

**'0-60 Seconds iNTELEVISION Commercial Producers'**  
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## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### **Guidelines & Job Description – What I need to do after I get some experience?**

These procedures were designed to give the person responsible in this area some indication to what needs to be achieved after a lengthy exposure and work experience. The person(s) selected for this particular position will be allowed time to adjust and train him/herself while working with the producer. Not in-depth experience or qualification is required at this stage. Please come along and share your experience with the rest of us. Thank you.

### **The Casting Process**

Casting is broken down into three categories: Principal players (major speaking parts), secondary players (non major speaking parts), and extras (non-speaking atmosphere talent).

To cast principal players, usually a screen test or an audition is held. During an audition, the actor will read from the producer's script, and from their reading, you can tell a great deal about the actor's suitability for a certain role. But, the best thing to do in addition to the auditions is to see how that actor appears on film. Therefore when casting a principal actor, you would probably base your choice on actors you've seen in other films. IF you have found a potential actor but have never seen him on film, then the best thing to do is to shoot a screen test.

In a screen test, the auditioning actor will act out/perform a scene from the script, usually in full costume and makeup, and they will be shot on film so that the producer is able to see that potential actor on film.

Unless the actor belongs to the SAG (Screen Actors Guild), they are usually paid for a screen test, and afterwards will receive a copy of their completed test so that they can see how they did during the screen test. If running a screen test is too expensive for your budget, then you should use video equipment rather than actually filming them with cameras. That way, you will spend less money and still get to see that actor on videotape.

Assuming that you've selected a principal actor from seeing their performances rather than shooting screen tests, the first thing you should do is to contact that actor's agent. When you do, the agent will ask to read the script, and if he feels that the script will interest his client, then the agent will forward it to his client. The agent also has to be sure that you can afford his client's fee and that his client is available and has no conflict to your schedule. If you are able to contact a potential actor for the film with personal connections, then it is advisable to sidestep the agent part and ask the actor directly.

As an agent, it is his job to help his client to obtain the best deal possible. A good agent will also look at the long-range proposition of a project. If, for instance, the role that you're offering could allow the actor to be accessed to a whole new area of opportunity, then the agent might reflect on that and bend a little to fit your budget.

The worst that can happen is that the agent turns down your offer, but most probably, he will recommend other clients of his that he feels are more suitable to your film.

To an actor, and not just fresh new actors but A-list actors as well, the most important thing to him is the script. They are always alert and watchful for scripts that will best serve their talents and expand their perspectives. Basically that means that, for instance, a certain actor might be well known for doing drama, but he may also wish to give a shot at comedy or action. In this case, because this certain actor is not known for doing comedies, he will then definitely be willing to accept a smaller salary for the chance to play such a role. However, since that actor is known for dramatic roles, he will often not get the chance to work on comedic work as they are usually first offered to actors who have created a name for themselves in this genre.

In order to do a good production it is best to cast the right person for the right role because if the actor takes on the role because of the attractive salary or whatsoever, they will lack the real enthusiasm that adds a spark in their performance.

### **What's in a Name? (Choosing the right actors)**

For small independent films with small budgets, the casting choices are made based on the best actor for the best role, not based on name value. However, it is helpful for the producer to cast at least one role to an actor whose name is somewhat recognizable in the film community. This helps with the release of the movie and also eventually the video, television and foreign sales.

Among the large amount of actors and actresses there are a small amount that are considered 'bankable' stars. What this means is that by casting a 'bankable' star in your film, no matter for a big or small role, it will guarantee financing. It doesn't guarantee your film being a big hit or topping charts, but it *will* guarantee 'bottom-line return', which in other words, means that you will be guaranteed for a minimum market.

The importance of having a recognizable name in a movie and not having a familiar name at all has a great significance. If someone asks you who's in your film? and you answer by saying a name everybody knows then your film will be treated with respect.

But, if you are not able to name anybody they know, then your film will be treated differently and obviously not with as much respect. That's why it is always important for the producer to at least include one well known, if not A-list, actor/actress in his film.

These Standard Operating Procedures [SOP] were designed only to be a guide and help to you.



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