

# “How to Ask Your Agency for a Submission List...Gracefully!”

by Cam Dobbins (Career ACTivate actor)

There are many things actors are used to hearing.

“Don’t touch my stapler! Be prepared. Make STRONG choices. Be perfect. Don’t be stupid. You have to be brilliant. Don’t call a CD’s office directly. Don’t bug your agent- just don’t call them altogether! Use 4 staples on your resume. Use 2 staples on your resume. Glue your resume.”

Yikes! it’s no wonder why so many actors are confused and left guessing about how to approach an acting career and how to market themselves.

An issue that has been underlying for quite some time now, but needs to be addressed is the issue of the proper agent for the actor. Most often actors say, “My agent isn’t getting me out enough!” While that may be true, part of the responsibility lays on the actor to confront their agent and see how they can best serve the agent, so both of them can make commission (\$ signs).

If an actor feels that they’re not being sent out enough, actors should ask their agent, “What can I do to make my job easier for you?” Any agent worth their salt should willingly answer this question. If not, GET ANOTHER AGENT. An agent not taking the time to answer this simple question very clearly doesn’t care about money (not to mention their talent) and for that reason- quite frankly- shouldn’t be an agent.

While asking this question and listening to their agent’s response, the actor should COMMUNICATE with their agent about what they- themselves- have done to further their own career. (Remember, the agent does 10% of the work (and most of it’s law- negotiating contracts- to negotiate a higher rate than what you- the actor- could have gotten for yourself) and you- the actor- do 90% of the work.) This is where the actor should talk about that Improv class they’ve taken, Scene Study class they’ve joined, etc.

If the actor is really feeling that their agent is not submitting them for auditions, an actor should gracefully ask for their Submission List. A “Submission List” is where the actor can see where the agent has submitted them for certain projects. It’s up to the buyers- the CD’s, producers, directors, etc. whether or not the actor gets called in for the audition, but getting submitted by the agency (if not yourself) is the first step to getting that audition in the room.

Most agents will not want to show you their Submission List concerning you because they feel that you've violated their trust. After all, an agent is a business relationship and you like all relationships, trust is vital. An agent may not feel that you deserve to see your Submission List because they think this means that you don't trust that they are doing their job for you. After all, an agent only gets paid if you get paid. The other important reason that an agent may not want you to see their Submission List is because they aren't doing their job of submitting you! If this is the case, ask your agent what classes you should take or if you're doing Targeted Shows & Marketing, tell your agent that you're thinking about doing certain workshops with CD's in hopes of getting called in for that particular show. Communication is key. If you are doing everything that you can to succeed (training, communicating with your agent, classes, workshops, great marketing materials, etc.), then perhaps it is time to begin the search for a new agent. Keep in mind though that an agent can only help you if they know what the problem is. Make sure you've explored all options before you leave your agent. Don't prematurely leave your agent. Communicate!