

Intermediate Guide For Working With Talent

When should talent show to a shoot?

30 minutes before, so the talent can get used to the environment, get relaxed, and so the director doesn't have to worry about the talent showing up.

Tell the talent how they are being framed or staged (theatre or TV, what kinds of shots), so they can make the framing and body adjustments.

Let the actor know the latitude of their input.

Get the actor to do a second read of a scene, maybe in a different way or "their way", to see (1) the actor's range, and (2) if they can do a better take. Doing a take "their way" allows an actor to put their energies into it.

General rule for timing voice-overs: three words is a second.

Make your call times real.

Don't move the closing time.

Shoot voice-over stuff first—especially if they are executives. They'll be fresh and have more energy. Plus, it gets all the exec's "handlers" away, allowing the director to get an easy rapport with the exec and quick credibility. This also gets the client used to a teleprompter. The voice-over will match better later with the on-camera stuff.

For voice-over pickups, have talent take it from the previous sentence. This gets them into their breathing rhythm, and they'll be less likely to burst out your needed sentence (causing syllable popping, audio spike).

It's easier for an actor to pull back emotions than draw them out. In other words, when trying out scenes have the actor overplay, not underplay, the scene.

Craft services: Serve actors no coffee, juice (acidic), milk, or cold water (constricts throat). Room-temp water is best. Watch takes after lunch, when a person's blood sugar level drops. This can cause drowsiness, slurred words, etc.

Make talent part of the team—introduce them to the crew.

When you find the style you want from the actor, tell them so they can maintain and polish it.

Raise the bar on your talent. Expect them to maintain their style, hit continuity, etc and they will rise to meet the challenge (to prove they're professional).