

# **Tips To Help You Make It As an Actor in LA**

## **WHAT YOU MUST HAVE IF YOU WANT TO WORK IN LA:**

- An agent and/or a manager (*sadly, only agents and managers get to see the best roles being cast in the big films and TV shows, the general public does not*)
- An ActorsAccess.com account (*this is the primary source for most of the theatrical casting notices*)
- An LACasting.com account (*this is the primary source for most of the commercial casting notices*)
- A GREAT headshot that captures “You!”
- A GREAT demo reel (*especially if you are looking for a good agent*)
- Confidence (*a belief in the phrase, “You are enough as you are!”*)
- A strong knowledge of the Entertainment Industry and how it works
- A place to practice your skills (acting class, theater company, etc.)
- Cold reading/audition skills (*a good cold reading class helps*)
- A decent source of income and a flexible schedule (*or a trust fund*)
- A dependable car (*it’s rough trying to make it in this business without a car*)
- A network of industry friends (*we need others on so many levels!*)
- A deep love of the art! (*you will never survive all the rejection and painfully hard work if you don’t have a love for acting*)
- A good plan of attack and solid goal setting system (*actors are spontaneous people by nature but without a plan of attack you’re just shooting in the dark*)
- A fan base (*it’s all about fan bases and how many people will pay to see you in a show, film, etc.*)
- A GPS (*or at least a reliable and available map*)

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE IF YOU WANT TO WORK IN LA:**

- SAG-AFTRA card (*it’s true, Hollywood is primarily a union driven town*)
- A CastingFrontier.com account (*this is the secondary source for commercial casting notices as a few of the commercial casting offices prefer this service over LA Casting*)
- IMDbPro account (*your secret weapon for researching the industry and figuring out who is worth knowing and working with and who is not*)
- A CastingAbout.com account (*this is the most reliable list of casting directors, their contact info, what they are currently casting and if they are active at any given moment of not*)
- A great resume (*feature and TV credits matter most, theater credits matter second and training matters third. If acting matters to you your resume will show it.*)
- Several specific character headshots (*one for each of the types you will most likely play*)
- Postcards, fliers and other marketing materials (*to remind the town you are out there and working*)
- A proper wardrobe (*appropriate to the types and roles you play*)
- A personal website (*easily readable, with your photos, demos and your resume*)
- Social media accounts (*It’s all about fan bases and many actors have booked roles based on their social media numbers alone*)
- Stand up comedy and/or improv experience (*especially if you’re funny*)
- A knowledge of what to do technically in an audition, on a set, etc. (*a good audition and/or on-camera class can help*)
- Self-productions. Your own videos on YouTube, Vimeo, Funny or Die, etc. (*this alone has made many a career in Hollywood... remember, it’s all about fan bases!*)

## **WHAT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE IF YOU WANT TO WORK IN LA:**

- AEA (Actors' Equity Association) card (*not only is theater the best place for actors to hone their craft is also a great way to be seen. Plus, if you’re lucky, it can also be a nice source of income.*)
- An audition and work tracking system (*a way to keep track of your auditions and your work, who you met, what you wore, etc. You’d be amazed at how much you miss without one*)
- A good publicist (*only after you have something to publicize*)

## **PLACES YOU SHOULD TARGET MARKET (Post Cards, etc.):**

- Casting Directors (*especially for the shows you are right for*)
- Assistant or Associate Casting Directors (*they will be the casting directors of tomorrow*)
- Agents (*see IMDbPro for ones that fit you best*)
- Directors (*ones you've worked with or who direct the shows you're right for*)
- Writers (*especially the show-runners on the shows you would be cast in*)
- Ad Agencies (*for commercials*)
- Producers (*for indies, TV shows and features*)

## **PLACES YOU CAN NETWORK (Because Work Begets Work):**

- Your own acting groups (*form your own practice groups, make films, do plays, etc.*)
- Theater companies
- Film festivals (*Sundance, Hollywood, Los Angeles and many, many more*)
- Social Media (*Twitter, FaceBook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.*)
- Greenhouse Arts & Media (*a non-profit networking and skill building group of filmmakers*)
- Acting classes
- Improv groups
- Stand up comedy clubs
- Showcases
- Cold reading workshops
- Writers groups (*especially where you act the parts for the writers*)
- Sports teams. Softball teams, hockey teams, etc.
- Happy hours
- AFI and other Universities (*especially for student films*)
- AA, charities and church (*only if appropriate! I hesitate in even mentioning it but...*)
- SAG-AFTRA and SAG-AFTRA Foundation (*plus, you can take a ton of classes and seminars*)

## **MARKETING IDEAS TO CONSIDER:**

*(It's up to you to shop around and find out how best to spend your money. Every actor gets something different out of each of these activities. Figure out which ones work best for you. Do things that will best keep you on the radar of the industry.)*

- Produce your own short films (*I can't stress enough the value of this one!*)
- Perform in showcases
- Produce your own plays
- Do your own one man/woman play or YouTube show
- Send out post cards regularly (*when you work or have something to announce*)
- Do casting director and agent drop-offs
- Attend casting director workshops (*especially the free ones at SAG Foundation*)
- Do mass mailings of headshots

And it's very important that you shop around for a good marketing plan. Meet people who have done whatever it is you're considering doing for marketing. Ask them about their experiences.

Everyone is a unique individual, therefore everyone gets something different out of doing the same thing. And, no two people ever do all of the same things the same way. There's no single recipe for success. What works for one actor doesn't necessarily mean it will work for every actor. Design a marketing program that works best for you and your style. Keep trying new approaches until you find a list of things that works best for you. That's the best way to find your own recipe for success.