

By: Xavier Paul

www.coolvoicemedia.com

Voice Actor / Coach / Audio Producer

Apathy And A Bad Attitude Are Voice Over Career Killers

I recently had a heated conversation with a VO colleague on the subject of being put "on hold" for jobs by agents and casting directors.

My colleague's frustration led him to believe that he was entitled to "hold money" in the event a casting director called to put him on hold for a project and, due to whatever reason, he is "released" from the holding date.

I explained to him that since he's not exclusive to that product, "holding money" is out of the question. That's not the way it works.

LOTS TO LEARN

After hearing this, he caught a huge attitude with me and retorted, "I'm not one of your students."

I replied that since his business practices leave a lot to be desired, that "that wouldn't be such a bad thing if you were."

I left that conversation realizing that if this guy is my "competition," then I really don't have anything to worry about.

BAD ATTITUDES

It's said that 95 percent of all people in all professions are incompetent. In no other business is this more true than in the voice over business.

Sometimes I talk to people about how they conduct their VO business and silently think, "How did YOU get signed?"

With the bad attitude, lack of ethics and lack of real interest in the dynamics of this business, it's obvious what's really going on here - and that very little of it is voice over.

This makes it clear to me that signed voice over talent exhibit apathy after several years of working with the same agent.

DEADLY FOR CAREER

Apathy might be fine in your personal life. However, in your business it's probably deadly - which brings me to an important question:

Instead of going on automatic pilot just because you're signed, how about choosing to create the same enthusiasm that was mutually felt between agent and talent when the talent was first signed?

There are effective ways to do this, which only require an absence of the following:
bad attitudes,
adversarial attitudes toward agents, casting directors and producers, and
an ability to step out of the "commiserating comfort zone" in which most signed talent park themselves and their career.

HOW TO CREATE ENTHUSIASM

Here are some ways to create enthusiasm:

Create a new demo. The talent I mentioned earlier in this article has been signed for 15 years and still only markets one demo and wonders why his voice over career won't take off.

Sharpen and update your skills. This same "talent" hasn't taken a class in 15 years. He uses auditions as his "workshop."

Meet new casting directors/producers regularly. Hey, they are meeting VO talent on a regular basis. Why not do the same?

Build a website. Yep, you guessed it. This guy has no website and gets upset when I suggest he build one.

Market regularly. Time to get creative with this one.

The Internet is a tool for reaching out to a global audience. It's up to the voice talent to harness these tools and hit a home run in the big game of voice overs.

AUDITION REGULARLY

I'm signed with a major New York City agent and regularly go to that office for in-house auditions.

More often than not, when I get there I see a huge pile of scripts in the waiting room - untouched by "signed" voice over "actors" who are no-shows.

I wish these so-called VO people would understand that a limited number of appointment times are available for every audition.

When they waste the time, another actor who is very interested in building a career is sabotaged.

WAKE-UP!

I hope this article is a wake-up call to all voice over talent, particularly to signed voice over talent who, from my observation, seem to be taking the "signed" status for granted and wearing it as a trophy instead of really getting to work.

Feel free to do what you want, as long as you know that fresh new talent and experienced VO professionals who are sharp and understand how to keep the energy going - even after a number of years - are taking the initiative and running rings around you.

ABOUT XAVIER ...

Xavier "X-Man" Paul is an internationally known voice over talent with extensive credits in all voice over genres, as both a specialist and producer. He is the new on-air promo announcer for the NBA, narrator for the History Channel's UFO Files, performs characters for the Grand Theft Auto video game, is a new character in the animated series, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and performs TV spots for clients including Merck, Gatorade, Burger King, Reese's Peanut Butter Puffs Cereal, Colt 45 Malt Liquor and Foot Locker. He is also a voice over coach and provides full-scale audio and radio commercial voice over production services.