

## WHY YOU DIDN'T GET THE PART OR POSITION YOU WANTED...

You gave it your all at the auditions, but someone else got the part you wanted. Now you feel like you're "stuck in the chorus" without any feedback as to why. You applied for a crew position and are not sure why you didn't get a position. What's the deal? Read on to learn the top ten reasons directors give for not choosing someone for a cast or crew position, and what you can do to improve your chances.

### **Reason #1: Someone else gave an acting interpretation that was closer to what the director wanted.**

There are many different ways to interpret a role. If someone else comes closer to the director's vision of the part, that actor may be a better choice because they are already that much closer to the vision. Also, please bear in mind that sometimes a director doesn't know exactly what they want from a role until an actor shows them and they have a light bulb moment of recognition.

**How to better your odds:** Many directors explain their vision of the characters and the show before the auditions take place. Pay attention to those character descriptions and try to create it at auditions. Also, there's nothing wrong with asking the director their vision for the character. Other times the director may want to see *your* vision and what *you* can bring to the character.

### **Reason #2: Someone else was better prepared at auditions or for a crew position.**

Or just a better voice, acting skills, or dance skills. Or has a better voice for a role. For example, you auditioned for a part out of your vocal range, you auditioned for a tenor but you're a bass. Maybe the other person takes voice lessons. Maybe you just sang and didn't act with your song. Maybe you just read the script and showed no emotion or physicality. Maybe you were nervous and came across mechanical in your actions. Maybe you have no tech experience for a crew position.

**How to better your odds:** If it's available, look over the script and songs before the audition. The prepared actor shows they are enthusiastic about the show and is serious about wanting the part and working hard. Practice with the material at home. Act it out in front of a mirror or family members. Ask questions at the audition to prepare yourself better (be careful of too many questions). Audition as much as you can for shows. Just like anything else in life, the more you practice it the better you will become. If you really want to work on your skills

then take vocal and dance lessons. Take theater classes. Students in Theater Production Management class definitely will be known as having tech skills for a crew position.

### **Reason #3: Another actor was physically better suited for the part.**

Some of the physical requirements for a part may be looking a certain age, height, race, hair color, length or style to mention a few. If the part requires someone to lift and carry another actor off stage, obviously the director is going to cast someone physically capable of doing that. And while much can be accomplished with makeup and wigs, if someone comes in with all the necessary physical characteristics of a part as natural attributes, they will be one step closer to a part than someone who requires changes in their look to pull it off.

**How to better your odds:** Let your director know if there are any minor changes you'd be willing to make, such as wearing elevated shoes, coloring or cutting your hair, etc.

### **Reason #4: The director wanted a certain chemistry among the cast.**

Directors will often juggle actors in and out of parts at auditions as they attempt to arrive at a certain chemistry. They may need a romantic chemistry or a comedic chemistry. Or characters that are believable as a family or parent and child, siblings or twins. If the director chooses an actress for Maria who looks 20, chances are you aren't going to stand much of a chance at getting her romantic interest Tony if you look 10 years old-no matter how well you audition. You lost the part not because of anything you did or didn't do, but simply because you wouldn't work playing opposite that actress or you wouldn't be believable in the part. Sometimes you don't have much control when you just physically don't fit the part or have the right chemistry with another actor.

**How to better your odds:** There is not much you can do about this one, other than give it your best shot and remember that not getting cast for this reason happens to everyone sooner or later. This one is beyond your control.

### **Reason #5: You struggle with taking direction-actors and crew.**

Directors sometimes try to give you direction as you're auditioning. Take this as a compliment. The director is working on two levels-they have seen something in you that works, but would like to see if you can change what you're doing to better fit the idea of the character. They are probably also checking to see how well you take direction in an effort to determine how easy you are to work with. If you get direction and then go on to do the scene exactly the way you did before, then you didn't do well with taking direction. You may have also done this in a past show with the director and they have already experienced giving you direction and you not doing well with taking direction.

This can also apply to crew. If the director has worked with you before in a show and you didn't handle changes in direction well.

**How to better your odds:** When the director asks you to change your interpretation, do it! Listen carefully and ask a couple of questions. Make sure you've got the idea. This applies even if you're asked to do something totally off the wall, like play a death scene as it were a comedy. The director is not necessarily telling you that your interpretation is wrong, they want to see if you are flexible or see other interpretations.

As a crew member make sure you are always flexible and ready for last minute changes. Never refuse a director's request, have a problem-solving attitude.

### **Reason #6: You're an unknown quantity.**

You gave a really strong audition and are physically right for the part, so how come you didn't get the part? Is the theater company too cliquish? Sometimes the director knows what other actors and crew members can deliver from past experiences and don't know you as well. The director isn't familiar with your work habits, your ability to get along with others, your sense of commitment, or your experience.

**How to better your odds:** Get involved in any way possible. Volunteer. Are you early to rehearsal and see the director setting up chairs? Jump in and lend a hand. During break times, grab someone to help you with the choreography or help organize or clean up the theater. Does the show need someone who can juggle? Volunteer to learn! The director will notice your extra effort. In general, look for ways that you can be useful other than just showing up for rehearsal. Be a team player and a hard worker. If you are a problem, missing your cues, gossiping, having a bad attitude, disrespecting staff, being ungrateful for your part or job, bringing a negative energy to rehearsals then the director will avoid putting you on the cast and crew in the future. Make yourself indispensable and bring a positive energy and the director will find you an asset to future productions. **YOU ARE ALWAYS AUDITIONING FOR THE NEXT SHOW.** (There is a great short story called "Carry Your Own Skis" that embodies this sentiment.-Check it out!)

### **Reason #7: You are a known quantity but you have not been dependable.**

This could be not memorizing your lines, being tardy, missing rehearsals, always asking to leave early, not knowing the choreography, not being productive, or not following through on your commitment to a production.

**How to better your odds:** Ask for tips on memorizing lines, or if you are waiting at rehearsal, practice your choreography instead of talking with friends. Be 10 minutes early to rehearsals. Put ALL of your conflicts on your callout sheet. Ask to come during Pte to work on your part or job. Practice or work on things at home. Ask questions at rehearsals. Ask if anyone else needs assistance-costume, props, set. Be willing to help anywhere.

*When given a part or a job positively embrace it as an opportunity to prove yourself again for future productions.*

### **Reason #8: You have been difficult to work with in the past.**

Director's notice if you gossip, talk negatively, complain or are ungrateful, instead of bringing positive solutions. This can be disrespecting or not listening to staff, acting in a passive aggressive manner, bringing a negative energy to your work and rehearsals, not getting along with staff, cast or crew, or creating a divide in the team working on the production. ATTITUDE COUNTS.

**How to better your odds:** The best policy is to avoid getting this reputation. Don't argue or complain about casting, blocking, interpretation, or a job you are given. Don't bad mouth the show, staff, cast or crew. Seek out help with solutions. Be grateful to be a part of the show. Everyone has had a bad day or made bad choices, so if you do any of these things apologize quickly and then have the actions to follow. (Words can be void of meaning if the improved actions don't follow.) Be professional and respectful of the staff, cast, crew and the production process. It doesn't matter how talented or experienced you are-HOW YOU TREAT OTHERS MATTERS.

### **Reason #9: It is someone else's turn to learn.**

A lot of times in educational theater there are more students auditioning or applying for crew positions than there are spots available. If directors take the exact same students for every production then other students are not getting a chance to learn. That would be contrary to the point of educational theater. Students interested in learning about theater deserve a chance to be part of a production. So sometimes directors have to spread the wealth.

**How to better your odds:** See all of the above. Be prepared. Work hard. Be early to rehearsals. Have good attendance. Bring a positive energy. Be a helper. Learn as much as you can so you are a valuable asset. Be willing to participate in multiple ways. If you only check acting or lighting on your callout sheet you are limiting your chances to be involved.

### **Reason #10: Remember the real reason we do this.**

Students should love being in the show just to be involved in something bigger than themselves. Not for what the role or the show gives them but based on what they can bring to the show. Even when watching a Broadway show people watch the ensemble or the lighting, etc. People want to see the whole show not just the one or two leads. This isn't really a reason people don't get a cast or crew position... but it is very important to remember. The point of educational theater is not to turn every kid into a stage star. While directors try to give as many students an opportunity, most of the students will come and go and will have never had a lead role. And hundreds of students have done just that and still say it is one of the best experiences in high school. Theater in high school is teaching students self-confidence, teamwork, listening, creativity, problem solving, positivity, collaboration, and fun. Skills for real

life and adulthood. Students are learning to be good people which is a lot more important than getting any singular role or crew position. At the end of the day being a good person is the goal.