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## **The Business of Show Business**

### **Do you understand the business?**

If you have decided that acting is going to be your business, then you have to treat it like a business. You can be the greatest actor that ever lived ... sitting in your room, perfecting the performance of a lifetime, but if no one comes to see you -- so what? If you really want to work as an actor, not only must you study and work on your craft, but you must also be pro-active and put yourself out there in front of the decision makers who have the power to hire you.

To do that, you must understand the product being marketed. Most actors don't get ahead with their careers simply because they don't know what they're selling or marketing. You, the actor, must see yourself as "You, The Product". Every product is marketed to a target audience, with a specific type of packaging to make it the most appealing to that audience. If we asked you - What does Coke® advertise? Your answer might be - a refreshing soft drink. However that answer would be wrong. Coke® sells the consumer the feeling of "it". What is "it"? Success, happiness and achievement are what they are selling you. Coke's advertisements tell us that we can have IT too, if we drink the right soft drink. Now ask yourself -- "Do I have IT?" Do you have a marketable look and style? If you think you do, then you must ask yourself how to package and present IT (you) to your target audience.

The first thing to do is to get focused on who you are, how you are perceived and how to package yourself. Let's first understand and be clear what your "type" is. Are you thin, tall, beautiful, offbeat, quirky, funny, etc.? To identify your own IT qualities, pull out a sheet of paper and write down -- as fast as you can -- the ten adjectives that best describe you.

Another good way to discover your true description adjectives is to ask other people what they think of you. Ask three individuals you know well, three you kind of know and three complete strangers to list a number of words that best describe how they perceive you. Ask them to be brutally honest, and be prepared to dislike what you're going to hear. Now look over the list of adjectives you used to describe yourself and see how it compares to how your friends, acquaintances and strangers perceive you. Pick out the ones that are mentioned most and then make a final list of words that best describe your look and personality.



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The next step is to make sure the packaging or look of “you” matches your list of adjectives. The tool to help you market the product “you” is called a headshot. The look you decide to shoot should match the list of adjectives you came up with and if you wish to have a variety of looks, simply make sure each look is distinct and well planned out with wardrobe and accessories strengthening each look you decide to market. To ensure a successful shoot, be sure to pay close attention to details such as clean, ironed, and unstained clothes.

This planning should be done before you show up to the photographer’s studio. It is well worth it to spend the money on a good photographer and make up artist so don’t try to cut corners since your shots are your ticket or calling card to meet the casting directors. Plan on spending anywhere from \$275 to \$425 for a three to four roll shoot as well as an additional \$50-\$75 dollars for a good makeup artists/hair person. For kids in the business you will be spending a dollar amount of \$225 to \$350 for headshots.

Once you have produced a marketable headshot and tool it is time to get your picture out to the decision makers who have the power to put you to work. The myth that there is not enough work is simply not true. Producers, directors and casting directors are in desperate need of you, to produce the hundreds of films and countless hours of television programming each year, but they need to know what your product is and how to get in touch with you -- and that comes down to marketing and making this thing we call show business...your business.

### **What should my next step be?**

If you live in Los Angeles or are soon relocating to the Los Angeles area and need help setting up a strong business plan for yourself or your child contact the ESI NETWORK to schedule a meeting to see if they can assist you.