

CASTING WORKBOOK “101”

Film Production Lecture/Workshop

Fall/Winter 2013-14

Presented by:

Glenn Hall
N.A. Operations Manager
Casting Workbook Services Inc.
321 Davenport Road, Top Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5R 1K5
t. 416.593.1051 x221 f. 416.593.8949
e. glenn@castingworkbook.com

Your CWB Contact is:

Justin Camacho
Studio Manager
t. 416.593.1051 x 225
e. justin@castingworkbook.com

Contents

- 1) Rules and Regulations for Workbook Use
- 2) The Casting Cycle
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. General Casting Notes (inc. callout script)
 - iii. General Audition Notes (inc. actor sign-in sheet)
- 3) The Casting Workbook
 - i. Key Elements of a CWB Breakdown/Creating Your Breakdown
 - Audition & Shoot Dates
 - Contact Information
 - Submission Instructions
 - Storyline
 - Role Descriptions
 - ii. Saving/Viewing and Proofing your Breakdown
 - iii. Posting/Uploading Sides
 - iv. Sending Your Breakdown
 - v. Viewing Submissions
 - vi. Scheduling Auditions

DO NOT share your codes with anyone. The Casting Workbook is a password protected site which contains sensitive industry information. Casting Workbook CD's, Producers or Talent Agents must either be members of the CDC, EIC or TAMAC or provide three references from existing Casting Workbook Members with full access (or must be a members of the associations listed above). You are being granted special access because of your film school affiliation.

If you have not already completed your sign up sheet, please fax your completed sign-up form to: (416) 593-1061. Allow 48-hours for your codes to be set up and activated. You will receive an email with your codes.

Have Fun & Good Luck!

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- Do Not Share your login codes with other students (except on your team).
- Only one breakdown is allowed per student project.
- One casting person should be assigned to communicate with agents and actors.
- Your breakdown cannot be posted unless it is first approved by Justin or Glenn.

THE CASTING CYCLE

The time it takes between posting your breakdown and going to camera should be 3 - 5 weeks.

Sequence:

- 1) Create your breakdown on the system and save it.
- 2) Upload your sides and script.
- 3) Post your breakdown. You must get your breakdown approved by Justin or Glenn first.
- 4) Receive and review suggestions
- 5) Create your audition schedule(s)
- 6) Call out auditions to the agent or the actor directly (if the actor is self-represented).
- 7) Do your auditions.
- 8) Call the agent with the booking or actor directly (if the actor is self-represented).
- 9) Go to camera.
- 10) Deliver the finished DVD to the Actor (or agent) - VERY IMPORTANT!!!

BREAKDOWN TIMING AND SUGGESTIONS

- Allow adequate time for Talent Agents to respond to your breakdown.
- Remember that Agents can respond within minutes to your breakdown but because this is a non-paying project you may want to give them extra time so they can consult with their actor about your project.
- Upload your sides and script when you post your breakdown so agents can read your script and make recommendations to their actors.
- Allow adequate time between your submission deadline and your audition dates. If your deadline is Friday, allow yourself 1 - 3 days to review your suggestions and make your agent calls. You may have to leave a message with an agent and wait for them to call you back.
- Plan a minimum of 3-5 days between the time you call agents with audition information and the actual audition date so the actor has time to learn their sides.

- Do not post your breakdown prematurely. Actor schedules change overnight. Your best success will be if you plan to shoot within 1-2 weeks of booking your actor or 3-5 weeks from the time you post your breakdown.

GENERAL CASTING NOTES

- When building your role descriptions use the union definitions of actor, principal and lead properly. This will assist rather than mislead agents and actors.
- Students should use the CWB service to cast speaking roles only. There is little benefit for a professional actor to appear as a background performer or in a non-speaking role. Engage your peers, friends and family as background or SOC performers.
- Students should draw talent from agent suggestions (rather than searches) as these actors have been deemed interested and available for student film projects.
- Students may conduct searches on Casting Workbook and solicit actors through their agents (or directly if they are self represented). Remember that many working actors are not willing to commit to non-paying student projects as this may make them unavailable for paid work.
- Remember that while most working actors will honor their commitment to your project to the best of their ability, paid work ultimately takes priority. Other production companies may not be able to work around your production schedule.
- If you are engaging a higher profile working actor, be prepared to accommodate their schedule and possible schedule changes.
- Use a call-out script when calling agents and actors so you don't leave out important information
- Try to avoid calling agents before 1PM. This is when most agents are doing their breakdown submission work.
- Ask actors to wear clothing appropriate for the role they are playing (within reason). You may be able to do a wardrobe check during the audition.

EXAMPLE OF AN AUDITION CALL-OUT SCRIPT

Identify who you are and why you are calling.

“Hi my name is _____ (your name) and I am calling from _____ (your college/university) with an audition for _____ (actor name).”

When the agent comes on the line (or their assistant or their voicemail)...

1. Repeat the above.
2. “The audition is for the role of _____, in the student film _____.”
3. “Auditions will be on: _____ (audition date).”
4. “The audition time is: _____ (audition time).”
5. “The audition location is: _____.”
6. “Please have your actor prepare the sides that I have posted on Casting Workbook.”
7. “If the actor is booked he/she will be required for _____ days of shooting.”
8. “Tentative(or confirmed) shoot dates are: _____.”
9. “Please call me to confirm that your actor will be available to audition. Again my name is _____ and my cell is: _____.”
10. “If this audition time does not work for your actor we will also be seeing people on _____. Please let me know if you need another time.”
11. **wardrobe check** “As this actor is auditioning for the role of a “lawyer/mother/student” it would be great if they could wear _____ for the audition.”
12. “Thank You!”

GENERAL AUDITION SESSION NOTES

- Don't run late when doing auditions. Plan appropriately and provide adequate time between actors.
- Have every actor complete a sign-in sheet
- Have an extra copy of the sides available for the actor while they are waiting.
- When considering your actors for roles, always have a second choice in mind for your leads and principles in the event your primary choice becomes unavailable.
- Try to avoid callbacks. Respect your actor's time and always remember they are volunteering their time for your project.
- Take the time during the audition to put the actor through their paces. Leads should be allocated more audition time than actor or principle roles. Make sure actors are given scenes ahead of time and take time to redirect them at their initial audition. You should be able to make your final decisions without callbacks.
- It's always a nice gesture to have cool bottled water available for the auditioning actors.

EXAMPLE OF ACTOR SIGN-IN SHEET

Audition Date: _____ Time: _____

Role: _____

Actor Name: _____

Union Member: Yes No

Actor Phone: _____

Actor Email: _____

Agent Name: _____

Agent Phone: _____

Agent Email: _____

This project will be shooting: _____

Are you currently available for the shoot dates? Yes No

Do you have any uncontrollable allergies or potential conflicts that we should be made aware of:

THE CASTING WORKBOOK

CREATING YOUR BREAKDOWN

- 1) Click on CREATE NEW BREAKDOWN
- 2) Where it says “Assign to an Existing Project” - Select “Student Films” from the dropdown
- 3) Begin entering your breakdown information.
- 4) When you are finished doing your data entry, click on SAVE or PREVIEW (and your breakdown will be saved on our server).

Please note that the system will create spaces for 5 roles when you first create your breakdown. To make room for more roles click SAVE and 5 more role spaces will be added.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A CASTING WORKBOOK BREAKDOWN

- 1) Union Designation - Select “Both” (if your school has signed an ACTRA Agreement)
- 2) Project Name
- 3) Contact Information

Establish a single contact person who will be dealing with the agents. Make sure that you have a fast and easy way that they can reach you in the event their actor’s schedule or availability changes.

- 4) Deadline for Submissions: This is the last day agents can suggest actors for your project. This should be 3 to 5 days BEFORE you hold your auditions.
- 5) Dates for: Auditions, Shooting Starts, Shooting Finishes
- 6) Comments Section - INCLUDE THESE WORDS ON YOUR BREAKDOWN!

“We can accept union and non-union actors through our student agreement with ACTRA. This is a non-paying student film and no permit is required. Actors will receive a copy of the finished film for their demo reel.

You can also add additional comments to further demonstrate your set etiquette and professionalism.

- Meals and beverages will be provided on the shoot days.
- If transportation is required we can arrange for a ride for the actor during filming.

- 7) Submission Instructions:

“Please submit online using Casting Workbook. For actors that are not online, please email photos and resumes to: .. *your email address*”

- 8) Storyline: Really Important.. This is an opportunity to sell your project to the agent and the actor.

9) Role Descriptions:

- Try not to over-define your role - too precise a description may disqualify an actor in an agent's eyes.
- Include your wish list or an example of a actor who might embody your role "Brad Pitt" or "Roseanne Barr" for example.
- Be politically correct, positively descriptive and sensitive in your description of the actor you are looking for.
- Think about mixing things up. Sometimes the best actor to play the role isn't the one you envisioned.. throw a wild card into your auditions and casting.
- Remember Casting Workbook needs a "role name" in order to track suggestions. Use "Man #1, Woman #1" if no proper name is scripted.
- Use the proper ACTRA definitions of Actor, Principle and Lead

SAVING YOUR BREAKDOWN

You can Click SAVE or PREVIEW to save your breakdown work. Click FILM & TELEVISION at the top to return to your breakdown list. SAVE buttons are strategically located throughout the breakdown page. Use them often.

VIEWING/PROOFING AND PRINTING YOUR BREAKDOWN

Always preview, print, and do a manual spell check before you post your breakdown. Incorrect spelling and grammar will reflect directly on you and the school. Double check your submission deadline and audition dates. The submission deadline is the last day you will accept suggestions from the agent. This date should be 3-5 days BEFORE your auditions take place.

- 1) Click on BREAKDOWNS and FILM/TELEVISION
- 2) Click on VIEW/PRINT
- 3) If changes need to be made, click on the "edit this breakdown" link at the top-right corner of the VIEW/PRINT page or click on EDIT from the project list.

POSTING YOUR SCRIPT AND SIDES

Scripts and sides should be uploaded before you call Justin or Glenn for approval. Agents and actors will then have access to sides immediately when the breakdown is posted.

UPLOADING A SCRIPT/SIDES

All students should have some materials for agents and actors to view. Even a draft copy of a script will help sell your project to potential actors and their agents.

- 1) Log onto the Casting Workbook. Click on Breakdowns/Film & Television
- 2) Find your project and click on "Sides"
- 3) Click on "Click Here to Upload Sides"
- 4) Click on "Sides Available"
Use the browse button to find your script .pdf file on your computer. Sides MUST be in .pdf format.

UPLOADING A SCRIPT/SIDES - continued

- 5) Type in the page numbers (if required) that each actor will need to prepare for your auditions in the box beside the role.
- 6) Click "Enter" at the bottom

TESTING YOUR UPLOADED SIDES

- 1) Click on the VIEW SIDES Tab at the top.
- 2) Click on the script "download" link.
- 3) Your script/sides will be displayed.

RELEASING (SENDING) YOUR BREAKDOWN

***DO NOT RELEASE YOUR BREAKDOWN WITHOUT JUSTIN OR GLENN'S APPROVAL. REMEMBER ONCE A BREAKDOWN IS POSTED IT CANNOT BE RETRACTED OR MODIFIED (it becomes a matter of Public Record).

All agents receive an email copy in minutes and it can be viewed online immediately. Call Justin at Casting Workbook (416) 593-1051 x 225 when you are ready to post your breakdown. You should be in front of a computer when you call.

VIEWING SUBMISSIONS

Casting Workbook makes it easy for you to view and create select lists of your actor submissions. Simply click on the counters that appear below the ACTOR, NEW and TOTAL columns. All actors should be "evaluated" and added to one of three lists "A,B, or C". You can print call reports (lists with agent and actor phone numbers) .

We recommend you use: "A" for definite audition candidates, "B" for second choices and "C" for actors you do not want to see.

Actors who are not "added" to an "A, B or C" list have not been "evaluated". Your "A,B and C" choices cannot be seen by agents or actors.

Any actors that appear in the "Talent Scout" agency are self-represented. You will be provided with personal contact information for these actors.

YOUR SELECTS - HOW TO PRINT

Once you have indicated your "A,B or C" selects you can print out a call report by clicking on the counter in the appropriate column, then click on the "view by agent" link. This report will show the actor name, role, agency name, phone number and agent notes. Actors who are self-represented will appear in the "Talent Scout" area. Personal contact information for self-represented actors will be revealed when viewing the actor's portfolio (by clicking on their thumbnail photo).

AUTOMATED SCHEDULING TOOL

You can manually schedule your actors or use the “add schedule” option on the breakdown page. To make things easy, all actors you want to appear on your automated schedule should be flagged as “A”.

If you are doing auditions on different days, you need to create schedules for each day of auditions. You may wish to label Day 1 Actors as your “A” choices and your Day 2 Actors as your “B” choices to make building your schedules easier.

DO NOT USE THE SEND FUNCTION. This will immediately transmits your auditions to all agents whose actors appear on your schedule. This is for the experienced user only.

It is important your make your audition calls personally as this is your only opportunity to speak with agents and network.

- End -