



Modeling Scams Exposed

“How to Protect Yourself and Your Dreams”

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This is a free e-report compiled by Paul Gage (Boost Sales and Marketing, LLC) to protect the dreams of aspiring models. This report is not meant to be sold. The content was compiled from modelsadvocated.com and packaged in electronic format for your convenience.

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Model scams can be avoided - so don't let this happen to you!

You dream of becoming a model, so you go to your local "model center" for a "free evaluation."

You're told their "talent packaging" (whatever that is) will turn you into an instant super model and "Eddie" (a used car salesman turned "talent agent") convinces you to be on their web site (lost among 50,000 other people) for \$1000 or so with "professional photos" that he will pay an amateur \$75 to do for you.

In just a few minutes, with your receipt and "guarantee" in hand, you are all set and ready to take on the world.... You rush home to tell your family and friends of your good fortune.

A few days later you arrive for your photo shoot and discover that the receptionist is also the "makeup artist," there are 10 or 20 other people milling about waiting for their turn at stardom and, surprisingly, not one of them looks like a real model.

The following week you rush back to the model center to see the results and to your amazement - not one of the images from your "professional photo shoot" looks even close to something you would see in a real modeling portfolio or in a magazine.

You are handed your pictures and a "job list," Eddie waves good bye and good luck, and suddenly stops returning your calls.

A few weeks later, you ask yourself, "How could this have happened to me? I was told I would be working with professionals, they guaranteed me work - and all they did was give me the phone number of some woman that wanted me to do a free fashion show and a publicly advertised address where anyone and everyone can submit a photo to The Gap."

What went wrong is you failed to see the warning signs, chief among them: Anyone that will take your money on a false pretense will think nothing of throwing in a worthless guarantee.

Unscrupulous promoters love when you ask for a guarantee.

Why? Because when you ask for a "guarantee" you are setting yourself up to be taken advantage of and it saves them a lot of work.

In whose opinion? In the opinion of the Better Business Bureau, the Federal Trade Commission and consumer protection agencies in all 50 states:

"Bogus guarantees are the hallmark and the foundation of most modeling scams. No legitimate company (booking agency, Management Company, scouting company, etc.) will promise employment or guarantee work to anyone."

(New York and Texas actually have specific laws that prohibit model/talent agencies from soliciting clients by means of false and misleading representations or promises.)

According to numerous BBB and FTC reports - anyone offering a guarantee is making empty promises and one of two things will happen:

1.) Whoever is making the "guarantee" will soon be out of business or operating under a different name, or

2.) The "work" they use to fulfill their "guarantee" will consist of free fashion shows at the mall or in a bar, free hair shows, passing out samples (for little or no money) and/or (soliciting others to patronize the same company that made empty promises to you).

How do they get away with it? They get away with it because the wording in their "guarantee" is so vague and the guarantee itself is so full of escape clauses, you've got to wonder how anyone could take them seriously....

Example: "This Guarantee certifies that the model will be contacted for at least one magazine shoot within one year.... If for any reason said model is not given the opportunity for a magazine photo shoot, he/she shall receive a refund for their.... advertising space. This is a money back guarantee! Once said model has been contacted and given the opportunity for a magazine photo shoot, said contract shall be fulfilled. Model is required to notify (company) of changes of address or telephone numbers within 5 days. Failure to notify (company) will render this contract void. This Guarantee Contract is offered based on the model's original stats and photographs. Any misrepresentation of the model's true and current look shall render this contract null and void...."

FACT: There simply are no guarantees. None of the top agencies will promise employment and - even if you sign with the best agency in the world - there is still no guarantee that you will be a success.

The likelihood is much greater, of course, but... ethical agents, scouts, managers, photographers, etc., will not make verbal or written promises or guarantees - and every real agency or management contract will have at least one paragraph covering this subject at the very top.

The wording in the following paragraph is typical of a real agency or management contract:

"MANAGEMENT shall act on behalf of MODEL/TALENT and/or provide MODEL/TALENT with advice and counsel with regard to all aspects of the modeling, film and/or television industry. At no time, however, shall this agreement be construed in such a way that deems MANAGEMENT to be an employment agent, theatrical agent or talent agent. And, further, MANAGEMENT has not offered, promised or agreed to and is not expected to obtain, seek or procure employment or bookings for MODEL/TALENT."

When you first learn that bogus companies promise employment and legit companies do not, it may sound confusing - maybe even backwards at first. But that is the way it is - so don't let anyone take advantage of your confusion.

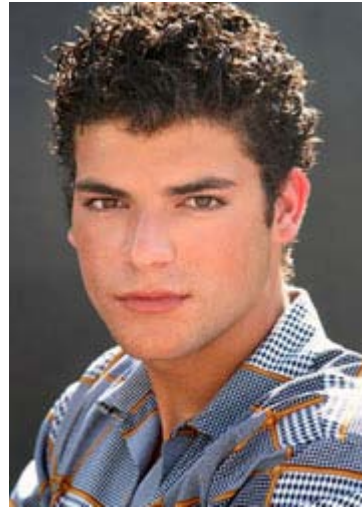
Modeling myths and misconceptions

There is a vast abundance of modeling information on the net - some of it valuable - much of it contradictory. Additionally, over the years certain myths have developed - many of which are still being actively perpetuated by companies with a financial interest in their continued existence.

Other myths and misconceptions are based upon practices that were instituted many years ago, but no longer work. Still others have arisen from simple misunderstandings.

One of the areas where beginners experience the most confusion has to do with what kind of photos they will need to get started and/or to work on a regular basis.

Myth: "All I need to get started is a Polaroid or a snapshot."

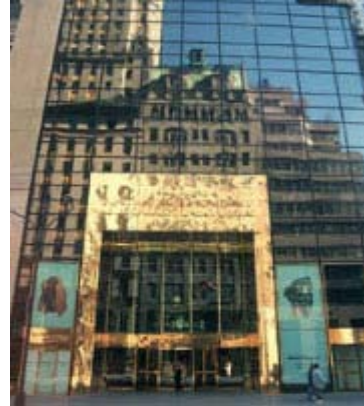


Reality: Although a Polaroid or a snapshot (as in photo above left) might get you in the door to be seen by an agency, better pictures (as in photo above right) will eventually be needed - and they will almost always be at your own expense.

Myth: "If an agency wants me, they will pay for everything I need to get started."

Reality: Contrary to popular myth and lots of wishful thinking, only a very small handful of agencies will *occasionally* advance money to models and only to those models that have signed long term exclusive contracts with them **plus** the model will be required to sign some sort of loan agreement **plus** the model will be required to pay that money back at some point - **plus interest** - so **all** models end up paying for their materials one way or another.

Someone told you that Donald Trump stands in front of Trump Towers every day handing out \$100 bills and free photo shoots to every aspiring model that walks down Fifth Avenue - and you believed them?



IF you are a very tall, very skinny teenage girl and **IF** you get picked up by one of the top 10 agencies in the world and **IF** you are willing to sign a long-term exclusive contract with them and **IF** you are ready, willing and able to move to New York City on a moment's notice and live there on your own - then **MAYBE** your agency will advance you money for test shots then deduct it from your first paying job or two.

If you are **NOT** the aforementioned very tall, very skinny teenage girl - ready and willing to do all of the above - you will need to cover your own costs to get started as no one is going to do it for you.

Myth: "I have a friend that has a friend that will be able to take suitable pictures for me to get started."

Reality: Many new models make the **career killing mistake** of going on castings with amateur looking photos taken by well meaning family members or friends. You do not have to spend money to take decent photos if you are going to submit those photos for promotional modeling. Promotional modeling agencies need to see photos of the real you and not of an airbrushed computer version.

"I personally have interviewed thousands of girls that do not look anything like their pictures and that was a complete waste of time" (Paul Gage, Boost Sales and Marketing). Clear and un edited photos that show your fun personality are the type of pictures I like to see.

A certain quality and/or energy level in photos is expected - and most friends and amateur photographers simply do not know how to help pose or direct new models to assure that they will come across with a strong, professional look.

Wedding photographers, school photographers, portrait photographers, "photo day" photographers, student photographers and "pin up" photographers usually can NOT produce the proper results.

Believing the myth that someone will actually hire you for real work off of amateur photos or a couple of blurry snapshots is also wishful thinking - and going on castings with such photos will only serve to brand you as an amateur, making it very difficult for anyone to take you seriously.

Do not make this mistake and do not listen to half-baked advice, rumors or gossip from other moms you run into on castings as half of them have no idea what they are talking about and the other half may be deliberately trying to sabotage you.

If you expect to work on a regular basis, you need to visually prove that you can look like a real model.



"photo day" modeling school photo



professional photo

"Yes," this is the same girl in both photos and "No," she did not lose weight between photo shoots. The right pose, the right lighting, professional makeup, camera angle, background selection and lens selection can make a huge difference.

Agents are perfectly willing to look at snapshots and even Polaroids - as they figure, "What the heck, if the person looks good in a snapshot - imagine what they might look like with professional makeup, good lighting, etc."

IF you manage to get past the receptionist of an actual talent **buyer** however (someone that can actually make a hiring decision) he or she may not be so patient with you if you walk in with junk photos.

Fact is, the majority of them will not appreciate you wasting their time and they will put a big X through your name after you leave.

(If you don't think this is true, volunteer to assist with a few castings and see for yourself.)

"A 'test shoot' is a photo session to enable the model to get suitable pictures for his/her portfolio. It is essential for a model to build a strong book - so you have to test, test, test and test some more." - Model Talent Bible



These two magazine editors look at pictures of aspiring models every day.

Which of these two girls do *you* think will be taken more seriously?



You will also need to have a comp with a few strong pictures on it, typically one picture on the front and four or more on the back.

Why do you need a strong card? If you go on a casting and you don't have a card to leave behind, interviewers (casting directors, production coordinators, etc.) are not going to take you seriously and very likely they won't even remember you were there an hour later, much less the next day. (Don't worry, however, as inexpensive 'temporary' cards can be made.)

When business is booming agents MIGHT send you out on interviews with a few snapshots and/or without a card, but when business is slow - guess who will be the last person to be sent out on castings and guess who will be the first person to get dropped from their roster altogether? That's right, if you don't have strong materials, it will be YOU.

Another word of caution: TFP is the #1 source of model related horror stories.

There are thousands of TFP (Trade For Pictures) offers on the net, most of which are made by amateur photographers with little or no skill.

With rare exception, TFP is the province of amateurs and a complete waste of time - a classic case of the blind leading the blind. In fact, the term TFP is seldom used in professional circles except perhaps to joke about it.

If you are interested in picking up bad habits and you would like to have a bunch of amateur snapshots in silly, awkward poses in bad hair and bad make up - then TFP will certainly accomplish that for you.

As bad as all that may sound, however, this is not the worst thing that can happen.

It's amazing how grown up models (and even parents) who scoff at the idea of a "free lunch" and hang up on telemarketers who offer a "free cruise" will never ask, "What's the catch?" when some stranger offers a "free photo shoot."

The catch is, the majority of TFP offers are made by so-called "photographers" looking for "dates" and/or "questionable content" for adult sites - and their "something for nothing" offer is simply a way to lure you in.

If you are gullible enough to fall for it, you will probably never hear from the "photographer" again and it is unlikely you will ever receive any prints or CD's as promised and - even if you do - showing these images will do you more harm than good.

The good news is... there are excellent, moderately priced photographers out there that can make you look like a real model.

Never forget: nothing is free and the so-called "free stuff" will invariably turn out to be the most costly - in wasted time, lost jobs and ruined careers.

Modeling myths and misconceptions cont...

"If 'they' really want me 'they' will invest in me, right?"

One of the biggest myths is that if an agent or manager really wants you, they will pay for everything you need to get started.



Unfortunately, this particular myth has been repeated so often and for so long it has held back thousands upon thousands of people - people who waited for years for divine intervention to make them a star.

Every agent in the world has advanced money to models that have not shown up or not followed through - making it impossible for the agent to recoup their investment.

Most agents and managers simply cannot afford to pay for promotional materials for models and actors - and the ones that can afford it have learned not to throw their money away.

Some real life examples

An agent or manager advances money for promotional materials, then:

the model walks in and announces that he/she is getting married and the new wife/husband to be does not want him/her modeling.

he/she leaves to go with another agency.

he/she radically changes her appearance (blue hair and shaved eyebrows are in this week).

he/she decides to get a huge tattoo.

he/she has a knock down drag out fight with his/her girlfriend/boyfriend every time a modeling opportunity comes up.

he/she decides to join the Navy.

he/she decides "saving the whales" can't wait another minute.

he/she decides she is going to go to school on the other side of the country.

he/she decides that painting houses is a much better career choice.

he/she has reliability problems.

After one or two experiences like this, the agent or manager must either stop advancing expenses - or face the very real prospect of going out of business.

One well known personal manager used to pin unused non-refundable plane tickets to his wall (from actors and models that decided not to get on the plane at the last minute) as a constant reminder.

"One girl flew in from Seattle for an important audition and a photo shoot. She ducked out about 10 am on Saturday morning and turned up back at her hotel around midnight.... Turned out she spent the entire day at Disneyland. Then on Sunday she did the exact same thing again. That was the day I decided to stop fronting expenses."

You may be wondering who's who and who's for real, and rightly so... but industry professionals don't know who you are and they don't know if you are for real either - and they have much more to lose than you do.

It isn't unusual for a big agency to get 10,000 inquiries per year or more. If they contributed just \$500 to the promotion of every person that asked for it - their total expenditures would exceed \$10,000 per day (over 5 Million Dollars per year).

Only a very small handful of agencies will **occasionally** advance money to models and only to those models that fit very strict criteria and only to those models that have signed long term exclusive contracts.

IF you are a 5'10 teenage girl that wears a size 2 or 3 dress and **IF** you look like the next super model of the world and **IF** you sign a long term exclusive contract with the agency and **IF** you are ready, willing and able to live in New York City on your own - a major agency **MIGHT** give you a small advance.

An advance is **NOT** a gift, however, and the model's parents will be required to sign some sort of loan agreement and they **WILL** be required to pay that money back at some point - plus interest.

If you are not a 5'10 teenage girl that looks like the next supermodel of the world - and you have been waiting for a big mobile dressing room to pull up in front of your house with a smiling crew rolling out a red carpet while simultaneously waving for you to join them - you are going to be waiting a long, long time.

Let's face it, there are very few ways to go get started in any business without making some sort of investment. At the very least, a few good test shots will be needed for potential employers to see what someone photographs like before they might agree to hire them.

No competent photographer, make-up artist, stylist, etc. (the key word here being "competent") is going to create usable promotional materials for free and/or agree to be paid if and when the model gets work.

How could anyone expect a \$500 a day make-up artist and a \$1000 a day photographer to jump up and down at the prospect of taking pictures of unknown and unproven talent for free? (For reduced "test rates" Maybe. Free? Not likely.)

Why would any highly skilled professional put in hour after hour of paper work, shooting time, photo editing and retouching - plus cover assistant costs, makeup artist costs, camera costs, computer costs, equipment costs, mailing costs, phone bills, etc. - then hope and pray the model will reimburse them at some vague time and place in the not too distant future?

Imagine telling your dentist that the teeth whitening procedure you want him to do should be free or that he should be perfectly willing to let you pay him back "some day" because you need the procedure in order to maximize your earning potential as a model.

Imagine walking into a new car dealership and asking for a free car because you need one to go on modeling interviews.

What sort of a reaction would you get?

How to detect and avoid a model scam

When it comes to detecting and avoiding model scams - knowledge is your best protection so learn everything you can about how the industry actually works - most of which can be found on models advocate.

Depend on reliable sources of information.

Bulletin boards, chat rooms, web sites, etc., are not always reliable sources of information as quite often the writer has a hidden agenda - and even the bigger agencies will use the bulletin boards (or any other ways and means at their disposal) to attempt to discredit others and make themselves look good.

These agencies (yes, even some of the biggest ones) will never tell you that they are splitting fees with the photographers they refer models to which is illegal in New York, California, Florida and Texas - and highly unethical everywhere else.

But it still goes on, and it goes on much more frequently than any of them will ever admit.

When considering what someone is offering or suggesting, ask yourself the following questions:

- 1. Is what they are doing legal?**
- 2. Does what they are suggesting make sense?**
- 3. What exactly am I paying for?**
- 4. Will it provide a benefit?**

Ask for references. Asking for references is one good way to check something out.

The Better Business Bureau. Maybe not so good, as professional scammers know they have will have at least six months to a year before complaints start coming in to consumer protection organizations such as the Better Business Bureau so, by the time complaints start piling up, they have already made plans to change the name of their business and/or move to a different city or a different state and start over again.

What sort of references are meaningful then? Look at things like solid references, reputation, length of time in business, tear sheets, newspaper and magazine articles and other items you can readily see.

Model/Talent Convention Scams

"Model/Talent Convention." What a great concept, right? Spend a few hundred dollars to see people from real agencies instead of spending a couple thousand dollars going to New York - only to find out no one has time to see you.

The big problem with the vast majority of modeling conventions, however, is that there are just too many of them going on - every weekend in dozens of towns all across the country - for them to be attended by real scouts, real agents, etc..

Who are those people with the name badges then?

More often than not they're just "friends of friends" - not real scouts, not real agents and not real decision makers.

Many conventions advertise that a large number of agencies will have agents, scouts or some other sort of "representatives" on hand to see you, but when you get there you may only see a few people wearing "name badges."

(You thought they would all be patiently waiting for everyone to take turns walking down some makeshift runway? Look in the dining area or in the bar area as most of them will be in one of those two places.)

FACT: Real agents do not live and work out of motor homes - and there are simply not that many of them to go around to travel to and properly staff all of these "events".

So why pay several hundred to several thousand dollars for a few seconds of "exposure" to individuals that are incapable of even recognizing a potential model, let alone signing one?



The newest come-on? "Meet the most famous model scout in the world! We will invest in you and introduce you to 30 top agents for free!"

Sounds good, but what you will actually be doing is attending a two hour meeting with a couple of hundred other people (zero agents present) where the "scouts" present will try to convince everyone that gets "selected" to part with \$500 to \$600 for useless pictures to show to the agents at the "free convention" that you will have to pay several hundred dollars or more in travel expenses to get to - only to be told you are "too short, too old, not what we're looking for right now," etc.

Then the promoters skip off to the next town - with your money. (Check their website for a very long list of places they have been to and where they will be going next.)

It may seem convenient to attend a "model/talent convention" that comes to your town, but what is more important - doing something that is convenient, or doing something that is real?

Modeling school scams

Most **modeling schools** charge \$1000 to \$2000 or more for a few weeks of classes and a "portfolio" they will put together for you by paying someone \$50 or so to take a few quick pictures of you upon "graduation."

FACT: Assuming you have real potential, every top agent in the world will tell you that - instead of attending a modeling school - you would be infinitely better off putting most of your time and effort into getting great pictures, where it counts.

Want to learn how to walk a runway? It does not have to be expensive. Instead of paying a school to teach you outdated methods for big money, simply go to a fashion show at the mall, introduce yourself to one of the models there and offer him/her \$50 or so for an hour or two of their time.

"But their ads say that a famous model went to their school."

Maybe he or she did, but he or she probably drank milk too. (Just because someone went to a modeling school does not mean that is what made them successful.)

Want to go to a "model camp" or a modeling school for fun or for something to do after school? Great. Just don't expect a whole lot to come of it.

Things you need to know about modeling schools

1. You do not need to go to a modeling school to become a model.
2. There isn't a modeling school in the world that can teach you to be tall.
3. There isn't a modeling school in the world that can teach you to be photogenic.
3. You will get the experience and training you need through test shoots, on the job experience, through conversations with your agent or personal manager, and, if necessary, from brief classes arranged, often for free, by your agent.
4. A lot of what modeling schools teach is just plain wrong. Some schools have instructors that used to be models 20 years ago and - and that's if you're lucky. A lot of instructors aren't models at all, and never were. They're just graduates of the same schools, imperfectly passing on what they learned - and all you are going to pick up from them are bad habits.
5. Pictures from modeling schools won't cut it in the real world. OK, once in a while a school gets lucky and they get real, professional quality pictures done for their models. But the vast majority of the time you get junk. The school counts on the students and their parents not knowing any better, and they (the schools) are usually correct. So all the money you spend on pictures through the school is wasted.

6. They don't tell you what you really need to know. At least, not if it keeps them from selling you classes, or pictures, or attendance at expensive modeling conventions they say you should attend.

A school (no matter what they tell you) is NOT an agency. Schools make their money by taking it from you, not making it for you - so you can't count on them to tell you certain things.

What are some of the things schools won't tell you?

a. There isn't much modeling work in small towns and you can't be a model in the big city unless you live in the big city.

b. With very few exceptions, no modeling agency in any major market is going to front expenses for you to move there to work with them.

c. Talent buyers (people who actually hire models) don't care that you've been to modeling school.

d. You don't need to know how to walk on a runway. OK, maybe if you are a very tall, very skinny teenage girl you do, but someone that knows what they are doing can teach you that in an hour. No one else needs to learn how to walk a runway as that's not the kind of modeling they will be doing.

e. No photographer can take good portfolio pictures of ten people in one day - and shouldn't even try - as that would be totally unfair to the models.

Having a booking agency license proves an agency is legit?

If you think this is true, you may want to look into the background of the owner of a very well known "legitimate" modeling agency that spent six and a half years in prison for defrauding investors out of \$250 Million and causing the biggest banking collapse in modern history.

Or, you might want to ask yourself why 72 of the largest and best known model and talent agencies in New York State recently lost a huge class action suit and had to pay millions of dollars in fines and restitution for charging commission rates up to twice the amount the state lawfully allows.

Just because there's a license hanging on the wall - or just because the word "agency" or "talent" is part of a company name does NOT automatically mean everything is legit.

Far from it, in fact, as most so-called "agencies" are not true agencies at all as perhaps 9 out of 10 of them are partnered up with a "portfolio mill" or modeling school or training center of some kind.

(Model and talent agencies are specifically prohibited from being involved in such activities by law in at least four states, New York, California, Texas and Florida. In all other states model scams generally fall under much broader consumer fraud statutes.)

Legitimate agencies make their money by taking a percentage off the work they book.

Most agencies take a 20% commission from the model and another 20% from the client as an agency fee. Example: If they book you a job for \$1,000, they will then bill the client \$1,200. When the model gets her check, it will be for \$800 and the agency's cut is \$400.

Unfortunately though, a huge majority of agencies do not make money from booking jobs and taking commissions.

Model Agency Scams. How can you tell if an agency is legit?

Real agencies operate a Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm business.

If you are contacted to attend an "Open Call" or "Talent Review" make sure it's between these hours. Be suspicious if someone asks you to come in later in the evening or on the weekend. (Real agencies are not open evenings and/or weekends.)

Look around at the caliber of the "talent" around you. (Legit agencies don't have time to talk to a roomful of wannabes.)

Be further suspicious if most of the people in the room recently went to a modeling convention. Most of the fake agencies get "leads" from these conventions and they will pay up to \$5 per lead just to get your name and phone number.

Listen to what's going on around you. Does the staff look busy? Is there a booking table? Are the phones ringing? Do you hear actual work being booked?

Don't drop your guard just because you see a state issued employment agency license on the wall. (Just because you see a business license and/or a booking agency license on the wall does NOT necessarily mean the agency is legit.)

Don't base your opinions on décor or photos on the wall. Fake agencies often display comp cards of people they do not actually represent and some will go so far as to cut ads out of magazines and show them to you. They may even pretend they have launched so and so's career or claim to have booked this job or that job just to impress you.

If the space is quite large and/or has lots of different rooms, figure you are in some sort of training center rather than a real agency.

You can further protect yourself by asking around before you even get there. Contact some other models and talent to see if they have had any experience with this company.

Also, be especially wary of any agency that advertises in local papers or on the radio. Real agencies do not advertise in the newspaper or on the radio.

The most common modeling agency scam is what is known as a "portfolio mill" or "photo mill".

Many "agencies" make money by sending models to photographers that are ON STAFF to shoot photos used to produce worthless portfolios and comp cards.

These agencies don't make money by booking real work. Instead, they sign up anyone and everyone for low quality photo shoots and book very few jobs, if any.

A legitimate agency will give you what is known as a test list. This is a list of good photographers in your area that you can contact on your own.

A real agency will not ask you for money for photography services, enlargements or comp card printing. They may suggest a few places, but they will advise you go see them on your own.

Be very suspicious if an agency asks you to pay them for a test shoot instead of instructing you to pay the photographer direct.

Be very suspicious if an agency asks you to pay them for enlargements, comp cards, etc. instead of instructing you to pay the photographer or the printing company direct.

How to further protect yourself from model agency scams and photo mill promoters

Never pay an agency for the "privilege" of having them represent you or for "classes" or runway training or pictures.

In fact, NEVER buy anything from or through a model or talent agency. Under no circumstances should an agency require you to attend a particular class or to buy anything from them - not books, not photos, not classes, not workshops, not runway training, not tote bags, not "exposure" on web sites or on CD's or in some "talent book," not videos, not portfolios, not comp cards, not address labels - NOT ANYTHING.

This practice is not only unethical, it is also ILLEGAL (specifically forbidden by state law) in New York, Florida, Texas and California.

One of the main purposes of an agency license is to LIMIT agencies as to what they can do - it does NOT permit them to steal - so it would be especially dishonest of someone to point to their agency license with one hand while picking your pocket with the other.

According to Florida State Law - 468.410 Prohibition against registration fees; referral - model/talent agencies are not permitted to charge for photos, classes, runway training, seminars, consultations, etc.

(1) A talent agency may not charge a registration fee.

(2) No talent agency shall require the applicant or artist to subscribe to, purchase, or attend any publication, postcard service, advertisement, resume service, photography service, school, acting school, workshop, acting workshop, or video or audio tapes.

(3) A talent agency shall give each applicant a copy of a contract which lists the services to be provided and the fees to be charged. The contract shall state that the talent agency is regulated by the department and shall list the address and telephone number of the department.

NOTE: Don't let anyone tell you that they don't actually "require" applicants to purchase anything and therefore the agency is not breaking the law by selling you something as this is complete nonsense. Also, don't think for one moment that this sort of "agency" won't steal from you in other ways - like by overbilling you for courier fees or model apartment rent, or by booking a job for you for \$1000 then telling you it's only \$500 minus a \$100 commission leaving them with \$600 and you with \$400. (This is also big time illegal.)

The following compilation is based on articles that have appeared in various Florida newspapers:

Florida agencies build up hopes, dash dreams

Authorities are investigating dozens of Florida modeling agencies that charge big money for products and services and promise jobs that don't materialize.

At 79, Lois Krebs is not your typical fashion model. But she thought she might find a place in ads that appeal to senior citizens. "I had a notion I could do what I saw other people my age doing on television," said Krebs, a great-grandmother.

The first agent she met at the ----- Agency told Krebs she had a distinctive look that companies want to sell their products. When she got no work there, she tried another agent at ----- Talent, who also fed her hopes for a successful modeling career.

Krebs says that she paid about \$1,200 to these agencies to help launch her career and, one year later, still has not seen any work.

Her story is very common in Florida

Quite a number of Florida agencies have gained a reputation for making false promises to find modeling work for people who have little or no chance of being models. Gina Hughes said she also paid a bogus agency over \$1,000 for photographs of her 3-year-old daughter. Now she wants to keep others from going through the same thing.

Modeling agent ----- has also had multiple complaints against her in recent years for selling workshops and promotional materials and other products.

An agent's income should come solely from commissions received through finding work for models and/or talent.

A real agency will put you in touch with a real photographer so you can make your own arrangements for test shoots, etc.

A fake modeling agency that is selling "portfolios" and/or "model training" to 10 people a day for \$1,000 or more each can't be bothered with finding work for you and a real agency that is booking millions of dollars worth of work every year can't be bothered with running a model scam.... So which agency would you rather be with?

Click [HERE](#) to see the FLORIDA STATE LAW that makes it ILLEGAL for model / talent agencies to charge money for training, classes, workshops, photo sessions, comp cards, etc.

New York, California, Florida and Texas all have laws prohibiting model/talent agencies from charging money for anything but commissions on jobs they book.

Charging for anything else is prohibited in the state of New York by New York General Business Law Section 396-n.

Modeling agencies are also required to have a license issued by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. (N.Y. GBL Section 172).

Licensed agencies are required to conspicuously post a notice concerning the agency's bond, the applicant's right to bring an action against the company, the required contents of a contract and any fees involved.

New York modeling agencies are prohibited from requiring applicants to subscribe to any publication or incidental service or to contribute to the cost of the agency's advertising.

New York State Law also specifically prohibits model/talent agencies from soliciting clients by means of false and misleading representations or promises. (NY GBL Section 187).

Texas State Law 215.202 specifically forbids a model/talent agencies from making false and misleading statements or engaging in deceptive acts or practices.

California's Business & Professions Code Section 17200 prohibits illegal, fraudulent, and "unfair" business practices and Code Section 17500 prohibits false advertising.

Plus ALL states have more general fraud prevention laws that prohibit making false and misleading statements as well as false advertising in newspapers, circulars, pamphlets, posters, letters, radio, television - or in any other way.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates interstate commerce and prohibits false advertising - a form of unfair and deceptive commerce.

Many people that are new to the industry experience a great deal of confusion over what is fair practice and what is not.

For example, many newcomers think it is wrong for ANY type of service provider to charge for their services which makes no sense, of course, as this would put most photographers, makeup artists, stylists, fitness trainers, etc. out of business.

And YES, although they may be very few and far between, there ARE legitimate model scouts and many of them also work as photographers, make-up artists etc. which is perfectly ethical and perfectly legal in all 50 states as there is no inherent conflict of interests. In fact, working with a legit model scout that is also a photographer can be very beneficial to a new model that is just starting out.

(Who would you rather shoot with, someone that hands you your photos, says "Good Luck!" and walks away, or someone that can walk you into top agencies where you will be given special consideration based on their track record with them?)

Just be sure not to confuse what a model scout does with what an agent does. A scout simply introduces new talent to agencies and does not get involved with negotiating fees for bookings and, therefore, does not need to be licensed. In fact, in all 50 states, there is no such thing as a "model scouting license".

Expenses are and always will be a part of being in any business and the modeling business is no exception.

If you are planning to become a model, be prepared to make some sort of investment. (Be sure to keep your receipts as most expenses will be tax deductible.) You should not, however, overspend.

Whatever you do, however, don't get tricked into paying big money to a bogus agency - especially one that promises employment and/or offers a "guarantee."

The fake guarantee is the hallmark of almost all modeling scams and those who can deliver what you want very likely will NOT offer a guarantee.

Some of the worst 'promise of work' offenders deliberately choose names that end with the word "Talent" to lead the uninitiated into thinking they are a booking agency - and their ads and web pages are chock full of phrases like: "We get you work," "gigs," "auditions," etc.

Don't fall for it. If the company's name is misleading and if their advertising is misleading and if they are willing to lie to you to get your money - they won't think twice about throwing in worthless promises and a meaningless guarantee.

If you find yourself writing out a check for big money to "ABC Models"... you can bet they are pocketing most of it and paying some amateur \$50 or so to take your pictures. (Perhaps up against a \$3 plastic shower curtain, as with what happened to a writer with Jane Magazine.)

Don't let anyone fast talk you into spending a lot of money on comp cards either as 99% of the time, if and when you sign with a real agency, they will request that your cards conform to their format. (If your agency uses nothing but editorial style images on blue card stock with light gray type, what good will it be for you to have a commercial looking white card with black type that does not have the right contact info?)

Impressed with their nice office in a shiny new building? They hope so. (They want you to pay their rent for them.)

Impressed with their flashy web site with the catchy music? They hope so. (If they have no substance, then flash is all they have to show you.)

Impressed with their radio ads and toll free phone number? The best companies have no need for radio advertising or toll free lines. (If someone is advertising on the radio and they have to induce you to call them by offering a toll free number - be prepared for a big sales pitch.)

Model/Talent Directory Scams

"Anyone can put up a web site and claim casting directors look at it. No casting director is looking for models, extras or actors on these sites." - Susan Gard, spokeswoman for the California state agency that oversees talent agent licensing.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of online "agencies" where, for a fee, potential models can post their photos for managers, agents, casting directors, etc. to "discover."

Some of these sites even go so far as to have a "Become a talent scout" division for potential "talent scouts."

FACT: The term "talent scout" is usually a tip-off that the site is either a rip-off or cannot help you.

FACT: Real scouts are not called "talent scouts" within their respective fields, except by the media - and no one gets a legitimate scouting position by clicking on a "become a talent scout" link.

FACT: People at real casting companies, modeling agencies and talent agencies see enough potential models in person and receive enough referrals from legitimate model scouts, that searching online for "new faces" is completely unnecessary.

FACT: Real casting directors, modeling agents and talent agents are much too busy to spend hour after hour looking for "new faces" online.

FACT: The quality and style of the photos posted on "model directory" sites is usually so bad they are of no use to a potential agent, manager or casting director.

FACT: Very few potential employers, casting directors, etc. will take you seriously if you are on a "wannabe" site.

Think about it. Busy professionals simply don't have time to wade through thousands of "member profiles" to find new talent - so don't let anyone talk you into spending hard earned money for amateur photos and a listing in some online talent directory.



"About a year ago I discovered (I'll call it "dumbmodelplace") and read all the stories about thousands of models getting contacted for work and what a great deal it was. They make it sound so glamorous and so easy and so inexpensive. Well, one year later I finally realized the truth. They are a scam! I canceled my membership with them three months ago but I'm still being charged every month and no matter how many times I call I am still getting billed. Oh, and all those "jobs" that I was supposed to be contacted for turned out to be non-paying TFP (Trade for Pictures) and almost all of them wanted me to be nude or even worse, doing some sort of porn."

Some sites allow you to "register" for free then they will start sending you e mails that say "you have booking requests" for which you have to pay a few dollars each to see in more detail.

The big problem with this is that you don't really have any booking requests.

No one really "requested" you and what you will actually receive for your money is a copy of a post that has been lifted off of some public access forum where you can get the same information on your own for free.

And, since there is zero screening and zero verification of any employment offer of any kind on this type of site, you can safely assume that 5% or less of the model/talent castings are real and maybe 1% of those don't involve nudity plus most of them don't pay enough money to bother with.

Meanwhile, telling you that you have received a booking request is false, misleading and fraudulent.

(Making false and misleading statements in order to get money from someone is illegal in all fifty states - and doing this across state lines constitutes mail fraud or wire fraud which is a felony offense under Federal Law.)

What about posting a few pictures on MySpace or some other web site then e mailing agents and casting directors a message with a link to your "profile"?

Useless and unwanted emails are considered "spam" and no one likes to receive spam - so why go out of your way to make a negative impression on the very people that can help you?

Do you really think sending out emails out with your "model ID number" or a link to your "profile" is a good idea? (It's not.)

Do you really think real agents or real casting directors will take you seriously or have time to search for you. (They won't.)

Anyone can post a picture on these sites proclaiming they are a model. Very few actually qualify however, and very few of the "models" on these amateur sites ever follow through (answering e mails, returning phone calls, showing up for a casting or a booking, etc.).

Why put yourself in this category?

How to detect a model scam and avoid being victimized

When you sign on for something, know what you are getting.

If you are paying for web presence, then that is what you can reasonably expect to get.

If you are paying for a photo session, then that is what you can reasonably expect to get.

If you end up signing with a real agency or if you get some kind of modeling contract out of it as a result, consider it a bonus.

Don't forget: A legitimate company will NOT promise employment.

There is no way an agency or a manager or anyone else can guarantee you work.

No one can predict the future and a real agent or manager will not pretend to speak for those who will consider you for hire.

No matter how good a company is and no matter what they may do for you, you may never become a \$2,000 a day model. If that is the case, it may not be the company's fault. It could be that the clients just didn't select you no matter how hard the company you signed with tried to get you work.

In many cases (quite often in fact) new models are so inflexible and have such a long list of conditions and demands - or they have such unreasonable expectations - or their appearance changes so drastically - that they make it almost impossible for themselves to get signed or booked.

Just because you didn't get work, does not necessarily mean the company was a scam - whether you paid them anything or not.

If you got what you paid for, then you have no complaint. You may not have gotten the results you and possibly everyone else were hoping for, but if you got what you paid for - you were not scammed.

Anytime someone offers you a verbal or written guarantee or attempts to use high pressure tactics on you or tries to coerce you into buying something from them, get up and walk out.

Don't spend a lot of money and don't sign up for what you don't understand.

Know what you are paying for and you should be OK. It isn't all that hard to figure out.

NEVER FORGET: Never buy anything from or through a model or talent agency. Under no circumstances should an agency require you to attend a particular class, or to buy anything from them - not books, not photos, not classes, not workshops, not runway training, not tote bags, not listings on web sites or on CDs or in some "talent book," not videos, not "comp cards," not address labels, not ANYTHING.

Do not pay a modeling agency for photography services, pay the photographer.

Do not pay an agency for comp cards, pay the printing company.

Can't figure out why you're not getting any modeling jobs? "IT'S YOUR BOOK."

Not sure why you're not getting booked as much as you would like?

Are you wondering why someone else always gets the high paying jobs?

Most beginner models are walking around with amateur photos featuring glamorous makeup, low cut tops, floral print dresses, large hoop earrings and outfits that don't quite fit properly. In other words, most of them have spent a lot of money and/or have put a lot of effort into photo shoots that will ultimately prove to be worthless.

Beware of "TFP" photo shoots, school photographers, "photo day" photographers, student photographers, glamour photographers and the like as the resulting photos will invariably turn out to be too amateurish, too glamorous and/or very rarely in the style needed to qualify you for paying jobs in the real world.

Beginning models often convince themselves that by shooting with amateurs they are saving money or they are getting something for nothing but - in reality - amateur looking photos will do you more harm than good.

Your portfolio should sell YOU - not sex, not clothing, not jewelry, not makeup and DEFINITELY not some amateur photographer's concept of what a model should look like.

Make no mistake. If you want to work on a regular basis, you will need to visually prove you can pull it off.

A promising career can be over before it gets started

"Be nice, accept the word 'no' gracefully, tomorrow is another day, don't gloat if you get the big part, and most of all, just show up."

Here are some of the most common career killing mistakes most models and parents make - and how to avoid them.



Not utilizing pro photographers and real makeup artists is the #1 career killing mistake most beginner models make.

Your portfolio (or "book") is only as good as your weakest shot. If you look great in most of your shots, but lousy in one or two - a casting director will most likely remember the bad ones.

Good makeup artists and pro photographers are essential. **ALWAYS** use a real stylist to do your makeup and hair. (This does not apply to young children, however, who should NOT be wearing makeup in photos.)

Trying to save a few bucks by cutting corners can cost you thousands of dollars in wasted time and lost jobs.

Variety is also a key factor. The more "looks" you have in your book, the better your chances are for getting work.

Does your book show you can look 16 years old as well as 26? Does your book show you can look like an editorial model as well as a catalog model?

If you have nothing but catalog type shots in your portfolio, that is the type of work you are going to get offers for. (You will get the types of work you show in your portfolio - and every GOOD look you can come up with for your book improves your marketability.)

You can also have multiple books. If you want to market yourself in several areas, have separate books for each of those market segments.

A lifestyle agency is not going to be able to get you work (or want to deal with you at all) if you have nothing but fashion shots in your book. Put together two or three different books that specifically target the work you are going after.

Presentation is also very important

Color copies? No! Potential employers are MUCH more impressed with a model that shows professional PRINTS in a nice presentation book or portfolio.

Make no mistake.... Your book is your visual resume and your success depends on it.

Would you submit a job resume written in pencil on yellow tablet paper for a \$10 an hour job?

Why would you show junk photos as your VISUAL resume for a \$200 an hour job?

PHOTO RETOUCHING

"As a model you are expected to look flawless in all of your pictures. We are all human, we all get blemishes and we all have flaws. Fashion, however, is about fantasy and perfection. All of your pictures should be flawless. All of the supermodels and all of the magazines retouch, so do what the professionals do. A flawless picture is worth it's weight in gold." - Model and Talent Bible



before pro makeup / retouching



after pro makeup / retouching



before pro makeup / retouching



after pro makeup / retouching

How to keep looking good so you won't need a lot of photo retouching

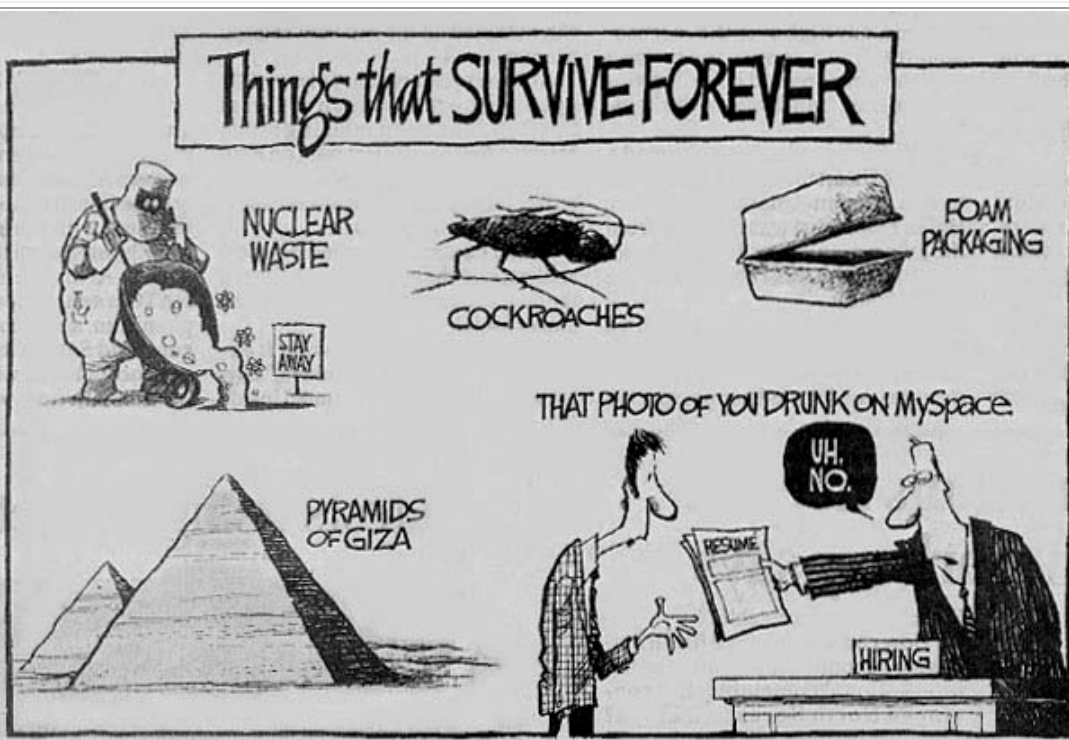
Stay out of nightclubs and bars, especially ones where you might run into other models, crew members, agents, potential employers, etc.

It says on your resume' you're 19, remember? If you are seen in nightclubs and bars at all hours of the night you will very quickly become known as a "party girl" and not a real model.

Successful, working models go to castings, take long walks, go to bed early and drink lots of water - not alcohol.

If you want people to think you are disciplined enough to get up for a 6 am call for makeup, don't let anyone see you - or photograph you - in a bar.

(If Lindsey Lohan can't get away with it, how can you?)



AVOID LIKE THE PLAGUE

NEVER send potential employers links to myspace, onemodelplace, exploretalent, model mayhem - or any of the other hundreds of model wannabe sites - as you will NOT be taken seriously.

Paris Hilton gets paid big money to show up at a club. You are not Paris Hilton - so directing potential employers to **myspace** to look at amateur pictures of you in a nightclub with a cigarette in one hand and a drink in the other will only serve to make you look foolish and unreliable.

Kate Moss? Yeah, we saw the pictures too. When you start making 18 Million Dollars a year like Kate Moss did this year and you have fifty different people that depend on you working so they can make their mortgage payments - you might be able to get away with partying all night too. BUT, you will not be able to get away with it in the beginning stages and it would be a career killing mistake to even try.

Do not show modeling school "diplomas", amateur TFP pictures, Glamour Shots, web-cam shots, prom pictures, year book pictures, cheer leading pictures, basketball uniform pictures, pageant pictures, photo day pictures, bikini contest pictures, you and your friends on spring break pictures, wedding pictures, etc.

Do not put low quality prints or photos in your book.

Do not put "age inappropriate" or overly sexy amateur glamour photos in your book.

If you have fuzzy, grainy, trashy, amateur looking images in your book - that is how you will be perceived.

An image is only "half baked" when it first comes out of the camera, and it will need to be "photoshopped" (retouched) by a professional for anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour or more before it can be printed out.

Do not expect professional photographers to hand you over negatives or digital files so you can sabotage their efforts to make you look like a real model by making and showing cheap copies.

(You have every right in the world to ruin your own career if you want to - but you do not have the right to ruin the photographer's career in the process.)

Do not expect to get high quality prints or enlargements from your home printer as prints made on a home printer not only look unprofessional - they will fade within a few weeks, much sooner if left in direct sunlight.

It costs time and money to make a professional print. Professional retouching software and archival inks and papers costs more than consumer software, inks and papers - but the prints will last up to 200 years.

(Also, don't forget Federal Copyright Law gives the creator of an image exclusive legal ownership and the exclusive right to reproduce the image in any form so, not only is it inadvisable, it is actually illegal to publish, copy or reproduce a photographic image without the express written permission from the creator of the image.)

More career killing mistakes and how to avoid them

Imagine if you and a thousand other people joined the army tomorrow and each person brought with them a list of terms and conditions for the army to follow - and each list was different.

Do not expect to walk into every interview, test shoot or job situation with a laundry list of demands that everyone must follow as if you are doing them a big favor just by showing up.

(It is much more likely that they are doing you a favor, especially in the beginning stages, so conduct yourself accordingly.)

Casting directors and crew members are there to get a specific job done - economically and in as short a time frame as possible.

They are not there to entertain or baby sit - so do not expect them to cater to you and do not expect them to have a lot of time to chat.

Some of the best agencies and some of the best production companies have small offices in unpretentious buildings - as most of the work they are involved in is done 'in the field' or on location....

Do not complain if you don't get a big suite or a dressing room with all the conveniences.

Elaborate sets and fancy dressing rooms are rare. You may have one for one job in ten - so expect to make do with whatever facilities are available, especially on location.

If you want "glamour" (pageantry, purple curtains, chandeliers, red carpets, strobe lights, etc.) go to a modeling school or a "model talent convention."

There you will find lots of people to entertain you for the day and nod their heads in agreement to all your musings (in exchange for several thousand dollars).

Just don't expect anything to come of it.

NEVER "trash talk" anyone EVER and do not be rude or complain to assistants, receptionists, etc. as...

1.) Your behavior will immediately be telegraphed "up the line" and you will kill your chances of ever working with that company.

2.) Assistants and receptionists often get promoted very quickly and you may very well meet the "lowly assistant" (turned booker or producer or director) on future castings.... They **will** remember you - and it is very unlikely you will be able to correct the negative impression you first made.

Common sense guidelines also apply....

Smart parents keep a low profile and do not intervene and do not complain about real world working conditions.

Smart parents give their model offspring an opportunity to demonstrate they are flexible, cooperative and independent.

Imagine for a moment that you are a school principal or a business owner and someone brought friends and relatives with them to their first day of school or to their first day at work....

Or, imagine a crew of 30 people on a set - each one of them with one relative and one friend visiting for the day. (60 extra people stumbling around makes it almost impossible to get any work done.)

Crew members are not permitted to bring friends and family on set and (with the exception of young children) the same goes for models and talent.

Showing up with an entourage can get you sent home, never asked back and, of course, the entire incident will be reported to your agency - who will probably drop you like a rock.

In many cases (quite often in fact) new models are so inflexible and have such a long list of conditions and demands - or they have such unreasonable expectations - or their appearance changes so drastically - that they make it almost impossible for themselves get signed or booked.

Interviews and go-sees

A "go-see" is simply an appointment arranged by the model or actor or by their agency - and an opportunity to be seen by potential clients such as magazine editors, photographers, art directors, casting directors, etc.

Real models go on "go-sees," often several a day

It is very unlikely you will ever get booked for anything of any importance without first being seen in person.

Why? Any talent buyer that hires someone for an assignment without first seeing if they show up for an interview or not will experience somewhere around a 40 to 50% "no show" rate - and no one is going to take a chance on booking someone they have not seen in person at least once.

Real agencies provide real models with forms outlining the name of the firm, person to see, time of appointment and type of assignment and a working model or actor/actress may spend an entire day going from one go-see to another.

Never forget (!) the first person you speak to on the phone can be the key to your success.

If you (or a parent) sound uncooperative or difficult on the phone - it is very unlikely you will be given the opportunity to be interviewed and it's a safe bet this information will be passed up the line. (If you are with a real agency and this happens, don't be surprised if you get dropped.)

Be organized. If you find out about a casting on your own, provide this same information for yourself.

When you have these items written down neatly on a sheet of paper, you'll feel like a professional right from the start.

Interview tips

- 1.)** Be on time. Nothing says, "I don't care about this job." like showing up late. (Being too early is not good either. Five minutes early is considered 'on time'.)
- 2.)** Call if you must be late for any reason.
- 3.)** Write down a phone number, the correct address, directions, and parking specifics as well as building or studio access instructions, exact name of the meeting room, etc. and be sure to bring them with you.
- 4.)** Wear clean conservative clothing - not too dressy and not too casual.
- 5.)** Go easy on the make-up.
- 6.)** Well manicured nails (clear nail polish or french manicure) make a good impression.
- 7.)** Bring a pen and note pad and take notes.
- 8.)** Be patient. Be prepared to wait a few minutes or longer.
- 9.)** If you have another go-see or booking later the same day, politely mention it so you can get in and out sooner.
- 10.)** When you sit down for the interview, do not immediately hand over a portfolio or pictures unless asked. Let the interviewer take the lead.
- 11.)** If the interviewer leaves the room, do not stand impatiently or wander around.
- 12.)** Your interview begins the moment you enter the building.
- 13.)** Never criticize or attempt to direct other actors or models, even if his/her performance is awful.

14.) Make sure you know about dress requirements for the audition.

15.) Almost all interviewers have had the experience of meeting a prospective model/actor where a friend or parent does all the talking - and at the end of the interview the interviewer will be thinking, "Gee, I feel like I know the friend/parent really well, but I have no idea what the model/actor is like."

Unless you are very young, say 15 or 16 or younger - try to avoid giving the impression that you lack independence by having family members or friends sit in and/or "take over" the interview for you.

An interview can last three minutes or thirty minutes.... You should not take how long the interview lasts or the interviewer's comments personally.

When you feel the interview has come to an end, smile, say "thank you" and leave the room. If the interviewer asks for a picture or a composite, leave one. (A laser copy is fine.)

Your portfolio is your passport

A portfolio is a set of professionally taken pictures of a model in various outfits, looks, make-up and expressions.

Consider your portfolio (or "book") as your passport to the modeling world as without one you will not be taken seriously and it is going to be very difficult for you to go anywhere.

A good book gives potential employers something to look at so they can visualize you in their upcoming shoot and make an informed decision.

Your portfolio is your first step to enter into the fashion world and it needs to be handled very carefully. It should highlight your beauty, moods, expressions and emotions.

Your career can get off to a flying start, or suffer a slow death - all based on the way you visually present yourself starting day one.

The quality of the photos in your book is critically important. A great portfolio shot by an experienced photographer not only enhances your chance of getting a break in fashion industry it also gives you confidence.

A good photo shoot is a team effort. Be sure to discuss what you are trying to accomplish before and during a shoot. It is only when you communicate and cooperate that you will be able to create great images.

Keep jewelry to a minimum. Big jewelry or the same earrings and/or the same necklace in different shots and different outfits detracts from the impact of all of those images.

Stick with solid colors. A black dress is fine, otherwise avoid anything all white or all black or anything too busy (dots, floral prints, paisleys, stripes, etc.). Bring everything on hangers, not in bags, to avoid wrinkles.

Make sure clothes fit properly. Swimsuits, for example, should be snug, with no gaps showing when they move but they also shouldn't be too tight.

Vary your hair style. When trying to create a variety of looks short hair can be a challenge. For variety, try a wig. Keep your hair as close to its natural color as possible. AVOID chunky highlights as they can make you look older and do not photograph well.

Make-up should look fresh, young and natural and needs to vary in style and color to compliment different hairstyles or outfits. This makes each portfolio image look truly different. Heavy make-up, especially in the beginning stages, makes potential employers have to guess what you really look like (not good).

Every day make-up is very different than photographic make-up. DO NOT attempt to cut corners by trying to do your own make-up.

Shoes can also make a big difference. Bring along at least one pair of shoes with the highest high heels you have or can borrow. Even though they will not show in most photos, high heeled shoes change the way you stand and give you a bit of extra height that all but the tallest models can use.

Hold in your stomach a bit to give a more toned appearance - even if you are in great shape.

Maintain good posture. Most people, models included, do not have good posture. Unless you're going for a casual look, keep your back straight and shoulders up.

Learn five basic poses ahead of time by looking at a magazine or a catalog. Practice in front of a mirror a few times and have them ready to do without having to think about it.

Generally, don't keep both arms entirely straight unless directed to do so for a specific pose. Bend one or both arms, even if only a little, to make the pose look less artificial. Likewise, don't keep both legs entirely straight.

Don't hold your breath. The concentration will show making you look awkward and stiff.

Don't always look straight at the camera. Instead, use a variety of head positions. Try turning your head, tilting your head to one side or the other, or look off to the side in some shots.

Don't use a big smile for every shot. Try a closed mouth smile, a pout, a laugh, a scowl, or even a frown, to give some variety to your facial expressions.

Listen to what (professional) photographers direct you to do and learn from them. They can see how things look through the camera. You can't.

Do not allow or encourage spectators to "shoulder hop" the photographer as this will create huge distractions that virtually guarantee poor results.

Do not shoot with amateur photographers as this will not give you quality on-camera experience.

Shooting with amateurs will teach you bad habits that are very hard to break. Plus, you will never know where your pictures will turn up weeks months or years later.

Have a cell phone with you at all times and make sure it is turned ON especially while you are on route to the location.

Bring at least one bottle of water so you don't get dehydrated.

A good hair cut or trim a few days ahead of time is highly recommended. Come with hair in rollers or blow dried.

Wash hair the night before to avoid fly-aways and be sure to get seven or eight hours of sleep.

Do not wear contact lenses (unless you can't see without them) and come with a clean face (NO makeup, light moisturizer ONLY.)

Stay out of the sun as much as possible. Avoid having tan lines and do not use self tanners.

Be on time and, of course, do not be late as you will be cutting into your own shooting time.

The day after the shoot your agency will probably call and ask the photographer, "How did the shoot go?" ("He/she was late," is not the first thing you want them to hear.)

ALL photos need retouching. There isn't a model on earth that does not have a blemish or a wrinkle or imperfection of some kind that needs retouching.

Make sure the photographer has at least two or three years of experience in photoshop and ask to see work samples.

If his/her book contains images of models with blemishes, dark circles under the eyes, etc., you can be sure your images will look that way too - and you will not be able to use them.

Overly "photo shopped" images are also a negative as they do not allow potential employers to see what you really look like.

Do not waste time, do not waste money and do not take chances with your personal safety or your career.

"TFP" situations are almost always a waste of time and potentially dangerous. Anyone can buy a camera, make some business cards and claim to be a "professional photographer."

Get in front of someone at a real agency, go on and on about how wonderful "TFP" photo sessions are - and watch how quickly (and often loudly) you are shown the door and asked to leave.

Never Forget: "You are your book" and the last thing you want to be doing on an interview is stuttering, stammering and making excuses for poor images in your portfolio.



Amateur photos (top row) - professional photos of the same models (bottom row)

Why do I need a portfolio and a comp card?

NEVER FORGET: This is "FIRST IMPRESSION" business.

Modeling agencies aren't just looking for attractive people. They need people who have the right tools to get hired - including a strong portfolio and a comp card that shows the model is capable of portraying a range of ages, emotions and characters.

How you present yourself is EVERYTHING so don't expect casting directors or other potential employers to take some huge leap of faith that you will look like a real model in their catalog, advertising campaign, commercial, etc.

When you go on a casting for print work, the first thing the interviewer may say to you is, "Can I see your book?"

If you say "I don't have one." You are not going to make a good FIRST IMPRESSION and you are not going to be taken seriously.

(The interviewer will be thinking, "No book? This can't be a real model, they are not serious about working, he/she might not show up on time, he/she might not show up at all, etc.

In England it's called a Zed card and in the U.S. it's called a "comp card." Whatever you want to call it, however, you need one. Here's why:

Whenever you walk into a real agency you will see at least one or two walls with display racks filled with comp cards.

- 1.) Several times a day, bookers will get calls from clients asking for a certain type of model. The booker will then walk over to the racks and start "pulling comps" to send to the client via mail, Fed Ex or courier.
- 2.) Of course, if you don't have cards on the rack your card will never get pulled and it will never get sent to any clients and you will never be seen for any bookings.
- 3.) If the booker does not see your name and face every time they look at the rack they will very quickly forget about you.
- 4.) On many castings, you will often find yourself sitting in a reception area with a dozen or more other models - and someone will come out and say, "Ok everyone hand me your card." They will then take the cards in the back to the casting director or whoever is actually hiring the models. (If your card is not in that pile you will not be seen and, in effect, you don't exist.
5. On other castings, you may see a decision maker without first handing cards to an assistant. At the end of the interview, however, they will usually ask you to leave your card. If you don't have one, you not only look unprofessional and unprepared, the interviewer will probably forget all about you within 20 minutes of you leaving and for sure won't remember you were even there the next day.

A strong book and a strong card says: I am a professional." "I will show up." "I will be on time." "I can pull this off." "I'm worth \$2000 a day."

A WEAK BOOK OR NO BOOK OR A WEAK CARD OR NO CARD SAYS JUST THE OPPOSITE.

How to avoid spending several hundred to several thousand dollars

If an agency is interested, they will typically ask you to leave at least 10 to 20 cards with them.

If you don't have a card, a real agency will not ask you for money to have cards printed for you, but they will instruct you to go to a printer and have 400 to 500 cards made with their contact info on them - and this will cost you anywhere from \$400 to \$500.

Then you may walk into 4 or 5 other agencies and they will all say the same thing.... and you will end up being faced with the decision of spending \$2000 to \$2500 or more on cards to make them all happy - or you will end up with no one willing to book you because you don't have cards.

Fortunately, however, you can avoid this problem (and avoid hearing icy comments like, "Do you have a problem having some cards made?") by having "temporary cards" made that the agencies can put their sticker on until you get your first booking or two.

(Temporary cards are inexpensive, they will get you through your first month or two until you get your first booking and they are perfectly acceptable.)

What makes a model?

Some people say it's a certain look or a sense of style or an attitude - or maybe all three.

Others will point to eyes, hair, cheek bones or other physical attributes. Still others might say confidence and charisma are what matters most.

Runway models can distinguish themselves by how they carry themselves, while commercial models add expressions of like-ability and enthusiasm to their presentation.

All of these characteristics are important in establishing and evaluating a model's potential, of course.

But no matter how important these traits are, it is - and always will be - a model's photos that will make or break their career.

There is an old saying that still holds true: "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Photographic images can capture the individual aspects of a person and present them in an artistic, inviting and compelling manner.

Pictures are a universal language that can transcend all barriers and reveal a personality, tell a story, share a secret, stir the senses and capture the imagination of the viewer in an instant.

Placing more value on "quantity" instead of "quality" is a huge mistake - as four or five great shots can do you more good than a hundred bad ones.

Amateurs working with other amateurs tend to stay at the amateur level until they are either asked to leave or give up entirely.

That is why it is so important to get images of the highest possible quality.... Images that show what makes you special, unique, and memorable.

Also, you cannot go around thinking that you will get every job you audition for....

Even top models and actors don't always get the part. It's simply part of the business and you should never take it personally.

Always keep in mind that the client does not see you as yourself, they see you as the image/character that you are portraying.

Part of being a professional model is being able to understand and accept that if you do not get the job, it is usually because the client is searching for a certain type of look.

You could go to your next call and be hired on the spot, simply because you have "the look" they need for that particular job on that particular day.

Be persistent, be on time, and never give up.

Once you start booking regularly, your name and face will become better known and you will start to get more work.

Also, you can't realistically expect to go out and make tons of money right away - so be prepared to work for low rates when first starting out.

Under the best of circumstances, it can take two or three months to get started and begin working consistently.

Be COOPERATIVE and SUNNY ALL THE TIME and NEVER trash anyone EVER for ANY REASON.

Regardless of whatever situation you find yourself in - you will always be expected to appear as though you are comfortable and having a good time and you will always be expected to get the job done.

Griping, even a little, will brand you as a complainer and make it very difficult for you to get work - and the same goes for parents.

Never forget: Good test shots and a pleasant and cooperative attitude is - and always will be - THE quickest way to jump start your career.

Comments and opinions on this page are all from real working models



I'm not online all that much. I've been doing this modeling thing in real life... and I've come across something I think is really important to those truly interested in modeling. I was in a casting today with eight other models. It was a bit awkward, as many castings can be, until everyone chills and becomes real again. (Sometimes that never happens, and you stare at the floor until you go see the person running the casting.)

I ended up talking to four of the girls there, all with big agencies. We began chatting and looking at each others books... The quality of images that are in a model's portfolio (REAL WORKING MODELS) are really high. The IMPACT of these images is what gets models booked. A model that only looks good 'in person' will only get so far.

I'm being sent out on castings on a fairly regular basis. I have a card. I have a decent book. But that is just the beginning.... Modeling is a business. A job. Like anything else, it has it's own unique set of rules you must adhere to if you want to be a success. If you have the look.... then you need to present

yourself properly. The books I saw today contained SERIOUSLY excellent photography.

There are only a relatively small handful of photographers out there that can do this. Less than one percent of the photographers you will ever meet could even come close to being able to deliver the caliber of images that you need to GET BOOKED at a casting.

How you look in person is important too but often, all someone sees is a bunch of cards. You can be the world's best model in person, but if you don't have phenomenal pics, there are ten other girls that may all meet the general requirements for the casting.

I know it's been a long post and somewhat rambling. I just wanted to tell you how important good images are to a model. And... you get what you pay for. Very rarely is excellent photography free. VERY rarely. When it is excellent, and when it is inexpensive, make sure you appreciate it. A LOT.

*ahem. I'm done. Any other working models, feel free to comment on your experiences. Or anyone who would like to comment. Thanks for reading this post. Really. LRE

Your book is EVERYTHING. Castings are full of beautiful/unique models... What sets you apart? IT'S YOUR BOOK. And let's not forget the importance of tear sheets. I have roomed with models that have had books made up almost entirely of tears. Absolutely awesome stuff. and beware of those places that charge you \$1200 for pics and then give some beginner \$50 to take them! Everyone starts somewhere. That "somewhere" is your book with some outstanding images. LRE SPEAKS THE TRUTH!

This has to be one of the best posts I have ever seen! A lot of people think that models are made overnight... did you guys know that Giselle had been modeling since she was 14... and she just recently made it big? Don't think that someone is going to see you on the street and tomorrow you will be Vogue's top model.

Modeling is so competitive... I wish some of the people here just starting out could go to a fashion show behind the scenes... talk to an agent in Paris and let that agent critique your book.... My portfolio is good.. but not like some of the girls' I've seen.

I don't think a lot of the people here realize how hard it is. IT IS NOT EASY... and a whole lot of determination is needed. PATIENCE is key... good pictures are the most important! No matter what anyone says... photo day pics will only get you laughed at, AMAZING ones will get you work!

I wish everyone on here luck... I know that there are some that have what it takes. That's my share in the post... Anna xoxo

Yeah!! great posts! Sometimes beginner models get so excited about just getting their pictures taken they choose not so good ones. he he I used to do that... before I knew. So this is a really good post for new models just building their books to read! xoxoxo Sarah

Everyone should read this! This is so true. My daughter is in Miami going on castings everyday and all the girls have mad portfolios and tears. She has done 4 or 5 shoots just to try and improve her book. Her booker says you can be stunning in person, but the girl with the best book will get the booking. It is hard to break in. People post bad pics, then ask "can I make it" and when you try to be honest they get mad. If they only knew.... great post LRE Sheri

I so totally agree with what LRE has said here. As a talent BUYER, part of the thing for me when I see great shots in a book, is it gives me the confidence that the model will be able to work well in front of the camera and I can pass this confidence on to my client. The other thing is that I think it takes quite a bit of time and dedication (and sometimes a bit of luck) for a model to build up a good book. It won't happen over night. You just gotta keep getting in front of the camera whenever you can. LRE you are proving this Good post rf

Oh yeah, your book is what gets you in... I got kicked in the head in London a few months back... "too commerical"... "not unique enough".. "too sexy" ... "too innocent".... If that casting person sees the wrong angle, wrong lighting, or one hair out of place in one of your photos, you're out the door.

'Less is more.' a few really great shots is better than 100 mediocre shots. Geez, it's so easy to lose your self confidence in this business. It takes a real 'go getter' to pick themselves up and keep going... you know, take all of the criticism in stride. Those are the Giselles, Cindys, Claudias, and Carmens out there. On a positive note, I just shot some great stuff on the subway last week...!. - Amber

Great topic! My daughter is lucky she has a very good booker. She is 16 and is in the development stage. She did get a taste of things when we were in New York going to go-sees and castings. But her book wasn't strong enough. It is a long process and patience is everything. It does take time to develop a great book. Her agency is taking things slow so she does not burn out, which is wonderful because she is still in school. It does take a lot of dedication to continue. But that is her choice to make. In the meantime you still have to take care of yourself... facials, regular exercise, healthy diet and a healthy mind. It's a job before the job and there are no guarantees. Dar