



FILE 08 · THE OUTREACH

Submission Etiquette & Outreach.

How to write the cover letter, the cold email, the thank-you, and the follow-up.
The professional habits that get you read.

NEPA·PRO TALENT

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How to email people in this business.

The most undervalued skill in the New York actor toolkit is writing a clear, short, professional email. CDs, agents, managers, and casting offices receive thousands of submissions a week. Yours either gets read or doesn't. The difference is rarely your headshot — it's your subject line and your first sentence.

THE 60-SECOND EMAIL

Treat every email like the recipient has 60 seconds and 200 messages waiting after yours. Subject lines should be specific. Bodies should be short. Attachments should be linked, not uploaded. Greetings should be a name, not "To Whom It May Concern."

THE STRUCTURE

Subject line: Specific. Includes the project or purpose.

Greeting: Their actual name. Use Mr./Ms. only when you don't know which they prefer.

Sentence one: Why you're writing. Specific.

Sentence two: Who you are in one line.

Sentence three: What you're including, as links.

Sentence four: What you'd like next, if anything.

Sign-off: Your name, contact, rep info.

EXAMPLE — TO A CASTING DIRECTOR ABOUT A SPECIFIC ROLE

Subject: Submission for "Detective Smith" — Marcus Levesque

Hi Karen,

I'm writing to submit for the role of Detective Smith on PRECINCT NINE (breakdown via Actors Access).

I'm a NY-based actor with recent featured work on RESIDENT LAW (NBC) and a reel that shows the kind of grounded procedural work the role calls for.

Reel: vimeo.com/marcuslevesque/reel

Resume + headshot attached.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Marcus Levesque

marcus@example.com · 555-555-5555

EXAMPLE — TO AN AGENT (COLD)

Subject: Inquiry — Marcus Levesque, NY-based actor

Hi Sarah,

I'm a New York-based actor seeking representation. I came across your roster on the agency website and the work feels aligned with the kind of grounded, character-driven projects I'm pursuing.

Recent credits include featured work on RESIDENT LAW (NBC) and a co-star on PRECINCT NINE (CBS). I trained at HB Studio and continue at the Barrow Group on-camera intensive.

*Reel: vimeo.com/marcuslevesque/reel
Resume + headshot: attached.*

If you're open to a conversation, I'd welcome the chance to meet. Either way, thank you for your time.

*Marcus Levesque
marcus@example.com · 555-555-5555*

WHAT NEVER TO DO

- Don't mass-blast. CCing 30 agents on one email is a fast track to never being read by any of them
 - Don't over-explain. Three paragraphs of biography reads as desperate. One line is more confident
 - Don't apologize. "I know you're busy and I'm sorry to bother you" signals you don't belong in the room. Take up space
 - Don't lie. "Robert De Niro told me to email you" gets verified in five minutes
 - Don't attach .doc, .docx, or 50 MB files. PDFs only for documents, links for video
 - Don't follow up after 48 hours. Two weeks is the minimum gap, and even that's aggressive
 - Don't go around your representation. If you have an agent, they handle CD outreach. Going around them is grounds for being dropped
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THE FOLLOW-UP RULES

Most submissions never get a reply. That is normal and not a referendum on you. Wait at least two to three weeks before any follow-up, and only follow up once. The follow-up should be one sentence and reference the original submission:

Subject: Following up — Marcus Levesque submission

Hi Karen,

Just following up on my submission from October 15 in case it got buried. Materials still available at the same links. No worries either way.

*Best,
Marcus*

WHEN TO REACH OUT TO A CD WITHOUT A SUBMISSION

Mostly: don't. CDs are not your friends. The exceptions:

- Thank-you note after a callback or chemistry read. One sentence, professional, no neediness. They will remember the actors who do this well
 - An update worth sharing. A new reel scene, a new credit, a shift in your type — but only after a real prior connection. “Great seeing you in the room last month — wanted to share my new reel: [link]”
 - A genuine question after meeting them in a workshop or class — within reason
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WORKING WITH REPRESENTATION

If you sign with an agent or manager, they pitch you to CDs. You don't. Going around your rep is the fastest way to get dropped, and it damages their reputation. The exceptions:

- Personal relationships you had before signing — tell your rep about these on day one
- Open calls and EPAs — you can attend these on your own; just keep your rep informed
- Self-submissions on Actors Access for indie or non-union work — depends on your rep's policies. Ask

When in doubt, ask your rep. A good rep would rather field your question than have you make a move that costs them a relationship.

MAILING HEADSHOTS — STILL A THING

Some theater offices, particularly older or more traditional ones, still want a physical headshot/resume mailed in. Read the breakdown. If they say mail, mail. Standard format:

- 8x10 glossy or matte headshot, with your name printed on the front bottom margin

- Resume printed on 8x10 paper, attached to the back (staple or paste — check current preference; staples are most common)
 - Cover letter on a single 8.5x11 page (or sometimes a 4x6 note card — theater is old-school)
 - Address to a specific person, not “casting”
 - Use 9x12 or 9.5x12.5 envelopes; do not fold the headshot
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THE COVER LETTER — THE LAST INDUSTRY ARTIFACT

Theater submissions still sometimes ask for a cover letter. Keep it to four sentences:

Dear Mr. Telsey,

I'm submitting for consideration in the upcoming production of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. I'm a New York-based actor with recent classical work at Hudson Valley Shakespeare and training in verse from HB Studio. I've enclosed my headshot and resume; my reel is available at vimeo.com/marcuslevesque/reel.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marcus Levesque
