, expense reimbursement, overtime, and any other perks will help keep money in your pocket.

Another way to get noticed and integrate into the scene quickly is to meet up with some like-minded people – there will be many – willing to put together some sort of production. For actors, this could be a play or independent film. There is plenty of theater space available for rent in New York. Models can put together a mixer or fashion show. Doing so will allow you to network and showcase your talent with the hopes that someone important enough will notice.

Accepting work as a server or barista isn't simply a sign of struggle, either. Many aspiring actors and models work in the restaurant industry while promoting their work due to flexibility of shifts and the likelihood of connecting with other entertainers. In a market like L.A. or New York, you could very well be serving tables with other talent looking to make it big. Connect with these people and see if there is opportunity for collaboration. Don't wait for opportunity to knock – make it happen.

Models should also stay active on Instagram and other forms of social media. Scheduling photo shoots in the area is a necessary way to continue marketing themselves. Making connections with local photographers can provide ongoing work or lead to connections with larger industry influencers.

The most important thing to remember once you're in the big city is to get yourself out there and stay out there. No one will take notice if you hide in your apartment all day. You might have to jump on a computer and submit to castings, but you'll also need to look up in-person auditions and remain an active presence at all times.

Once you've hit a hotspot, you never know who you're going to run into next. This is the beauty of getting away from smaller venues. Fame becomes less of a pie-in-the-sky goal and more of an easy-to-reach reality in the larger markets.

Remember, wherever you're at career-wise, motivation is key. You have to continue to be motivated amid tough competition and constant rejection. You will be exhausted and burned out, having to work a day job while attending as many auditions and events as possible. But, you will get out of the industry what you put in.

Chapter 6 – Industry Interview:

Shelbie Kramer, High Fashion Model

Shelbie Kramer began her modeling career at a young age, working locally in Detroit for Kmart and a few other clients. Then, at just fourteen, she was scouted by Nine9 at a shopping mall. Still new to the whole “scouting” concept, Shelbie and her mom, Ann, decided to follow the advice they were given and fly out to New York for a long weekend.

While in the Big Apple, Shelbie was a hit. Many of the agents she met with tried to convince her mom to let her stay. But, Ann was adamant that they were there to “just check things out” and see what Shelbie was capable of.

The pair flew back home, knowing Shelbie could really make it big if she wanted to. She was still young, though, and Ann was hesitant to let her go. So, they compromised and went to Chicago, instead, signing Shelbie with Ford Models. Since the mid-sized city was a bit closer to home than NYC, Shelbie could work part-time and the two could easily travel together.

When graduation day came, Shelbie had to make a decision between modeling and college. She had already been uber-successful in the modeling world, so she decided to go with her gut. At 18, the 6'0" beauty returned to NYC – this time, alone. She signed with her mother agency, Elite Model Management, and immediately got work. From there, she traveled to Australia and London, doing mostly runway, but also picking up editorial gigs along the way.

Eventually, however, Shelbie realized that she and Elite has different visions for which direction her career should head. She didn't like who she was becoming and needed some time for self-reflection. So, she broke her contract and headed back home.

Now, at 26 years old, Shelbie's a modeling sensation once again in Detroit, promoting MAC Cosmetics and working freelance with many other clients. She

is preparing for one last trip to the Big Apple in just a few months and hopes now that she's grown up a bit and truly found herself, she will be more successful than ever before. We asked her to give others just getting started in entertainment and considering relocation some advice.

Q1: Why did you choose to pursue an entertainment career?

A: I feel like I didn't choose modeling, modeling chose me. I am passionate about it, though. In general, I would describe myself as a fine artist and it's a form of art that you can portray with your body. I danced for many years and went from dancing to modeling. It was a smooth transition. I also love creating. With modeling, I love seeing the finished project and feeling accomplished.

Q2: What does it take to be successful in a smaller market?

A: Promoting yourself is huge. People don't know who you are. You have to get yourself out there. Instagram is a big tool these days. Using technology and social media is key. You have to be real, too, and humble about your experiences—not fake. Go to events in the area. I love going to art galas, visiting art galleries, anywhere where people appreciate style. Find your niche and focus on it.

Q3: What does it take to be successful in a larger market?

A: I like to really show people who I am through style, Instagram, trends – give people what they want to see. When I go back to New York, I'll try to come across as sleek and expensive. I'm going to have my book ready, electronic or paper, at least four images that show my best features – including a full body shot, snapshots, and my portfolio. I'll have on heels with my hair slicked back and natural makeup. I want to get them to notice me within the first five minutes after I enter a room.

Q4: What advice can you give aspiring talent looking for their big break?

A: Never get your hopes up too high and don't let yourself down. Be the best version of yourself, and don't let anyone see any lack of confidence. They can taste that, they don't just see it. New York City is not a game, either – it's no joke. You have to have confidence and really know yourself. So, be prepared. Know and be in control of your talent. Think of one thing you can take out of your back pocket and showcase it – tell them they can like it or leave it. Understand fashion and know a handful of designers. Even if you don't know what you're doing, fake it until you make it.

Q5: What are your thoughts on travel? Is it worth it and why? What can talent expect?

A: It's 100 percent worth it whether it's something you're doing for soul-searching or you're doing it for work. Traveling and visiting new places is a huge part of finding who you are. It forces you to figure things out on your own and it changes

you. Traveling made me more street smart, more aware. It helped me figure out who I am. The world is art!

Q6: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: For modeling, when you go to see bigger agencies or clients, don't compare yourself with others. This creates self-doubt. Never compare yourself. Have tunnel vision and focus on who you are. I came back to Detroit for that reason. I just wasn't ready. Never let the girl next to you get to you – you don't know what client is looking for.

7

How Can I Help My Kid Catch a Break?

Having a child in the entertainment industry is a whole family decision. Parents make many sacrifices. They must be willing to invest in their child's career just as adult models and actors invest in their own. Marketing materials need to be prepared, children need to be taken to auditions and be introduced to the right people. Gone are the days of a child "getting discovered" on the playground. Parents must be willing to help propel their child into the spotlight by getting them in front of as many influential people as possible.

Does Your Child Have What It Takes?

Believe it or not, casting directors and model scouts are looking for some very specific things in your child. It's about having a certain look, yes, but it's also about temperament. If you want to get your baby or young child into entertainment, you have to consider their budding personality. Is the child fussy? Or, largely content? Are they easy-going or stubborn and independent?

Your baby might have dynamite looks and be extremely photogenic, but photographers want to know that they will produce in front of the camera. If that adorable baby picture you submitted is a one-off and you're absolutely sure your child will never sit still long enough to produce another, this is going to be an issue.

Time is money, and those in entertainment don't have time to waste trying to appease children anymore than their adult counterparts. They want to work with those of any demographic that can show up to work on time and ready to go.

You have to understand, too, that photography studios aren't all stacked with go-to emotion-easers for kids. You can't expect for a stuffed monkey to be readily

available to get your child to smile or for the crew to stop mid-way through filming to offer a pacifier.

Yes, they are young and impressionable, and yes, temperaments can, and often do, change as a child grows. So, if you just know your offspring is going to be the next big star, consider the best time to get them started. You may have to be patient and wait for him or her to come out of the “terrible twos” stage first.

If you have twins or triplets, you may have a leg up – however, only if at least one child is pretty laid back and easy to work with. If both are high-strung, having more than one just means having more than one that will be difficult to work with.

If you have identical multiples, this sometimes allow photographers and production crews to have options available. If one child starts to fuss, they can be swapped out for their sibling and, at the end of the day, no one will know the difference. This is why twins and triplets are often sought for roles in the entertainment industry. Ashley and Mary Kate Olsen, who both played Michelle in the hit television series *Full House*, are a prime example of this.

If you have a child who is beyond the infant years, certain life skills that translate well to an acting or modeling career, or to any other career or social situation for that matter, will be expected. This means, they need to be able to communicate well, with confidence and without anxiety. They should be comfortable presenting themselves to others, speak clearly and effectively, and understand basic social cues – such as when to listen and when to respond, when to shake a hand, offer help or say thank you. These things are all teachable very early on, and school teachers actively engage students and help to ensure they develop life skills while also excelling academically.

Life skills are taught primarily at home, though, and this is where a child will actually learn how to behave. Children observe family dynamics and mimic the behaviors they’re used to seeing. Set a good example and become a mentor for them early in life, so they can be successful outside of the home. Make sure your child has developed these basics before trying to get them to work with industry professionals.

When it comes down to it, it’s all about having that winning formula. Your child should be photogenic, personable, have a big personality but a calm temperament, work well on camera, and work well with others. If you can accomplish all of these things, you may just have Hollywood’s next budding star. But, you must also ask yourself...

Do You Have What It Takes?

If you believe your child has what it takes to be a star, look before you leap and make sure you also have what it takes for them to be a star. You’ll have to ask yourself some tough questions first:

Do I have the finances to invest in this?

Do I have a job that is flexible enough for me to be active in my child's career?

Do I understand the laws surrounding children in entertainment and can I respect these?

It's not easy to invest in your child's career – to most parents, in fact, this is a completely unfamiliar concept. When you become an adult and start a family of your own, the focus is generally on your career and what you need to do to provide for your children. Normally, parents aren't considering swapping their own paths to focus on their child's or even thinking about the possibility of having a career laid out for a youngster in the family. This is not society's norm, and you must realize that being successful in entertainment is not an average path to take.

So, what if the focus needs to shift to the child's ambitions? There is much to understand before this happens, and it's essential for parents to invest in starting the child's career for the right reasons – either the child is old enough to express interest or they have star qualities that are evident to those around them. Again, the decision to take action should be a whole family one.

First and foremost, you may want to wait until the child expresses a genuine interest in wanting to pursue entertainment. They should never pursue this career for the sake of mom or dad, or the child's own disinterest will be evident in the work they put out, and they will not do well. It's that simple.

Children cannot be propelled into the spotlight by their parents as a baby or very young child, do terrible on set, and expect to be successful either. They have to be comfortable in what could be a relatively uncomfortable situation for an infant. So, even if the child is still too young to express interest verbally, they must do so emotionally in order to continue moving forward.

It's also important to understand that a child's earnings are protected in many states. This means, if a child lives in and/or is employed in a certain state, a percentage of their earnings will be available only to them when they become an adult. This money is inaccessible to the child's guardians. So, a parent cannot force a child into an entertainment career solely for the purposes of getting rich from their success. Gone are the days in which parents can push their child into the spotlight to beef up their own bank account.

A child welfare worker will likely get involved to make sure the minor's rights are protected at all times. This means, regardless of whether a parent is willing to make some sacrifices and allow their child to discontinue their education or work longer hours than allowable by law, this will not be permitted. Even if a deferred trust account doesn't need to be set up in the state in which the child is earning

an income, the worker will ensure his or her earnings are protected. This industry watchdog, so to speak, will be by the child's side at all times.

Bottom line, help guide a child who is ready to be in entertainment rather than push them into it. Follow this rule, and you'll have a much better chance of making it.

Now, let's take a closer look at some of the laws parents need to understand before their child gets started.

Child Entertainment Laws

Entertainment industry employment can be defined as any participation in an industry production, whether it be film, television, online, in print, on the radio, or the like. Children employed in the entertainment industry are exempt from the protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act and laws regarding children in entertainment vary by state and pertain mainly to work hours and compensation. Many of the specific guidelines have to do with how old the child is.

Parents looking to get their children into this industry must research the laws of their particular state as well as any state in which the child is employed. As an example, if a child is between the ages of six and eight, he or she cannot work more than four hours per day. They will also need three hours of education, one hour of rest and recreation and half an hour for meals.

Casting directors, generally, know that they are not supposed to hold auditions during school hours, although, of course, this sometimes happens if a production is not properly regulated. Normally, a certified studio teacher welfare worker will be on set to assist with education and project the child's rights – sometimes from their own parents. It is the job of this individual to make sure guidelines are being followed at all times despite any willingness on the part of the parents or production staff to bend the rules.

Such a worker would remind everyone on set, if need be, that a child's designated shift is nearing its end. This individual would also make sure the child eats and continues his or her academics. They may even regulate the temperature of a swimming pool the child is required to jump in for a particular scene. They are there solely to ensure the minor's rights are protected.

Children may also be required to set up Coogan accounts, named for famous child actor Jackie Coogan who was discovered in the early 20th century by Charlie Chaplin. He became part of the comedian's film, *The Kid*. However, on this 21st birthday, Jackie discovered that all of his earnings were gone – his parents had spent all of the money he had worked all those years for. The young actor sued his mother and his former manager, and in 1939, the Coogan Law was put into effect.

Over the years, SAG-AFTRA Young Performers Committee, National Policy and Planning Department and other groups were successful in closing many of the

loopholes that made the original Coogan Law ineffective, and in January 1, 2000, a minor's earnings officially became the property of the minor in the state of California. California law regulates the minor's earnings and creates a fiduciary relationship between the parent and the child. Now, fifteen percent of all earnings must be set aside in a blocked trust account, accessible to the entertainer when he or she turns 18.

The Coogan requirements, and even the name of the account, vary slightly by state. In California, parents are required to open a Coogan Account with a state-based bank. In New York, parents are required to open up an UTMA or UGMA compliant trust account. The account may be opened with any bank, in any state, as long as it meets UTMA or UGMA requirements. In Louisiana and New Mexico, parents must open a Blocked Trust Account with any bank, in any state, and in New Mexico this is only required after the child earns more than \$1000 per each employment contract.

Your child may also need a work permit on file or some sort of written consent in order to begin working. The requirements, again, vary by state, and it's important to review the requirements of any areas of interest prior to accepting any bookings.

What Can I Do to Get Started?

The very first thing you should do is gauge the child's interest in the industry. Does your child really want to do this? Or, if they are still very young, do they have the temperament to do this? Are you sure? Consider getting him or her in front of a camera as often as possible to see how they react. Do they smile naturally or shed tears? Do they have a flawless expression in almost every photo or are they squinting and shying away from the device?

Then, ask yourself if you have what it takes. This career can be grueling. There will be many, many sacrifices you'll have to make and such a career requires a significant amount of funding. Since you are working with a minor and you are the guardian of this minor, you are responsible for fees associated with marketing materials, classes, workshops, travel, and everything else that goes into getting your child out there.

If you are comfortable with this reality, then do your research. It is absolutely necessary to understand the inner workings of the industry and how to position your child for success. Understand all applicable laws in your state and in any other locations you plan to have your child work and stay constantly abreast of industry changes particularly as technology changes.

Parents must not only understand the laws pertaining to having their child in the entertainment industry, but they need to understand where the opportunities are and how they're going to get their child to them. Let's take a closer look at these options.

Start at School

If you're looking to get a school-aged child started in the business, the best place to prepare before you venture out is right in the child's school. Particularly once that child is in middle school, and certainly during the final four years, there is a wealth of opportunity to get involved in debate teams, speech classes, drama clubs, and theatre. These activities will help a budding star learn out to present, speak, and move in front of others, including live audiences – skills that are obviously essential to break into acting or modeling.

Starting in a relatively comfortable environment, in which the youngster can learn these skills amid classmates and friends will allow them to more freely express themselves in preparation for the wider world. It will also help determine whether they truly want to pursue an entertainment career and do this all the time rather than during specified periods over a certain number of weeks.

If you are getting them started in entertainment while they are also involved in similar school activities, this is a great way to keep them practicing as well. Since school theater programs have kids audition for the roles they will be playing at the end of the term, this is a great opportunity for them to practice rehearsing, line memorization, presentation and placement, dressing the part, auditioning for decision-makers and performing in front of a live audience.

Often, companies like Disney look for children who have on-stage experience even if it's just performing in a school play. Casting directors realize this is a perfect place to start learning the fundamentals of entertaining.

Getting comfortable with presenting in front of others is also important regardless of whether the student is looking to pursue acting or modeling, or really any other professional position. Remember, too, that modeling includes many aspects of acting whether or not this is immediately evident. Models must be comfortable presenting themselves to others. They display nonverbal personality and confidence through body movements and visual cues, such as the way they carry themselves. If an aspiring model has never learned to be comfortable being the center of attention, he or she will have a hard time "performing" for modeling agencies, scouts, and clients.

Look into the various programs offered through your student's school and see if something seems like a good fit for transitioning into entertainment. The sooner you do your research, the better. If you've searched high and low and there really aren't any opportunities available, try seeking out programs in the community at large, including classes and workshops.

Classes and Workshops

Oftentimes, your local community groups will offer modeling and acting classes, as well as drama, theater, speech, and debate opportunities that will help your budding

stars get comfortable with expressing themselves. Getting started by enrolling a child in a modeling or acting class is a great first step. Having a minor attend a workshop is another great option. Before enrolling in a class and dishing out any money, ask if an audit is available. In other words, can you and your child sit in on one class to see if it's the right opportunity?

Classes are formatted to teach children the ins and out of entertainment. They tend to focus on confidence building, speaking in front of the camera, building emotion, and other general skills that will not only be helpful for this career path, but will translate to many different aspects of life. If a child can learn to be confident in front of a camera, for instance, he or she is much more likely to be confident just about anywhere. The camera is especially intimidating, and overcoming this hurdle is a major milestone.

Instructors will also practice relaxation techniques and work with the children on method acting, basically asking that the child summon particular emotions he or she felt during certain life situations. For example, if there is a scene in which the child needs to be angry, the instructor is likely to ask about another time in recent history in which the child was angry. Once they come up with it – “When mom put me in time out!” – it's easier to reproduce the same emotion.

They will also work with the kids on line memorization. Since they are already set up to practice memorizing content in school, this is much easier for kids to do than parents might expect. Instructors often ask kids to visualize certain images or practice repetition.

Parents looking to get their children into classes should ask during their search: Is there an audit available? Can we come in and watch the class prior to signing up? Who are the teachers? What kinds of experiences have they had in the business? What types of things are done in class? (i.e., working with scripts, improv, on-camera experience, practicing runway struts and pivoting, etc.)

Also, make sure to research online reviews and see how a class fares on Yelp, Google, and similar sites. What are other parents saying? Is the program worth it?

Mid-way through a series of classes or at the end of a single class, check in with your child to see if they are still genuinely interested in pursuing an entertainment career. Has the class made the proposition more exciting, or are they largely disengaged or disinterested now that they've had some exposure?

Child Modeling

If you have the most adorable kid in the world and you just know they can be the next “it” thing in child modeling, there are a few things you'll need to know to get them started.

First, it's important to note that the most popular ages to get children into the

industry – the ages with the most gigs available – are birth to 18 months and 3+ years. Yes, those in their terrible twos are excluded for a reason. Clients are looking for children who are very easygoing and easy to work with. They are also looking for kids with classic good looks and often prefer smaller children who can be cast in their actual age group or younger.

Again, parents must be willing to dedicate their money, time, and effort to their child's modeling success. This means, they have to be flexible enough to get them to open casting calls and last-minute go-sees, get them measured, and pick up wardrobes ahead of time. They must be willing to transport them to a set and be open to traveling. It's the real deal – as real as any adult entertainment career.

Parents also need to realize children who are just starting out in the industry typically do editorial spreads for magazines, which pay around \$100 per hour for a two-hour shoot. This is a decent paycheck, but there is no get-rich-quick formula. Like any other job, modeling is hard work and the amount earned will be based on both the parent's and the child's motivation to make it. If one or the other is too exhausted or becomes disengaged, it's over.

Note that there is also typically no guarantee that a child's photographs will actually be used in the end product. Photographers often double- and triple-book, lining up more than one child for a shoot just in case one acts up. The client will ultimately select the best shots from a few different options. This is not always the case, but it does happen. The child will be paid for his or her time either way but may not be able to add ad images to the portfolio.

Pay rates for child modeling tend to increase with the child's age. Parents who get their kids in early can expect the rate to double by the time the child is five and they'll receive even more in the teenaged years. There is also a sizable market for twins and triplets of all ages. Sometimes the entire set is used, other times only one twin or one or two of the triplets will be used.

The best thing a parent can do is get their child into a reputable agency that focuses specifically on this demographic. Searching the Better Business Bureau's site is a good place to start.

Industry Players Looking for Children

A big question parents often want to know when they're first getting their child started is – which companies focus specifically on child models and actors? Think first of the sheer multitude of products marketed to children. What are some of the top brands that come to mind? How about Disney, Tyco, Mattel, Crayola, Carter's, Children's Place, Justice, Hasbro, Fisher-Price?

Disney in itself is comprised of so many assets, it can be mind-boggling. The company is the world's second largest media company and there is a wealth of potential for your budding star in everything from corporate ads to theatre, films, television shows, and commercials.

These are the companies that you'll want to hook up with (and there are many, many others), eventually. Of course, just as with any other acting or modeling job, you'll likely have to build up your child's resume first, which means, accepting little to no pay opportunities until you have a few under your belt. Landing it big the first go-round is extremely rare.

If you have an aspiring actor, try getting involved with an independent film. If your child wants to model, keep your eyes peeled for local retailers who are taking on a new marketing campaign. Get your child into classes and workshops. Then, when you feel you've done enough groundwork, research how the bigger names cast for their campaigns.

Find out if they cast for ads internally or work with third-party casting companies and agencies. The Internet is your best friend. Look for a list of marketing contacts and begin cold calling – what will it hurt? As with any entertainment position, it's a numbers game. Eventually, you'll connect with someone willing to give your child a shot.

A Word of Warning, and a Bit of Advice

As your child embarks on an entertainment career, it's important to note that there are many predators out and you have to be extra safe to ensure the safety of your child. However, it's important to note that, often, your child will be taken out of your sight for a variety of reasons, including for photography, rehearsing, acting classes, auditions, interviews, and coaching.

Understandably, it can be nerve-wrecking the first time you hear, "It would be better if you just dropped her off." Many activities, in fact, inside and outside of the entertainment realm request this because kids tend to listen to instructions more closely and produce better when their parents aren't there to watch their every move. This is common in many sports and lessons, such as dance, singing, piano and other musical instruments, art, as well as in camps.

We can't always be with our children in everything they do. This is normal. After all, we wouldn't sit beside them at their desks in school and help them with their work. We wouldn't keep them from ever hanging out with their friends. We wouldn't disallow them from attending birthday parties, play dates, and other related activities and events. There has to be some level of trust, so your child eventually evolves into a level-headed, independent adult.

The same goes in the entertainment industry. There will be many times that professionals want to work with your child and you must let them work with your child. This means, however, that you must always do your research and trust your instinct. If a situation doesn't seem right or if you feel uncomfortable leaving your child with someone, don't. It's never worth going against your best judgment. And, you can always stay nearby, waiting in a separate room or in the parking lot.

That being said, if your child is over the age of eighteen, no one in entertainment will want you there holding their hand. Even if he or she is still under your roof, they are a legal adult and will be treated as such. You can still work with them to ensure their success – even manage them, if this is something you two agree to – but they will need to attend auditions, appointments, and gigs by themselves. Just as you wouldn't walk into a job interview with them, or flip burgers with them at their part-time fast-food job, you can't expect to be on set or stage, or hovering over a photographer's shoulder during a shoot.

What you can do is quietly sit outside or nearby, away from the project hustle and bustle and wait for the job to be completed. You can ask your child a million questions about it afterwards. You can commute them back and forth. You can still be actively involved, just as you can still be on the sidelines of sporting events and dance competitions, cheering them on. You will just need to be comfortable letting them work independently when work needs to be done.

Chapter 7 – Industry Interview:

Ann Kramer, Mother of Model Shelbie Kramer

Shelbie Kramer, already 6'0" at the age of 14, was scouted in a mall, and although she had done some modeling at a very young age for Kmart, her mother Ann was leery at first. She didn't really know what to expect and what it meant to "be scouted."

Ann had always been Shelbie's biggest advocate and supporter and had begun mentoring her in her modeling pursuits when her daughter was still very young. But, she never expected for her to be approached at a shopping mall.

At the time, Ann says they were both still "green" and the two would try to just go with the flow, showing up wherever they were told to go. They took a long weekend to travel to New York City, where they met with several agencies who were very interested in furthering Shelbie's career.

Ann was asked to keep her young, impressionable daughter in the big city that weekend and she refused, digging in her heels. She wanted her daughter to "have a normal life." Shelbie was still far too young, and they would have to front her expenses.

So, the duo came back home for a time, both knowing Shelbie was made to model. Everyone they knew thought so and they would be asked if she was a model everywhere they went. That's when Ann decided to compromise and sign Shelbie with Ford Models in Chicago. Closer to Detroit than NYC, Chicago offered her daughter the ability to work part-time. They could make the drive back and forth together.

In Chicago, Shelbie was routinely asked to travel with other models to gigs, but

Ann just wasn't comfortable with this. So, they she decided to stay with her at a model apartment where other models routinely came and went and went with her to jobs. The apartment only cost approximately \$20 per day, and since she was already paying for their food, gas, and Shelbie's marketing materials, this was a welcomed savings.

At one point, Ann had to have a heart-to-heart with her daughter after she realized Shelbie's expenses were outweighing her income. She called the agency and asked them to front Shelbie money, so she could continue to work. It was worth a shot – and it paid off. Ford agreed, and Shelbie was able to continue getting more and more experience.

Over the course of their journey, it became evident that Shelbie's height made it difficult for her to do catalogs, although she still realized some success, particularly with bridal magazines. She was more cut out for the runway. NYC was where she needed to be.

At 18, Shelbie went back – this time, alone. Ann knew she had to let her go so she could grow and find herself. Shelbie did New York Fashion week, strutting her stuff on the runway. Ann flew out to watch.

The still-young model gained some great experience in the Big Apple, but the pressure was immense. Shelbie was constantly being measured, told to lose weight, and comparing herself to other girls. So, she came home and is working the Detroit market once again.

We caught up with Ann to get her insight on what it's like to have a child make it big in entertainment.

Q1: What made Shelbie pursue entertainment and what made you decide to help?

A: We had a lot of people constantly say she has to go into modeling. I sent some pictures when she was still little to our Michigan contacts and she got five contracts. Shelbie worked with Kmart and with different Michigan-based companies. She did fun stuff. I wanted to gage her interest by starting her off locally to see if this was really something we should do.

Q2: What must every parent know about getting their child started in the industry? What, if any, sacrifices must be made?

A: Find out everything that's involved. Sit down with the agency. I sent Shelbie to a lawyer right away to review her contract. When they're little, be with them, and start local to see if they even like it. Ask every question you can. You have to stick up for them. If something doesn't seem right, speak up.

Q3: What specific documentation is needed for a minor to work and how did you figure out exactly what was needed?

A: If they're working with an agency – the contract. The agency should take no more than 20 percent of the top. We reviewed everything to see how much would cost. We didn't have to get a work permit, but I was upfront with her school and went and talked to principal. She ended up missing a lot of school, so Shelbie had to write a report about what modeling was doing for her.

Q4: How can you comfort a child who has been turned down for projects?

A: I would tell Shelbie, you know what, you are a strong, beautiful girl, you just aren't the right fit for this one. It doesn't mean you're any less. I tried to make her strong in who she is and would always tell her there's a lot more that you're going to be, than not going to be. There will be disappointments in life, these are just some of them. Shrug it off.

Q5: Do you have to travel or relocate? What markets are best for children?

A: No, stay within your own state, stay in the city in which you live if you can, at least initially. Make it fun. The best market is your home market.

Q6: Do child actors or models find life-long success? Why or why not?

A: As they realize how much it costs and how much pressure there is, many come back home. They try it for a little bit, realize it's not as glamorous as they expect, then choose to stay local, still doing some stuff while going back to school.

Q7: Anything else you feel would be helpful from your own unique perspective?

A: Be strong for your kids, go with them when they're getting started. If they're happy with what they're doing, continue. If they don't like it, get out of it. It should be fun. Realize, too, that you have to have the money to make money.

8

What Nine9 UnAgency Has to Offer

If you've decided to fill out an application with Nine9 The UnAgency, you've achieved the milestone first step of deciding to pursue your dreams and actually doing something about it. Pat yourself on the back! You've made a great decision.

Nine9 knows the entertainment industry is much bigger than its stereotypes, and the company serves the 99 percent of models and actors who aren't represented by an agency. In doing so, Nine9 provides aspiring talent with the tools, opportunities, and support necessary to begin and advance their careers, while also helping casting directors and other industry professionals find talent for their projects. It's a win-win.

A Proven Process in Four Steps

The process Nine9 uses to help talent realize success in the entertainment industry follows four steps – Want It, Get Started, Grow, and Be Active. Let's take a look at each in turn.

Want It

It almost goes without saying, you really have to want to be in entertainment, and you have to want to be successful. Motivation is key. If you lack motivation to achieve your dreams, you never will. As the famed hockey player, Wayne Gretzky, once said, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." It's that simple. You have to want this.

Many of Hollywood's A-listers once worked odd jobs to support a seemingly far-fetched, fruitless dream of one day making it onto the big screen or in a fashion magazine. Broke, exhausted, and deterred by constant rejection, they wanted

to give up. But, they didn't. They keep going despite having all odds against them. That's what differentiated them from the person sitting next to them. Do you have it in you to keep going no matter what?

If you answered yes, you were given the option of taking the initiative to set the wheels in motion by filling out an application and coming in for an evaluation with Nine9's highly knowledgeable staff. After completing the online form, a staff member will schedule an evaluation with you, which is conducted to determine whether this is a good fit – for both you and the company. During the course of your interaction with staff members, you'll be given ample opportunity, again, to decide whether you truly want it.

During the evaluation, you'll also learn more about Nine9 and the entertainment industry at-large. As you receive more and more information, many questions will arise – a natural part of the process. Asking questions helps both you and Nine9 get a better feel of where you're at and whether you're in a place in your life to begin an entertainment career.

Nine9's staff is always happy to answer your questions and help you feel more prepared in your journey. After familiarizing yourself with what it means to want it, a decision is made, and if it is determined this is the right opportunity for you, you'll continue on to the next step.

Get Started

Once you are signed with Nine9, you will be able to complete a detailed online profile that will help you get noticed. Make sure you take some time and double-check you've thoroughly completed this. This is the tool used by the Castings Department to help you get booked on projects. If information is missing and your profile is incomplete, this can cause you to lose out on potential opportunities. If there's one thing for sure – you never want to miss out on an opportunity, especially when you're trying to get your foot in the door!

You will be given a time to meet with a photographer, so you can take professional photos for your headshot and comp card. Nine9 works directly with photographers, so you don't need to spend any additional time researching on your own. There is an additional fee for a photo package, and the fee will depend on the package you select. Packages are reasonably priced, and deals are often available. This will be discussed upfront. (CAN MENTION THIS WHEN FINALIZED, IF IT'S BEFORE PROJECT COMPLETION: We are discussing including a single look with a \$99 price increase, but that hasn't been finalized.)

Simply schedule a convenient time through a Nine9 representative and go shoot! You will be given plenty of information, too, about how to prepare for this shoot. So, your only job is to read through this information and show up ready to go.

Once you have professional photos in hand, you can upload these to your digital

comp card in any order you'd like, swapping them out and updating as needed. Play with the layout, and design it in a way that you feel best represents you. (Note, although you can add unprofessional photos in the interim, it is highly recommended – essential, really – that you get professional photos taken. This is the only way to show casting directors you are serious.)

You will be able to download your card once you've finalized it and take a print version to castings, or simply use the digital version to submit to opportunities online. There is also a click-through resume template available to you to begin filling in your work experience. You will be able to download and print your resume should you require a hardcopy, or, again, you can simply submit the digital file to casting directors.

Make sure the email you have on file with Nine9 is accurate and up-to-date, and log into your account regularly to view your casting matches (emailed to you daily) and receive direct emails from the Castings Department. Full instructions for submitting to each opportunity will be provided, so you'll know exactly what the casting director is looking for. These instructions will vary, so make sure you are reading through all of the details before sending over your information.

Submit for as many or as little castings as you'd like – again, it's all about motivation. You are in the driver's seat and are ultimately in control of your own career. Getting booked, just like landing any other job opportunity, takes continual attempts. It's a numbers game and success comes with volume. The more you submit, the higher your chances of getting noticed.

Nine9 is here to offer you the help and the resources you'll need to be successful. Whether you choose to utilize these and how, however, is entirely up to you. Try, try again and, eventually, you will be able to land your first gig!

Grow

Nine9 doesn't just offer the digital resources and in-house customer service you need to get started in the entertainment industry. The company also offers a wealth of additional resources designed to help you hone your skills while networking and gaining exposure.

Nine9 offers Meet & Greets that are available to you as part of the service. You will be notified of upcoming Meet & Greets in your area via email – another reason to log in regularly. Make sure to attend as many as you can, focusing on those that will help you hone the skills for roles you're hoping to pursue. There will be all different topics covered in a variety of areas, including those in both modeling and acting.

Practice makes perfect and Meet & Greets are an excellent way to mingle with other aspiring actors and models, as well as industry professionals in your area. You can put any workshops you've attended on your resume, too, which looks great, particularly when your professional experience is still limited. Sometimes,

workshops are really all you need to put in your marketing materials until you've landed a gig, so take advantage of everything Nine9's service has to offer.

Occasionally, Nine9 will also host in-house or on-location events – a fun and easy way to get noticed. You may even be able to participate as a talent, depending on the type of venue, which is another resume builder. Casting directors and photographers can utilize Nine9's space as part of their service, and many choose to take advantage of this. For you, this means you could be called to an in-house casting or photo shoot right at the nearest Nine9 office.

The key is to maintain a flexible schedule to the best of your ability, so you can attend as many industry mixers, events, and opportunities as possible. In the real world, this can be easier said than done. But, the process will work if you work it. Make some adjustments wherever you can to at least accommodate those opportunities you feel will be the most beneficial.

Update your headshot, comp card, and resume on a regular basis, utilize all of the resources available to you in your digital space on Nine9's site, and perform any additional research you need to stay abreast of industry trends and changes. Staying in-the-know and keeping up with how the industry is evolving is critical to your success.

As a talent with Nine9, you will have access to in-depth materials designed to help you achieve your goals, including the entire workshop video library created by the successful commercial actor, Aaron Marcus, easy to follow step-by-step videos for setting up your marketing materials and applying for castings, a detailed Model and Actor's Guide, *Acing the Audition: The Insider's Guide to Fame & Success* by experienced talent manager, Vickie Frankmano, and many other resources.

Don't be afraid to reach out to Nine9's knowledgeable staff whenever you have a question. There are numerous ways to get in touch. You never need to feel like you have to go about this on your own once you're part of the Nine9 family.

You can always contact Customer Care at 800.989.1490 or talentservices@nine9.com. You can also check out location-specific contact information at nine9.com and log-in to chat live with a representative during normal business hours. Be sure to also connect with Nine9 over social media at facebook.com/pg/NINE9dotCOM, Instagram at [nine9dotcom](https://www.instagram.com/nine9dotcom), Twitter at [@Nine9dotCOM](https://twitter.com/@Nine9dotCOM), and the company's page on LinkedIn.

Be Active

Again, it's important to be consistently checking your email and logging into your digital profile so you can ensure you are pursuing as many opportunities as possible. Stay active. If you haven't logged into your account in a substantial amount of time, it's difficult for Nine9's staff to know if your profile information is still accurate or if you're still serious about your career.

You will be emailed castings for which you are a good match and periodically contacted directly by a staff member for an available opportunity. Nine9 will soon be implementing text notifications as well, and if you opt in, you will be able to receive texts regarding new castings and notifications to check your email whenever a new match is available. Once this is in place, you will be given all the information you need about the program.

You can log into your account and view all of the opportunities for which you were considered by Nine9's staff members who emailed the information you've placed on the site directly to an industry professional for consideration. You can also search for castings in your area, modifying your search criteria to make it as relevant as possible.

Above all, remember, rejection is just part of the process. You have to have a thick skin to make it in entertainment – there's no way around it. Sometimes you can do everything right, have all of your information up-to-date, have perfect photos, and be active on the site, and still not hear back from casting directors for some time or receive a hard "no" in response to a submission. If you can endure rejection, however, and continue moving forward undeterred, knowing your first booked opportunity could be the one you almost gave up on, you have a solid shot at success.

TIP: It is important to note that you should never tell a casting director you will be attending an audition and fail to show. This is a big industry no-no. If you think you might have a schedule conflict the day of the audition and are on the phone, feeling put on the spot, tell the individual you need to double-check and call them back. It is better to risk losing out on an audition because your schedule is not right in front of you than to tell the crew you'll be there and cancel last-minute or simply no-show. The biggest take away from this awkward predicament? Always have your schedule handy!

Okay, But What if I Can't Afford Nine9's Service?

If you feel you can't afford Nine9's service, pose this question to yourself before deciding to go about it on your own – Can you afford to not use it? You can get your start in the entertainment industry without a designated service provider, that much is true, but it's not going to be easy. The first thing you'll have to consider is whether you have enough industry know-how to forge your own path.

Do you know what entertainment professionals are looking for, and are you convinced they're looking for you? Do you have a solid understanding of why they're looking for you? What's unique about your look, experience, background or skillset? What will you do to make sure you set yourself apart from your competition?

Submissions to casting directors from Nine9 are considered credible and taken

seriously by decision-makers looking to book professional talent. Nine9's Castings team regularly researches opportunities on your behalf and will send your information in a lightbox directly to those on the production team because you match what they are looking for.

Casting directors want to know not only that a submission is coming from a credible source but that they won't need to waste their time weeding out those who don't fit. This is very time-consuming. Lightboxes are great, because they're able to quickly view a list of talent who meet their criteria and select who they want to see from that list. This is a welcome convenience after sifting through numerous single submissions, and the chances of you actually being requested to audition from a lightbox list are high.

Still convinced you'll do just fine submitting on your own? If you're confident you have what it takes, you'll need to create stand-out marketing materials. Do you know exactly what materials are needed for each opportunity, and do you know how to design these? Do you know every do and don't? Creating materials that look unprofessional, slapped together or that are otherwise not on-point will be the quickest way to get rejected – time and again.

There are many materials you'll need to showcase yourself and your talent – a headshot, comp card, composite sheet, resume, reel, tear sheets, snaps shots and Polaroids. It all depends on what avenue or avenues you choose to pursue, and each opportunity will have different requirements. Understanding the specific materials that will get you through the door is critical.

Even if you understand what you need to take with you where, are you sure you have the tools to set these up properly? You can reference online resources, but there is a multitude of conflicting information and varying ideas on what is considered "standard." Free web tools designed to help you construct a comp card are also extremely limited features-wise. You'll need a fully functioning design program to ensure everything is set up and the photos and layout are edited to industry expectations. You'll also likely need to solicit the help of someone familiar with doing this.

Either way, you will be responsible for creating your own materials and will pay to do so out-of-pocket upfront or it will be taken out of your pay when you book gigs. And, the latter is only an option should you land an agent, which is next to impossible when you're first getting started. So, you'll need to make sure you have your funds ready to go from the beginning.

If you're set on going about this yourself, you'll need a list of contacts you can reach out to and solicit help from in other areas. You'll need to know a great photographer who truly understands photography – basic lighting and photo composition and how you should pose to look your best. They'll need to know which background is best for which pose, what you should wear, and how you

should do your hair and make-up. If the photographer doesn't specialize in entertainment shots, whether the final copies will be acceptable is a toss-up.

You can get started by creating a social media platform and online presence dedicated to your brand. But, you will need to have professional materials to present properly. No selfies! Even if you stand in front of a nondescript wall, hold your phone out just far enough to fill the frame and filter it just right, this is not considered an industry approved headshot and will scream amateur as soon as it's discovered.

Nine9 offers a digital comp card. There is an easy-to-use template available to you where you can plug in your photos and stats. Your images can be updated as needed, swapped out and rearranged. Your stats are easily changeable, as well, and you can print the exact amount of copies you need whenever you need them.

Most places will charge you big bucks for a specified amount of printed comp card copies out the gate, and once these are printed, your images cannot easily be manipulated. You will need to pay a photographer to reshoot periodically to keep them updated, then pay to have a new run printed. Nine9 also offers an online resume builder, which makes it easy to plug in information, categorize it, and download for use.

How are you going to find gigs? Do you have a solid understanding of where you should be looking and what you should be looking for? Fair warning – there are numerous scammers out there just waiting to unload your pocketbook. There are a few known tactics scammers use that you can be on the look-out for (these are available in your Nine9 resources), but their methods frequently change. Often, aspiring talent desperate to land their first gig end up inadvertently shelling out thousands of dollars for nothing – sometimes this is even taken directly from their bank accounts before they ever have a chance to stop it. This can be financially devastating and recouping lost funds is extremely time-consuming.

You'll want to make sure you connect with the right people, considering your safety at all times, particularly if you are making connections on your own and especially if you're utilizing the Internet to expand your reach. You can use social media, but always exercise caution. Often, you will pay a service fee to use more reputable sites.

The biggest thing to remember when you're getting started is you are a self-employed freelancer. This means, entertainment is your business and it takes commitment, dedication, effort and patience to be successful. You will endure rejection, receive harsh critiques, and probably even start to question why you felt you were ever cut out for this before you land a life-changing gig.

This also means you'll need to carve out time to research and verify castings (something that is done for you should you partner with Nine9), then submit to these, ensuring you've submitted the right things. You will need to fund

your efforts with a day job, while planning to attend every audition, go-see, casting call, model call, or event you get invited to, cautious of any additional fees associated with doing so.

You will also need to attend workshops designed to help you hone your craft, many of which will cost additional funds should you choose to forge your own path. Workshops are normally held in the evenings throughout the week, which means less time to yourself, especially after you've put in the hours at your day job. There is a particular level of commitment expected if you truly want to make it.

Parents, you must also ask yourselves the following questions: Do you have the time to commit to your child's entertainment career? Do you know what the laws and requirements are with regards to allowing your child to work year-round? Do you know how to secure a work permit? What photos are best for this market? What opportunities are best?

Getting a child started can seem extremely overwhelming to a parent with little to no industry experience. You may wish to help your child every step of the way but are unclear just how to go about doing so.

All of these questions and more can all easily be answered by connecting with a Nine9 representative. However, you'll need to take that first step and choose how you will begin your journey. Where your future leads is entirely up to you!

Using Your Research and Resources for Success

Now that you have a better understanding of what it takes to prepare for a career in the entertainment industry, you are well on your way to breaking ground. You know what you'll need to market yourself, so start working on building these materials. You have a good idea of how to figure out where you want your career to head and how to find opportunities that align with your goals, so start applying! When you get your first invite to a casting call or audition, you know what you need to do to prepare, so pull together the details you're given and practice, practice, practice.

Remember that making it in the entertainment business takes confidence and determination. You have to have a thick skin and be able to grin and bear it amid rejection. A big factor in how successful you'll be is your own ability to stay motivated and driven despite inevitable obstacles.

Start close to home. Seek out smaller scale projects in your area and build a solid base. Create a resume with student film credits, time for print shoots, and the like, so you get some experience under your belt. Request tear sheets or a demo reel and pull together a portfolio. Then, once you can showcase your talent, take a larger step and consider moving to an entertainment hotspot.

Seek out representation, too. Pull together all of the resources you've been working on and get your name out there. If you don't get picked up right away, try and try again. Work toward joining a union if this suits your aspirations, so you can enjoy its perks and protections and put yourself in a better position to be considered for future work. You'll want to get any and all resources you can in your corner when you transition to a larger market, so you can remain competitive.

When you're beginning to consider relocation, make sure to do your research. Understand exactly where you want to take your career and research the best

markets for your particular niche. If you're going to make a significant change in your life, you'll want to make sure you're positioning yourself well. Gather a list of agencies, entertainment management companies, casting companies, and production studios in the area you're considering, and all other useful documentation. Keep this organized and easily accessible.

Being able to survive while you're striving to thrive is key, too. This means, you'll want to line up a flexible day job and have a solid understanding of how you're going to fund your goals. You'll want to select an affordable place to live and ensure you're close enough to the hotspots to make it worth your while to pay rent.

Get out and about as much as possible and try out for as many potential opportunities as possible. Attend not only casting calls and auditions, but industry mixers, premiers, and events. Of course, you'll want to make sure you do your research ahead of time and if you have a bad feeling about it at all, move onto the next. Consider your safety at all times and don't be afraid to walk away from a situation in which you feel uncomfortable.

Stay active online, both on the social media front and in seeking out castings and auditions in your area. Create a webpage after you have gained some experience and have professional photos taken so you can use these as part of your marketing package. Your self-branding campaign should be a mix of both digital and print materials and you should understand when you'll use which items. Keep them handy at all times and always be ready to run into someone who may just change your life forever.

Entertainment is all about networking. Always present professionally, on time, and show respect. Never burn bridges. In this who's who industry, leaving a bad taste in one casting director's mouth can be extremely detrimental. Be kind and intermix with like-minded talent. View fellow actors and models as friends rather than foes. After all, you're all in this together, and you may very well be working with the same individuals time after time.

In fact, you may want to consider bunking up with another hopeful entertainer, so you can navigate the scene together or apply for a job where you're likely to meet others in the industry. Join classes and workshops in the area or immerse yourself in a university degree program. Surround yourself with networking opportunities whenever possible.

Classes and workshops will not only help you hone your skills but will make you realize how much there truly is to learn. The industry offers a never-ending learning curve, especially as technology is quickly changing the way things are done and people are interacting more readily online. Now more than ever it's important to stay abreast of these changes and open to continual development. Knowledge is power – the more willing you are to invest in your talent, the more likely are to position yourself so others will invest in you, too.

Above all, remember to have fun! There's a famous quote – "Find a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." This is typically attributed to the Chinese philosopher Confucius, and although the origins haven't been verified the words are commonly said and very true. Pursuing your dreams should be fun and exciting, even when times get tough.

Taking a leap of faith and stepping out of your comfort zone is a scary, but necessary step in the journey. You'll likely stumble, fall, get back up, try again, then succeed. And, this is what makes becoming successful so rewarding. It's a result of hard work and dedication. The end result is worth it.

When you've found success, pay it forward. Share your craft with others. Doing so will allow you to keep learning and keep lighting the way for the future of entertainment. But, stay humble and never forget that you were once in the very same seat as the pupil who comes after you.

Everyone has to start somewhere. Here's your chance. Take a deep breath and go get 'em!

If you enjoyed the book, I'd like you to do me a favor and email me what you liked about and what you didn't like about it, if anything.

Also, if you have any questions, feel free to email them to me and I'll do my best to get you an answer.

Email me at a@nine9.com

Thank you,
Anthony Toma

NINE



THE UNAGENCY

PROVEN PROCESS

99% IS
ALWAYS
GREATER
THAN THE 1%

START

#1



WANT IT

Application
Come in for an Evaluation
Learn about the company and industry
Get signed

GET STARTED

Complete profile
Set up headshot and Comp Card
Submit to castings
Utilize resources

#2



GROW

Attend events
Increase industry knowledge
Improve photos and looks
Ask questions

#3



BE ACTIVE

Respond to all requests
Stay persistent
Keep all information updated
Attend auditions

#4



FINISH

Industry Terms

8x10: See Headshot.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS): A professional honorary organization established with the goal of advancing the arts and sciences in the motion picture industry. (Responsible for the Academy Awards.)

Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (ATAS): A non-profit corporation devoted both to the advancement of telecommunications arts and sciences and to fostering creative leadership in the telecommunications industry. (Responsible for the Emmy Awards.)

Actor/Actress: A person who portrays a character in a performance.

Ad: Abbreviation for advertisement or advertising. "Ad work" means a still photography session for a specific product.

Ad Campaign: A series of advertising messages that share a single idea and theme which make up an integrated marketing communication (IMC).

Advertising Agency: Creates integrated marketing communication campaigns for clients.

AEA/Actor's Equity: A union for stage opportunities.

Agent (Agency): A person who finds jobs for those in the entertainment business, media arts (i.e., authors) or who are otherwise in the public eye (i.e., professional athletes); Third party negotiator, receives percentage fee of bookings; Could be an individual person or a company.

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA): A national collective bargaining union with nearly 80,000 members (actors, singers, dancers, announcers, broadcasters and recording artists) served by AFTRA Local offices around the country.

American Film Institute (AFI): Serves as a point of national focus and coordination for the many individuals and institutions concerned with the moving image as art; The only national arts organization devoted to film, television and video.

Aspirational Models: Models who others "aspire" to be like and whose physiques actually look like they're achievable. Aspirational models generally don't have distracting muscle sizes. They are low in body fat and have more of a "shredded" appearance that allows their muscles to pop for the camera in different lighting.

Asynchronous Dialogue: Pre-recorded lines of dialogue that are placed over the top of a film or video, such as narration in a television documentary or a web-based presentation.

Audit: Attending a workshop or class prior to enrollment to check it out and see if it's a good fit.

Backdrop: Background used in a photographer's studio.

Background: A performer in a film, television show, stage, musical, opera or ballet production, who is nonspeaking, usually in the background. See Extra.

Blocking: Positioning of actors on a stage, or within a frame in film.

Book: Land a gig or obtain a role; to be set with/confirmed for an opportunity.

Booking: A specific job assignment.

Brand: The image one is hoping to portray.

Brand Ambassador: An individual who acts as a representative for a brand, similar to a promotional model.

Breakdown: Breaks down the elements of a character an actor is auditioning for.

Breakdown Service: A professional listing service available only to agencies that cast movies, film, TV, and stage projects with what types of actors are involved in a project.

Broadcaster: A program presenter.

Buyout: Advance payment for future use of a print ad or a commercial for a specific period of time.

Call-back: Second interview after an audition where the client is narrowing down their selections and wants to see you audition again or with another talent.

Cash at Wrap: Getting paid immediately following work.

Casting: An entertainment job or opportunity to work.

Casting Call: An opportunity for talent to present to a casting director.

Casting Director: An individual responsible for securing talent and identifying who will be participating in a project.

Catalog Modeling: Posing for clothing stores or for products like mail order items.

Character: The role that is being played in a production.

Client: Anyone who is seeking talent for their project; the person, company, or director, photographer, etc. who hires the talent.

Cold Read: A script that you are reading for the first time in front of the client, without time to memorize the lines.

Collection: A group of coordinated clothes being shown by a designer.

Commercial: Promotional advertisement on TV, radio or other media.

Commercial Acting: Actors who portray roles in television and web-based ad segments.

Commercial Contract: A legal agreement entered into for money-generating projects.

Commercial Modeling: Models who participate in ad campaigns and print opportunities.

Commission: The sum deducted from a model's earnings by an agency for their services, usually around 10-20 percent in the United States and higher abroad.

Comp card/Zed Card/Composite Sheet: A card with 3-5 photos of a model along with their height, eye, hair color, and size information to promote and distribute to prospective clients.

Coogan Account: A trust account established to safeguard a percentage of a child entertainer's earnings for use when they become an adult.

Co-star: A small speaking role typically used in just one episode of a television series.

Cue Card: Large flash cards that have an actor's script printed on them in big letters.

Day Player (Day Performer): A principal performing on a daily basis, rather than on a longer-term contract.

Day Rate: A specified rate talent will be paid for each day worked.

Demonstrator: A model who shows use of product at a trade show or store.

Designer: A person who creates and designs an idea for a garment or product.

Dialogue: The scripted words exchanged by performers.

Director: A person who directs the making of a film.

Discovered: To get noticed by an industry professional and be offered bookings.

Double: A performer who appears in place of another performer as in a stunt, or for posing as the actual actor to complete a shot's set up.

Elevator Interview: A quick pitch given to a decision-maker regarding your talent, skills, and experience.

Extra: An actor who has a brief role, typically nonspeaking, in a production.

Featured Role: A prominent speaking role.

Fitness Modeling: Modeling for healthy lifestyle publications and productions.

Fitting: Trying on clothes to determine fit and style - usually before a fashion show.

Flat Fee: A specified total rate for participation in a project; fee for a model's services which is negotiated on the basis of a one-time-only payment and which excludes the future payment of royalties or residuals.

Frame: The area a camera's lens is capturing.

Franchised Agent: Someone who has entered into an agreement with a union setting forth certain terms and conditions of a member's relationship with an agent.

Full-length Shot: Head to toe photograph.

General Services Agreement: A contract that outlines a plan of work for a talent and the relationship between an agent or manager and the talent.

Genre: Type or category a production falls into (i.e., horror, comedy, romantic comedy, etc.).

Glamour Modeling: See High Fashion.

Go-see: After a client selects a talent based on photos, they may be asked to attend a go-see in which the client will have a better understanding of what the talent looks like in person.

Guest Star: A larger role than that of the co-star; The character is often the central focus of a particular episode in a television series.

Headshot: An 8x10 photograph of a person's face, normally from the shoulders up.

Hip-Pocketing: When an agent is interested in a talent and picks them up without officially putting them in their books.

High Fashion: Also referred to as glamour or runway modeling, this elite segment of the modeling industry requires models to have very specific measurements.

Hold: When a client is seriously considering a talent and wants to retain them in case they choose to move forward with booking.

Host: A person who is responsible for running an event or show.

Improvisational Acting (Improv): Involves unplanned or unscripted interactions, usually comedic in nature. In its true, organic form, improvisational theatre, including the dialogue, action, story, and characters, are created collaboratively by the players as the story unfolds in present time.

Independent Film: Also called an indie film, this is a feature film that is produced outside the major film studio system.

Industrial: Typically, these are educational or sales films.

Internet Movie Database (IMDB): A web-based information resource for film and television.

Lightbox: A digital package of comp cards sent to clients for review.

Lines: Dialogue in a production.

Manager: An individual who helps a talent manage their finances and other business aspects of their career.

Mark: An indication of where to stand on the floor of the film studio, usually tagged with black tape.

Method Acting: A range of training and rehearsal techniques that seek to encourage sincere and emotionally expressive performances.

Mixer: A networking event in which industry professionals can mix and mingle.

Model: An individual who poses for or represents a product or service.

Model Call: An event in which models present themselves to a potential client.

Model Release: See Release.

Monologue: A scene performed by one person for a client that reflects a particular mood and demonstrates acting talent.

National Association of Broadcasters (NAB): Represents the radio and television industries in Washington – before Congress, the FCC and federal agencies, the courts, and on the expanding international front. NAB provides leadership and resources to supporting members, to broadcasters at-large, and through ongoing public service campaigns.

Networking: Meeting others involved in the same industry for purposes of potentially working together.

Niche: An area of expertise.

Noncommercial Contract: An agreement entered into for project that does not bring in funds.

Non-disclosure Agreement: A legally enforceable contract that creates a confidential relationship between a person or business which has classified information, and a person who is given access to that information.

Open Call: A casting at which the client sees all models suitable for the type requested.

Pageantry: A competition that has traditionally focused on judging and ranking the physical attributes of the contestants, as well as their talents.

Parts Model: A model that displays a specific body part or specific body parts.

Per Diem: Fee paid during on-location shoots to compensate a performer for meals and expenditures not provided by the producer.

Pilot: One episode of a show that is ordered by the network as a test.

Plus-sized Modeling: Full-figured modeling.

Polaroids: Snap shots used by high fashion models that show potential clients what these models look like naturally.

Portfolio: The collection of photographs and clippings of a model which he or she shows to prospective clients. This will include their professional photos as well as tear sheets from any jobs they have done.

Principal: A main performer.

Print: The pictures that are the final result of the photographer's efforts. Print work covers all bookings that involve still photography.

Print Model: A model that primarily poses for print publications.

Producer: A person responsible for the day-to-day decision-making on a production.

Production: A viewable entertainment project.

Promotion: Publicity to advance a product, service, or person.

Promotional Modeling/Event Representation: A model hired to drive consumer demand for a product, service, brand, or concept by directly interacting with potential customers.

Punchline: The crux of the joke; Proper punchline delivery by a comedian that induces laughter in an audience.

Rates: The fees charged by the talent or the amount a talent receives for a paid project.

Recurring Role: A role that appears in multiple episodes of a television series.

Reel: A demo tape composed of various short clips showcasing an actor's talent.

Release: A model release spells out the terms of the agreement and includes the limit to which the photos may be used. It also includes information about royalties, residuals and payment terms.

Residuals: Additional money paid when a piece runs in repeat. The rates are dictated by the unions.

Resume: A document used by a person to present their backgrounds and skills.

Role: The part being played in a production.

Runway: A narrow platform on which the model moves and displays clothing.

Runway Modeling: See High Fashion.

Runway Show: A fashion event with models walking down a runway to show clothing designs.

Scale: The minimum amount that any union performer must be paid for an appearance on film or videotape. It may amount to less than the model's regular rate. Sometimes a model may prefer residuals rather than negotiate a flat rate (higher than scale), which precludes residuals.

Screen Actors Guild: A former labor union which represented over 100,000 film and television principal and background performers worldwide.

Screen Test: An audition for a film role.

Screenplay: Also called a script, a screenplay is a written work by screenwriters for films, video games, television programs, or other productions.

Screenwriter: An individual who writes for films, video games, television programs and other productions.

Scouting: Seeking out talent.

Series: An episode-based production either on television or on the web.

Series Regular: A main role in a series that is central to the production and appears in every episode.

Set: The arrangement of props and furniture in a video/film or photo studio.

Setup: The part of a joke that informs an audience of any background information before the punchline.

Shoot: A photo or video/film session.

Short/Short Film: Any motion picture not long enough to be considered a feature film.

Sides: A piece of the script an actor is required to work on.

Sign-in Sheet: A list to gather contact information and to show the order in which each talent arrived at an audition.

Slate: To state one's name on camera before an audition.

Slot: An individually timed interview to keep the audition process moving along smoothly.

Social Media: Computer-based creating and sharing of information within social networks.

Spokesmodels: A model chosen to explain the features of a product/service.

Stage: The area within a theater in which performances take place.

Stats: The statistical information of a talent, including measurements, size, height, etc.

Stipend: A specified fee for compensation.

Stock Photographer: Photo or video work that is not for a specific client or job but used to get listed in a general catalog for any client to select for a project.

Storyboard: Artwork that shows each scene of a commercial.

Synchronous Dialogue: Where the voice talent is narrating some type of action occurring at the same time as he or she is speaking; The most common technique in voiceovers.

Tear Sheets: Pages tore from a magazine or newspaper which prominently features a model. The model "tears" them from the publication to include in his or her portfolio.

Teleprompter: TV-like screen that displays the words a talent should speak.

Test Photography/Test Shots: A sample shoot for a client and talent, often at no rate and to build a portfolio.

Testimonial: A declaration to the value of a product/service.

Time for Print (TFP): A common offer from photographers who are looking for talent but cannot pay them with money. Instead of monetary payment, the talent will receive prints.

Trade Show: A promotional display of products/services.

Usage: Additional fees for a set amount of time or style of use.

Voiceover: Background voice for radio or video recorded separately in a recording studio and dubbed onto visual.

Wardrobe: What a talent is required to wear during a production.

Webisode: A web-based episode in a series.

Work Permit/Release: A contract stating it is permissible for a minor to work.

"Why I Wrote #Nine9er"

–Anthony Toma, Author, CEO, Founder of Nine9 The Unagency



Being bullied as a kid all the way through most of high school was hard, but it didn't stop me from believing in myself or others. I wasn't in the "in" crowd, but that was okay, I had my family and friends outside of school for love and support. I launched Nine9 with the Core Values you'll find in this book. Nine9 is the go-to place for the 99% of those trying to get started in the industry that aren't in the 1% of talent with an agent or signed by an agency. Nine9 is a fee-based service for the masses, however, you keep 100% of every job you book. Nine9 provides all the tools, resources and opportunities you need to manage your own career. That being said,

I wanted to give everyone the opportunity—even those not in a position to make the investment in themselves to join Nine9, a way to help themselves. By the end of the book, you should have enough information to get started, land some gigs and be on your way. Always believe in yourself and never worry about what others say or do to derail your dreams.

Come to Nine9 and be whatever you want.

"I've had a great opportunity to get signed to the agency. This is helping me move in the right direction, toward success. Having that extra help of getting noticed is just what I needed. I know more great opportunities are yet to come."

–**Latrice D.**

Talent ID: 145857

My experience with Nine9 has been fabulous! I love the people working there, they really made me feel welcome. I was talking to the Office Director, Tyler Jones, and the way she was talking to me made me realize that she believes there is something bright in my future. I'm super excited for my future with Nine9!

–**Jeovanna S.**

Talent ID: 145437