

# Downstage Center

Go behind the scenes with Kevin Selwyn



Organization is key for any successful person. Accountants need to keep nicely organized and balanced books. Artists must keep a labeled portfolio of all their works. Realtors are required to keep their properties looking good for resale.

But what about actors, who generate no tangible product for all their work? Is that any excuse for not being organized?

Actors can and should keep home offices to manage and market themselves as their own small business.

Actors are their own products and don't have a tangible catalogue that can show off their work like an artist. Instead, they can keep themselves as organized as they can in anticipation of a role or to get a role in the first place.

Outlined below are necessities for an actor's home office and their uses.

First step is for actors to list their best attributes. The best way for this to happen is through a great headshot and a resume of acting credits. For this, these items are required for the home office:

- printer ink (\$20 to 30) for printing resumes (typically black and white)
- paper (\$5) for printing resumes; plain paper is fine, but special resume paper can be used

- paper Cutter (X-Acto® Personal Razor Paper Trimmer \$15) for cutting resumes to the industry standard size (8'x10')

- stapler (Swingline stapler \$10) for stapling resumes to headshots. Fans of "Office Space" know Swingline staplers are cheap and effective!

The next step for an actor is to be prepared and organized to pull off a great audition to snag a great role or book a job. Corresponding items in the home office that have to do with auditions are:

- 3-ring binder (\$2.99 to 6.99) required for keeping your repertoire book full of sheet music organized and presentable for accompanists playing your music

- plastic sheet protectors (100/pack \$12.49) for keeping your sheet music clean and protected

- Post-Its (3" x 3" neon notes, 14/pack \$12.79) for marking beginning and ending spots in your music and any notes that your accompanist needs to play your song correctly

The final aspect of the organized actor is correspondence. This comes in the form of cover letters that express an actor's desire to work at a specified theatre or company. Needed:

- envelopes (500/pack \$8) standard business-sized envelopes; legal sized if sending headshots that shouldn't be bent or folded

- stamps (44¢) for mailing envelopes, pretty obvious.

There are many more items that are not necessarily required, but the above items are the bare minimum. In addition to tangible office items, there are services that actors can use to stay organized as well.

- business cards (really cheap to really expensive) good for a small reminder for people that you meet to

help them keep in touch

- G-mail or any free e-mail service can help keep actors in touch with employers and fellow actors

- a Web site is a great way to keep in touch and get your name out there, anyone in the world can know a little bit about you and get into contact with you with a few clicks of a keyboard and mouse

There are a variety of items and services that are readily available to make actors ready and available and marketable.

The trick is to stay organized so that the only thing you need to concentrate on will be your monologues and songs and your skills as an actor and musician.



- Donate online through **www.ClintonBushHaitiFund.org.**

- Text "QUAKE" to 20222 to charge a \$10 donation to the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund. (The donation will be added to your cell phone bill.)

- Find more ways to help through the Center for International Disaster Information: **www.usaid.gov**