Tips and tricks for e-casting

What is an e-casting?

In contrast to live casting actors present themselves by sending a recorded audition. Casting and production companies offer e-castings when they are short on time, a shooting is very close and performers have to be chosen quickly or when live casting is financially unviable. In this case, they will specify the materials which have to be submitted. In the majority of the cases this means two videos in which performers first present themselves and then perform a given scene.

Advantages of an e-casting:

The advantage of e-casting is that the given scene can be recorded several times until it's perfect.

Disadvantages of an e-casting:

As personal appearance is not possible the chance to convince the casting company by direct personal performance and interaction is missing. Furthermore, most artists lack the professional equipment to shoot a high-quality video and they seldom have the chance to involve a professional to support the creation of the showreel or to help with issues. Thus, whenever a live casting is possible refrain from an e-casting to increase chances for a contract.

Video content to be submitted:

Introducing yourself:

- name, professional experience in film and theatre (present a selection of current and important engagements), language skills, dance, sports etc.

Scene:

- pay attention to genre and format (drama, comedy, thriller, etc.)
- submit two variants: one in a calm, relaxed manner and another in a dynamic manner/style.

What to avoid in an e-casting:

• repetitions
• the color red, neither as clothing nor as background
• a distracting background
• unbalanced brightness, darkness or volume
• unbalanced contrast of black and white
• wobbly camera work
• make-up (in close-ups e.g. lipstick or eyeliner may appear mask-like)
• too many props (as they will distract viewers)
• background noise
• distortion of the image due to unfavourable position and distance.

What to pay attention to in an e-casting:

• Study the text well! The more you memorize it, the better you can perform.
• If the text is presented with help of a note, make sure to look as little as possible on the text sheet.
• Wear simple clothing in warm and neutral colours.
• Find a comfortable position with neutral background.
• Film two shots: one close-up (head to shoulders) and one shot (head to hip).
• Realize the movie with a partner (who should be positioned next to the camera).
• Good lighting (face should be clearly visible), have preferably two light sources (from the front and from the side), no backlight.
• Follow the instructions of the casting agency for transmission. Forwarding videos via WeTransfer, YouTube or Dropbox is handy but carries the risk of infringement of privacy. Therefore, make sure that by no means videos in the network are accessible without a password.
• Label all clips with names and scenes, otherwise you risk that they will be lost and not be looked at.
• Adhere to the specifications of the casting and production company for the duration of the casting.

Technology:

Possible devices are video cameras, photo cameras with video function or smartphones. When using smartphones be careful to choose landscape orientation, portrait orientation is an absolute taboo.
Attention sound quality! It can be optimized with a small, inexpensive external microphone (usually connected to the headphone outlet).

Finished format:

Formats: mov (Quicktime), mpg4, avi, dv Codec: H264, deinterlaced
Scaling: 768x876 at 4: 3 / 1024x876 at 16: 9
Size: 2-8 MB per minute, total clip max. 25 MB
Compression: program Mpeg Streamclip, can compress clips. Free download at
www.squared5.com