

## TV HOST INFORMATION KIT

### QUESTIONS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK!

This Information Kit includes answers to the most common questions we get from aspiring TV Hosts. You will get a great overview of the industry and what you need to do to get that highly coveted TV Job! Stay Tuned for our 'How to be TV Star' Manual that will contain all the specific advice, loads of tips and resources to maximize your chances of a successful career in TV.

**NB: TV Host is the general term used in the UK and Australia, while TV Host is used in the US. For Simplicity both are referred to as TV Host in this info kit.**

#### ***1. Does a TV host need prior experience in order to get a job?***

No. Not at all. There is an endless list of professional television Hosts who have secured jobs with networks without any prior television experience. Often Hosts are found in the areas of sport, politics, finance, fashion and, increasingly, reality concepts. Be encouraged by the fact that networks are always on the lookout for the next Big Thing. Often prior experience is gained through working in another area of broadcasting such as researching or sales.

#### ***2. How do I get work as a television host?***

Although there are no strict criteria for television hosts, it helps to have a few tools at your disposal. Firstly, on a practical level, a showreel, headshot and resume are paramount. They are all tools in which to advertise your services, skills and expertise (even if you haven't got any!). These will invariably cost you money to design/produce/develop but your future career needs some kind of investment. If you need to convince people that you are serious about working in one of most competitive industries around, you need some material proof.

### **3. Where do I start?**

Once you have put together your industry tools (showreel, resume and headshot) and spent time in front of the camera (courses, tuition and/or practice) the next logical step is networking. This form of self-promotion does not sit comfortably with most people - largely due to the air of arrogance it seems to project - but it is essential to getting your name well known. You need to make contact with the networks, production houses and casting directors (these can be easily obtained through industry publications and directories) and start 'spreading the rumour'. You should also register yourself with these directories so the people in the industry can find you.

Your networking can include personal visits, mail send-outs, meet and greets, attending industry functions, meetings and phone calls or even generating publicity of some nature. Producers are looking for someone who stands out - and it doesn't have to be 'drop-dead' gorgeous - it may be a certain personality, expertise, or look - so find a way to make an impression!

### **4. What else can I do?**

It often helps to have a voice lesson with a professional tutor who will have the ability to highlight any irregularities in your pronunciation, pitch, tone and delivery (we all have them!). Secondly, taking a course in television presenting helps you obtain practical experience, mix with individuals who are heading down the same path, and most importantly spend time in front of the camera.

Practice makes perfect. Although plenty of TV host make it look easy, it is usually because they have rehearsed it a number of times. Taking time to practice writing scripts, delivering pieces to camera, interviewing members of the public or researching the industry will NOT guarantee work but it will give you a valuable advantage over your competitors.

### **5. Do I need an agent?**

No, not initially. However, an agent has access to castings and auditions which are not available to the general public. Large agencies have a database of producers, casting directors and networks that would take an individual several years to build. Agents will represent anyone who they think has the ability to make them money. Although a representative is helpful, you do not need one in order to generate your own networking and promotional opportunities.

## **6. How do agents work?**

Agents will generally charge 10% commission from work they generate for you. Although it is sometimes hard to part with hard earned wages, agents often work hard to push your talent and skills. An agent's work is often unseen but can be extremely effective. Remember: an agent won't make money if you aren't working.

## **7. How long should I realistically give myself?**

It is unwise to suggest a time frame although most people are encouraged to work to a five year plan. You need to allow time to make contacts, network, make a name for yourself, practice your craft, distribute material and to learn about the market. Don't panic if you don't make significant progress after only a few weeks.

## **8. Do I have to give up my day job?**

Unless you particularly enjoy waiting tables or busking then it is suggested that you keep hold of your day job. You can start actively taking important steps without giving up full time employment - although this requires enormous discipline. Getting home after a 9am-5pm shift and then having the energy to design video covers, script a showreel piece, set up locations, organize a shoot, add some production contacts into your database etc requires an almost pedantic enthusiasm.

## **9. What are the pitfalls?**

In short, television is an unpredictable industry that is largely governed by money and ratings. If a show does not attract or keep viewers then valuable advertising dollars are lost and shows are cancelled accordingly. Therefore television host contracts will very rarely last any longer than 13 weeks - even less. As a result, you would spend a large amount of your time unemployed - sometimes for long periods. This may suit some individuals but the majority of people need to know when their next pay cheque is coming. In television that is often impossible to predict.

As an aspiring Host, you will also have to handle rejection in large quantities. Rejection can be empowering but it can also drain your energy. Ask yourself - do I have what it takes to handle being constantly rejected and criticized? Be prepared for the audition process, as it can often be demeaning and misleading. You will spend

lonely moments waiting for the phone to ring - in most cases, it never does. You can spend 12 months being rejected before you get your first gig. And then you have to pay your agent 10%.

## **10. What are some industry secrets?**

Networks will often advertise hosting jobs internally. Anyone who works for the networks receives internal email every day, so to get into the ultimate 'loop' apply to work at a Network in any capacity. Hosting talent has often been found in reception, researching and promotional positions.

Networks are more receptive to show ideas and pilots than hosts. If you can come up with some show concepts together with your showreel, you will be taken more seriously. Wearing the hat of a producer or writer carries more weight.

Find a 'quirk', 'catch' or 'selling point'. There are hundreds of potential hosts who are knocking on the same doors as you are. You need to find a unique 'selling point' that will distinguish you from the rest of the crowd. This may be a look, a character, a style or accent - think about some hosts you know and what makes them unique and stand out.

## **11. It seems hard. Why would I want to work in this industry?**

Television is an industry that distorts reality, allows us to dream and can trigger every human emotion. Although it is an extraordinarily competitive industry, it can allow you to see the world, meet influential and amazing people, make a creative difference and generate an affluent lifestyle. It gives you the chance to be part of a select group - a group that determines what the public sees in their living rooms every night. What the public see can determine the mood of a nation, can influence elections, can cause wars and riots, but can also help fight poverty and crime, inform and entertain. To be a part of this is irresistible.

Hosts are often the meat in front of the camera. You get paid to read other people's scripts, dress in other people's clothes, deliver other people's lines. However, the more experience you gather, the more influence you will have in scripts, ideas and concepts. One day your show idea could be purchased and you could be producing your own shows!

Television is exciting, dynamic and ever changing. With dedication, persistence and your unique personality you can be a part of it!

## Your Next Step

Our complete manual on How to be a TV Star, containing everything you need to know to make it in the entertainment industry will be out shortly - we will keep you posted. In the meantime get your career started now, and begin applying the information you have read in this information kit!

We look forward to helping you in your career in Entertainment!

All the Best

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