



PROFESSIONAL
SCREEN ACTING
CLASSES FOR
KIDS+TEENS

T (604) 801-7050
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www.bizstudio.ca

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Q: WHERE DO I FIND A LIST OF TALENT AGENTS?

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I'm including a list of twenty-four agencies whose young clients I've worked with, and who I've witnessed doing well for their young clients, listed alphabetically. The number beside each agency is the number of talent agents working at each agency, according to IMDBPro, just to give you a rough idea of the size of the agency (i.e. are they a large agency or a 'boutique' agency).

Carrie Wheeler Management (1) www.carriewheelerentertainment.com
Carrier Talent (2) www.carriertalent.com
City Talent Management (2) www.citytalentmgmt.com
Connekt Creative (2) www.connektcreative.com
Cue Agency (4) www.cuemangement.com
Da Costa Talent Management (8) www.dacostatalent.com
JL Talent (2) www.jlmtm.com
KC Talent (7) www.kctalent.com
Kirk Talent (5) www.kirktalent.com
Lauren Levitt & Associates (3) www.llatalent.com
Lloyd Talent (1) www.lloydtalent.com
Lucas Talent (12) www.lucastalent.com
MJ Watts Talent (1) www.mjwattstalent.com
MoGood Talent (1) www.mogoodtalent.com
Moving Pictures Talent (1) www.movingpicturestalent.com
MVM Agency (2) www.mvmagency.ca
MNT Agency (3) www.mnt-agency.com
Pacific Artists (4) www.pacificartists.com
Play Management (9) www.playmgmt.com
Premiere Talent (8) www.ptmtalent.com
Principals Talent (4) www.principalstalent.com
RED Artist Management (6) www.red-mgmt.com
The Characters Talent Agency (28) www.thecharacters.com
Trisko Talent (4) www.triskotalent.com

There are a 115 licensed talent agencies operating in BC. The full list, along with the rules and regulations they have to abide by, can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/licensing/licensing-talent-agencies>



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Q: HOW DO I KNOW WHICH ONE IS THE BEST (FOR ME)?

Whether you're at a large agency or a boutique agency, the best agent for you will be one who you trust, who's excited about you as an actor, who has a small roster, and who has good relationships with casting directors in Vancouver.

Trust is the foundation of the actor-agent relationship. Film and television is notoriously inconsistent, and when auditions are slow or nonexistent, or you're considering changing your marketing materials (headshot, etc.), it's important that you're working with a professional who you trust to tell you to be patient, to give you advice, or to suggest the things that might help them market you effectively.

Excitement is contagious. If you have an agent who believes in you, your skill and talent, and your ability to get work, it's more likely that they'll be able to market you effectively.

Small Roster for a talent agent might mean 100-150 for an agent that focuses primarily on commercials, and 50-100 for an agent that focuses on film and television (i.e. a "principals" agent). More important than the number is that the agent is able to get to know each actor, their personality, skills, strengths and weaknesses, so that they know with confidence which audition opportunities are perfect for each actor so they know when to "push" to try and have that client seen for auditions.

Good relationships with casting directors are crucial in Vancouver, where there are only eight film and television casting offices. All agents have access to the same breakdowns (i.e. list of upcoming auditions). Agents ask for auditions for their clients, and casting directors choose who to see for auditions. And there are *always* more actors asking than they can see for audition, often hundreds of submissions for only eight to ten available audition slots. If an agent has a reputation for representing high skilled or successful talent, or if they have a close working relationship with a casting director, it may (at least sometimes) influence whether their clients are chosen to audition. Whether you're at a large agency or a boutique agency, it's the *individual agent's* relationship with casting that matters.

All twenty-four of the agencies on the list above are reputable, and have young clients who work in film, television and commercials. Research each agency's website, submit to as many as you can, try to meet with two to five before making a decision, ask good questions in the meetings. Ask all the industry professionals who you can for their opinion, including me, and the other teachers at Biz Studio! If you really want to do *all* your homework, then you can even get a 30-day "Free Trial" membership to the professional side of the Internet Movie Database www.Pro.IMDB.com and look up each agency/agent by name to see how many clients they have who book film and television roles (commercials aren't listed on IMDB).



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Q: WHAT DO I SEND? WHERE DO I SEND IT?

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To start with, choose six agencies from the list and quickly research each one via their website. Agencies that are active on social media will also usually have links to their profiles on their websites (only some agencies do social media, since casting doesn't care about those profiles they're mostly recruiting tools to help them look fancy for actors who might want to join them). On each agency's website you'll find a page with a title like "Submissions" or "Submission Guidelines" or "Want to be represented by us?" (etc.) that will tell you what that agency wants to receive in a submission, and will give you either an email address to send your materials to, or a form to fill out directly on their website.

Keep the cover letter for your submission very simple! The goal of the letter isn't to tell them everything about you and your work, the goal is to get an in-person meeting by giving them a few tidbits to show them that you're taking this seriously and already have some marketable skills. My recommendation is that you create something (simple and professional) of your own that fits your style and personality.

Use your research on each agency to personalize the cover letter, and then send that cover letter and any other materials they've requested (i.e. photos, resume, 'demo' video clips). You don't need professional "headshot" photos to submit, although you will be expected to get them after you "sign" with an agency. For a starter "demo reel" you can use short clips of your best work from class, just 30-60 seconds of two different scenes that showcase you well (i.e. technically proficient, confident, show your personality, no mistakes/hesitations/apologies).

If you really want to do *all* the research you can, you can even get a 30-day "Free Trial" membership to the professional side of the Internet Movie Database www.Pro.IMDB.com, look up each agent and review their clients to see if they already represent any other actors your age who look like you, and how much their clients work in film and television (it's an imperfect metric, but IMDB has something called the "Star Meter" that you can use to get a rough idea of who's working more or less at a glance; for more details click on each actor to see their total number of credits). You'll also find each agent's direct email on the same page as their client list, which may make your submission more likely to be seen than if you send it to the general "submissions" email address, especially if you personalize your email with the agent's name and add something about why you think you might be a good fit for their roster, based on your review of their current clients. If you go this route and email each agent directly it will take more time, so plan accordingly, so that you're not tempted to spam the agents with cover letters that aren't personalized specifically for them and their clients. Be smart about it, and be respectful, so that you're setting yourself up

Most submissions that agents receive are incomplete, hopelessly inarticulate, or missing photos or key information. So if you take the time to do a professional submission, you're already ahead of the game, and showing that you're serious about working professionally.



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Q: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE? HOW DO THEY DECIDE?

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I suggest sending submissions to as many agencies as you can, six at a time to make that process as easy as possible (i.e. about 1hr/6 submissions). If you send out six submissions a week, and work your way through all 24 agencies in the attached list, then it will take you one month to submit to all of them. At that point if you haven't heard from any of them, or if you haven't met with an agent you're excited about then just wait a few months and do it all over again, with different photos! Agents often receive 10-50 submissions every day and the only actors they remember are the ones that they're interested in. After six months they'll have forgotten you exist and you can resubmit.

You may get ten requests for meetings from your first ten submissions. You may not get any requests for meetings from your first one hundred and ten submissions. It's not personal. Actors who agents think are "marketable" will get more responses right away, i.e. if agents look at the submission and think "I don't have any clients who look like *that*... I know for a fact that actors who look like them work regularly... \$\$\$... cha-ching!" If you have an unconventional, unique or "character" look then it may take several rounds of submissions before you get one or more agents who look at the submission and think "I don't have any clients who look like *that*... I wonder if they're an amazing actor? If so then I know that amazing actors with unique looks work regularly... \$\$\$... cha-ching!".

It's not personal! Agents want to look at a photo and see dollar signs. All agents work on commission. They won't even meet with an actor unless they think that actor will get professional work, either because of their look or their skills or (hopefully) both.

Make a timeline for your submissions and stick to it, and stick to your timeline even if you don't hear from any of the agencies right away. If you want an agent, you can get an agent.



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Q: WHAT'S THE MEETING LIKE? WHAT SHOULD I ASK?

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If an agent likes what they see in the submission they'll ask the actor and their parent(s) in for a meeting, to get a sense of what the actor is like in person, to assess their confidence and personality and skill level, and to assess what the parents will be like to work with.

Young Actors: Ideally an agent wants to see a young actor who is outgoing, energetic, happy to be there, and confident/comfortable speaking to adults they don't know, since parents aren't allowed into audition rooms and they'll be expected to interact with and take direction from casting directors (who decide which actors gets to audition and then runs those auditions), directors (who are in charge of the actors and the story) and producers (who are in charge of the whole project and typically make decisions about who gets cast).

Parents: Ideally an agent wants to see parents who are self-educating, because the agent is unlikely to have the time to answer basic questions about how the industry works and auditions work etc., interact with the agent like a professional, i.e. with relatively low baseline anxiety about the process of auditioning and working on set, because agents typically don't have the time to do emotional management for parents and most agents have had bad experiences with aggressive or very anxious parents, and who seem like cool humans that the agent genuinely wants to interact with and get to know a little bit, as part of the actors' professional support "team".

Questions: Anything that you might ask in a meeting with a marketing professional that you were considering a long-term work relationship with. Agents are very skilled, very busy marketing professionals. Here are some ideas to get you started:

"How many actors do you have on your roster?"

"How many of them are the same age/look as [my young actor]?"

"Are you interested in representing [my young actor] for commercials, for film+television, or both?"

"How do you like to be communicated with?"

"How often do you want to hear from parents, and what's useful for you to know?"

"What should we expect if we sign with you?"

"What kind of roles do you see [my young actor] auditioning for?"

"What are your relationships like with the film+television casting directors in Vancouver?"

"What are your relationships like with the commercial casting directors in Vancouver?"

And any other questions that will help you get a sense of what they're like personally and professionally!



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Q: WHAT ABOUT EXTRA/BACKGROUND AGENTS?

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Extra work, or "background" work, consists of being a human prop or decoration on a film set. It's a great opportunity for young actors to spend a couple of days on a large-scale film set, to see what that working environment is actually like. For teen actors it can be a great part-time job, with flexible hours and decent wages. As long as you remember that extras are human props, then you'll be able to orient to the work correctly. It's not skilled acting work, it's not going to "make" someone's career, and in fact doing extra work long term can be harmful to an actors' on-set confidence, because extras have ZERO status on a film set. EVERYONE on set is more important than the extras. Even the folks who fetch coffee and hold stop signs. So extras get used to being careful, doing exactly what they're told, staying unobtrusive and out of the way, and in general not asking questions and not disturbing anyone. *Actors* on the other hand are expected to step onto a film set and know that they are just as important as the other key members of the crew -- to ask questions when they don't understand something, to speak up if they have personal or professional needs, and to generally behave as an equal with the other professionals on set.

Most Talent Agencies *do not* represent actors for background work, and it's totally fine for an actor to have both a talent agent and an extras agent, as long as you let your talent agent know that you have an extras agent, and communicate right away with your talent agent when you are booked for background work so they know you're not available to audition on those days. Actors who audition regularly will often choose to stop doing background work, because it's not an option for the zero-status extras to step off set for an hour or two for an audition and then come right back. And especially at the beginning of an actor's career it can be a lot of work for an agent to convince casting directors to see an actor for auditions, so if that actor has to turn down professional auditions in order to be a human prop on a film set, the agent may be understandably reluctant to do the hard work of helping get auditions for them.

A friend of mine who works in extras casting for one of the big TV shows that shoots here in town said that these are the agencies that he works with the most. He added the caveat "We use extras from all of the local agencies... these are just the ones that I've had the most positive interactions with or use the most regularly... but that's just me."

In Motion
InspirationAll
Lucas Talent
Local Color
Picobello
Showbiz

Spend a few minutes looking at each agencies website to see what they want to see from a submission. In general expect to send them basic info about yourself, a photo or two, and that's about it. Most will not require an in-person meeting before signing someone up on their roster of background performers.

Remember that extras are human props and set decoration. It can be really fun, especially for a young actor, and it's also really important not to confuse extra work with professional film+tv acting.



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RESUME TEMPLATE

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Your resume is a marketing tool. It is **not** a list of everything you've ever done. It's a guide to help decision makers know what kind of auditions they can bring you in for, and how to cast you. Don't put a list of "personal qualities" or "age range" or "personality" or "types of characters" (etc.), they have the photo for that.

Format the resume for the decision makers, and make it easy for them to see what they need in 10 seconds, because that's how long they will look at it (at least the first time).

Recognizeable professional credits get listed first, then amateur/indie/student credits. Don't list dates, or the name of the character, unless it's **extremely** recognizeable, i.e. "Lead (Juliet)". Lead/Supporting/Principal/Actor are the pay-grade categories used by UBCP, the Union of BC Performers, and in general Lead means the show is about your character, Supporting or Guest Star means that you appear prominently with the leads, Principal means that you have a substantial role with at least a page or two of dialogue, and Actor means that you have less than five lines.

Film and television gets listed first, then commercials/music videos/industrials, then theatre and live performance. From the perspective of a producer who's trying to decide whether to cast an actor in their movie, one line on a professional television show is more relevant and important than being the lead in a school play.

Your skills should go at the bottom of your resume in a simple list separated by commas. Anything that you can do at a three out of ten skill level (i.e. basic/competent beginner) can help you book a role on film and television, so list them here. Physical skills, sports, performance skills, languages spoken, accents (if skilled enough to be believable as a native speaker; NOT silly/comedy accents), and if you want you can end the skills list with **one** quirky trait or ability (i.e. "double jointed toes", "can burp the national anthem", "pet squirrel", etc.)



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RESUME TEMPLATE

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NAME:
AGE:
HEIGHT:
WEIGHT:
EYE COLOUR:
HAIR COLOUR:

PARENT NAME (IF FOR AGENTS, OTHERWISE AGENT INFO):
PHONE (PARENTNAME):
EMAIL (PARENTNAME):

FILM/TELEVISION

Awesome Movie	Actor	Amanda Director/Amanda Prods.
Name Of Show	RoleCredit	Name Of Director/Production Company

(RoleCredit = Actor, Principal, Guest Star, Supporting, Recurring, Lead)

THEATRE/LIVE PERFORMANCE

Awesome Play	Lead	Arthur Director/Awesome Secondary Sch.
Name Of Show	RoleCredit	Name Of Director/Production Company

TRAINING

Awesome Class	Biz Studio/Michael Bean (2 Years/Ongoing)
Name of Program	Studio/Teacher (# Years/Ongoing; if applicable)

SPECIAL SKILLS

Awesome Physical Skill (basic/intermediate/advanced), Awesome Performance Skill (basic/intermediate/advanced), Awesome Sport (basic/intermediate/advanced), Awesome Language Spoken (basic/intermediate/advanced), Awesome Accent (basic/intermediate/advanced), Awesome Ability or Strange Quirk (basic/intermediate/advanced)