

SPEAKLA

HOW DO I GET AN AGENT AND A MANAGER?

(Video Course Recap)

Q: WHAT IS AN AGENT?

- ★ An agent attempts to get you auditions by submitting to casting directors. An agent usually has a large roster or client list - 100 actors and up.
- ★ An agent wants to get you as much work as possible.
- ★ An agent works on your contracts: how much you will be paid/ billing etc. An agent gets 10% of everything you earn.

Q: WHAT IS A MANAGER?

- ★ A manager gets you auditions through submitting you to casting directors (technically this is NOT what a manager is “supposed” to do, but most do anyway).
- ★ A manager has a smaller roster than an agent (typically 5 - 20 clients).
- ★ A manager tends to look more at the big picture of your career.
- ★ A manager is often more detail oriented than the agent. A manager gets 10% - 15% of everything you earn.

Q: DO YOU NEED AN AGENT *AND* A MANAGER?

- ★ No.

Q: CAN YOU HAVE AN AGENT *AND* A MANAGER?

- ★ Absolutely!

Q: WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING BOTH AN AGENT AND A MANAGER?

- ★ You have more people on your team.

Q: WHAT'S THE DISADVANTAGE TO HAVING BOTH AN AGENT AND A MANAGER?

- ★ You're paying out more of your income.

Q: WHAT DOES AN AGENT'S DAY LOOK LIKE?

- ★ An agent submits you on *Breakdown Services.
- ★ An agent pitches you.
- ★ An agent sets up your auditions.

*Breakdown = A list of roles looking to be filled for a specific show, movie, commercial, or theatre production.

Q: HOW MUCH NOTICE DO YOU GET FOR AN UPCOMING AUDITION?

- ★ Auditions are often the next day but can be as late as the following week.

Q: CAN YOU SUBMIT YOURSELF?

- ★ Yes! You can submit yourself on various sites like Actors Access, Backstage, and L.A. Casting. These are great sites, but unfortunately they don't list all the work out there.
- ★ The "good stuff" (Primetime TV, bigger movies, etc.) is often reserved for the agents and managers and is not accessible to actors (Grrrrrr).

Q: WHAT DIFFERENTIATES AGENCIES FROM ONE ANOTHER?

- ★ Agencies differ in terms of the size of their roster, the level of actors they represent, and the amount of clout they wield.

Q: WHAT'S A LEVEL ONE (SMALLER) AGENCY?

- ★ A level one agency represents developmental clients - actors who are working on building their first credits.

Q: WHAT'S A LEVEL TWO (MID-LEVEL) AGENCY?

- ★ A level two agency is much more established than a level one agency and has more established clients. Gersh, Buckwald, and Abrams are good examples of mid-sized agencies. These agencies are working on getting their clients strong guest star credits, supporting roles in films, and above.

Q: WHAT ABOUT A LEVEL THREE (TOP) AGENCY?

- ★ These agencies are where stars and very successful actors are represented. The level three agencies often “package” projects (put together the actors, the writer and the director - all of whom they represent). Some of these big agencies include ICM, WME, UTA and CAA.

Q: WHAT IS A BOUTIQUE AGENCY?

- ★ A boutique agency is often started by an agent who started at a top agency, but left for a more intimate relationship with the actors they represent. These agencies have smaller client lists and tend to be more hands on.

Q: HOW DO YOU GET AN AGENT?

- ★ Participate in your college or graduate school's showcase.
- ★ Go to a casting workshop where you pay to “audition” in front of agents or managers.

**Disclaimer: Agency and casting director workshops are currently under intense scrutiny due to The Talent Scam Prevention Act. We are not advocating for either side, but simply want you to know that the workshops exist.*

Recommended Workshops:

- ★ Ace Studios: actorslinkla.com

★ *Actors Advantage Showcase:* actorsadvantageshowcase.com

★ *Actors creative workshop:* trulyacting.com

★ Ask a friend for a referral. If going this route, ask the friend if YOU can send a letter to their agent and “drop your friend’s name” in the letter. This way you aren’t asking too much of your friend, but you are still getting a referral to an agency.

★ Find a submission service. Submission services are usually run by a group of actors that charge \$75-\$100 a month, or sometimes you pay by the submission. This should only be considered if you are referred by someone you trust.

**Disclaimer: Much like the agency workshops, many would see submission services also in violation of The Talent Scam Prevention Act. We are not advocating for either side, but simply want you to know that submission services exist.*

Q: CAN YOU LOOK FOR AN AGENT OR MANAGER BEFORE YOU LIVE IN L.A.?

★ YES!!!!

★ Start by watching TV and movies with an eye out for actors who are playing the types of roles that you think would be appropriate for you.

★ Don’t be overly ambitious. Start by looking at the smaller roles.

★ Watch the credits and make a note of the names of the actors whom you have singled out.

★ Look at the website IMDB - International Movie Database and learn who represents the actors you have written down.

★ Look up the actors’ agents or managers and find their addresses (usually on their website).

★ Write a very short email to the agent(s) introducing yourself and attach your headshot and reel.

★ The agent or manager probably won’t write back but don’t get discouraged.

★ Every three months or so write another note with some news about something you’ve done (a play, a short film, etc.) and put that in the email. (Think of this as a form of courtship).

★ When you arrive in L.A., write them again, letting them know you are here and would like to set up a meeting, if they are interested.

★ If you don’t get a response, try to track said agent down at a workshop.

★ Be persistent, but also respectful.

Q: HOW DO YOU PREP FOR AN AGENCY MEETING?

- ★ Bring a resume and 1 headshot.
- ★ Wear something nice and casual that reflects your type.
- ★ Don't wear perfume or anything with a strong odor.
- ★ Don't smoke before you go into your meeting.
- ★ Be on time.
- ★ Be prepared with a monologue.
- ★ If they emailed you sides before the meeting, be off book and prepared.
- ★ If you sign a contract, only sign for 1 year unless you are *very* sure about the agent/manager.
- ★ Go into your meeting with a strategy. Know what *you* want from this.
- ★ Be clear on what *you* can offer *them*.
- ★ Make a list of your skills: languages you speak, sports you're good at, casting directors who like and know you.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK IN YOUR MEETING?

- ★ Good question! This is your interview too. Always have questions. Some good ones are:
 - 1) "How does your agency divvy up your work? In other words, does each agent have their own list of clients, or do you all share the clients? Is one agent responsible for TV and one for film, or do you all do all genres?"
 - 2) "If I sign with you, will I work with only you, or will I work with the other agents in the agency as well?"
 - 3) "How many clients does your agency represent?"

Q: HOW DO YOU FOLLOW-UP AFTER THE MEETING?

- ★ Always send a thank you note - either an email or a letter. Thank them for their time, and if you would like to work with them, tell them.
- ★ Tell them why you feel you would make a good team and why you think you would be an asset to their roster.
- ★ If they ask for more material (reel, more pictures, etc.) get it to them that day.

- ★ If they don't readily respond, don't try to talk them into working with you.

Q: WHY MIGHT AN AGENT OR MANAGER PASS ON YOU?

- ★ Sometimes reps will pass because you are a "conflict" - you look too much like someone on their roster.
- ★ They might pass because they are at capacity: they have the maximum number of clients they can handle on their roster.
- ★ They might feel you are too "green." They want actors with more experience than you have at this point.
- ★ It's never personal!
- ★ If you liked them and there was a good feeling, don't rule them out. Keep in touch and check back in after you add something new to your resume.

Q: WHAT WILL A TYPICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH AN AGENT LOOK LIKE?

- ★ Typically, actors and their reps talk at least 1-2 times a week.
- ★ This can be less in the beginning of your career when they are trying to help you get those first credits.
- ★ Don't call and bug them, they're working to get you auditions. Let them work!
- ★ If you go months without hearing from them and they don't return your emails and/or phone calls, move on. Time for a new agent.
- ★ If this is the case, make sure you let them know in writing, so you aren't legally bound to them in the future.

Q: IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN AGENT OR MANAGER, CAN YOU REALLY CALL YOURSELF AN ACTOR?

- ★ YES! DON'T STRESS! The beginning of your career should be about hustling your own credits and work. Spend 80% of your time making things happen for yourself (write, make web series, make short films, participate in theatre and student films, etc.) and 20% of your time looking for an agent or manager.

DO'S & DON'TS

- ★ Do research all your options.
- ★ Don't sign with anyone who gives you bad vibes.
- ★ Do put together a great outfit that shows off who you are in the meeting.

- ★ Don't be late.
- ★ Do ask questions - it's your interview too.
- ★ Don't bring more than one headshot.
- ★ Do have a monologue ready to perform in case they ask.
- ★ Don't wear cologne or perfume.
- ★ Do pump yourself up before the meeting.
- ★ Don't smoke before you go in.
- ★ Do be yourself.

Always remember - You're worth any agent or manager's time!