Introduction: This pamphlet has been written to help educate young people and their parents on how to begin a career in the modeling industry while avoiding the pitfalls and scams that are associated with the industry. While there isn't a set formula to become a model, consumer agencies often hear from parents and young people who ask about specific modeling opportunities. In some cases, they're asking about prospective offers, but in other cases they have already signed up for a service and are having second thoughts.

With this brochure on modeling, aspiring models will have a practical checklist of the things they can do to enhance their chances to be "discovered." One of the most important factors to remember in becoming a model is timing. Being in the right place at the right time is how many models got their break into modeling. It could happen anywhere such as a mall, movie theatre, supermarket, when an agent approaches them. It is important to point out that very few people are lucky enough to be discovered as a model and even fewer can make it their livelihood. Given these long odds, you have to be careful when approached by any modeling opportunity to make sure it is legitimate. We'll give you the questions you need to ask before you spend money pursuing a career in the modeling industry.

There are many ways to become discovered. One question asked all of the time is do I need to invest in professional photos to be discovered? The answer is no, it is not required. However, a good photographer can make a difference. So if you decide to invest the money, it is important to point out that just like a model has a portfolio, so does a photographer, so ask to see it. If the images are similar to the ones you see in the magazines, chances are the photographer knows what they are doing. Modeling is a business that sells an image, but it is mainly a business. On the following pages, we'll give you practical advice on what you must do to get a modeling agency to take notice of you.

First things first: The goal of an unrepresented model is to find an agency to represent you. An agency signs a contract to "represent" you, either exclusively or non-exclusively. The agency then promotes and advertises your services to their clientele, who need a model or models for a particular job. So the first thing you have to do is to convince an agency that you have the talent and ability that will interest prospective clients. Furthermore, an agency doesn't want to spend time and money on someone that has little chance of being hired as a model by their clients. And you don't want to waste your time and money on an agency that doesn't really show an interest in finding you work. Now comes the hard part: finding the right agency and then preparing yourself for an interview.

Before the Interview: To find the right agency for you, there are a few critical factors to keep in mind. As in any business relationship, you must be very careful about where you place your trust. It's your job to research all you can about an agent or agency before you seek their help. Since all agencies do not represent all ages and sizes, it is imperative to know which agency to see and why. You could begin by researching agencies in your area or asking other models and photographers for referrals. It may not be as glamorous, but an agency located in your town or city will probably have had years of experience and has a solid client base. Another question we are often asked is can I use the local Yellow Pages or internet to find an agency? If you do, be careful! Your local phone company does not check out the businesses that are listed under the "modeling agency" category. In reality, you will probably find that a good portion of these phone numbers are photographers or businesses unrelated to modeling.

"Agents are constantly on the lookout for new models, and have been known to pluck potential talent out of the crowd. More frequently, though, it takes hard work and dedication to become a successful model."

Getting An Interview: When calling an agency you should be prepared for brisk treatment. Remember the receptionist has to deal with hundreds of calls from clients, agents, photographers, models, messengers and hopefuls all needing immediate attention. If the receptionist sounds abrupt, do not take it personally. You can always ask when is the best time to call back so your questions can be answered more fully. Sometimes agencies have open calls (walk-in interviews) and the receptionist will tell you where and when to attend. (Note: it is very unprofessional to turn up unannounced at an agency and expect an interview without an appointment.)

Each agency has its own system that new talent should follow to be considered by the agency. When you call, the receptionist will inform you if they have open calls or tell you where to send your photos. You don't need a large number of photographs in order for an agency to consider you. Agencies are used to making initial assessments from snapshots. If you are going to send in snapshots, you should send one headshot and one full length shot, preferably a body shot to show the proportions of your body. Many models have been discovered by simply sending in decent snapshots. If a friend takes your photos, make sure the photos look like you. Your make-up should look very clean and your natural hair style should be shown; do not curl, spray or comb back your hair. If you are a parent of a child or baby interested in getting them into modeling, you should include one head shot and one photograph that shows the child's unique personality.

Mail your pictures or a composite to each agency and remember to write your name and telephone number on the back of each shot. You should also include a letter introducing yourself, which should include information such as your height, age and measurements. Please be honest! If an agency is interested in interviewing you, it will contact you by phone or mail. This could take a few weeks, so be prepared to wait. Most importantly, keep track of when you mailed your package in your day planner and be prepared to resend the package if your first one was not received. One thing you should know

At the Interview: A good agent can assess your marketability from looking at you in person. Usually within seconds they can tell you candidly if he or she can help you to pursue a career in modeling or if you should see other agencies. If you ask most models that have been signed by an agency, they will tell you that the whole process went much faster than they had anticipated.

"You need to look clean, fresh and neat for an interview. Choose fitted clothes that match the image you want to project, and choose an agency that already projects your sort of image."

- Being interviewed as a model is just like being interviewed for any other job; you have to sell yourself.
- Wear clean, casual clothes, choosing fitted rather than loose garments.
- Use minimal make-up and keep your hair clean and simply styled.
- Have your hands manicured. It's fine not to wear polish, but be sure your nails are clean, filed and buffed.
- Bring whatever recent flattering pictures you may have.
- Bring paper and pen and be prepared to write down any instructions or referrals that the agent might give you. (It's so irritating when an interviewee says, "Oh, will you write that down for me?" You are seeking free advice and possibly acquiring a new agency, so don't start off on the wrong foot. The agent is not your secretary.)
- Be on time. Call if you are going to be late.
- Be patient if the agent is delayed. Other business, such as photographers calling, models needing help, or unexpected emergencies, must take priority. Agents first take care of the talent they represent and then go on to considering others. Your interview is a brief interlude in a busy day, so make your interruption a pleasant one.
- When you meet the agent you should look into her eyes, smile and, if you wish, give a firm handshake.
- When you sit down with the agent, wait for the agent to ask for your pictures, if you have them. Do not assume that the agent will want to have your pictures thrust at them. When requested, place your portfolio in the correct direction for the agent's view.
- Do not inspect or fidget with anything on the agent's desk unless you are invited to do so. Consider anything that does not belong to you or that is not handed to you to be private property. If the agent should leave the desk, do not get up and walk around, sit patiently and wait for the agent to return.

This pamphlet was written by Gregory James and Marie Anderson. A portion of this pamphlet is an excerpt from Marie's best-selling book, *MODEL - The Complete Guide for Men & Women*.
Another recommended title is the *Model and Talent Directory,* which is an annual publication that lists over 2,400 modeling agencies and schools from around the world.
To order a copy of these publications, visit www.pgdirect.com or your local bookstore.
Gregory James is the Publisher at Peter Glenn Publications, the world's leading entertainment resource publishing company. Marie Anderson is known for discovering such supermodels as Cindy Crawford and Matt King and is the President of a world-renowned agency in Chicago.

Final advice:

This pamphlet encourages aspiring talent to take the direct approach: contact an appropriate, well qualified agency in your area and prepare yourself to make the best presentation possible. However, there are other legitimate opportunities to be discovered, such as scouting companies and modeling conventions. These companies bring agents to you or a city near you. These companies may advertise vast connections to agencies, magazines and others in the modeling industry. Once again: you have to check out those claims and find out if they're legitimate! And remember not to count out your local agency. Before and during your interviews, ask about their relationships and then contact those agencies to verify that a relationship exists.

Some talent scouts may approach you on behalf of a modeling or talent agency. Perhaps you've heard of someone who was approached in a mall and asked if they were a model. Some agencies do use these types of scouts. However, be cautious. Ask for a business card, which should have all of the agencies' information on the card including their address. Go home and tell your parent about this contact and then check out the company with the New York State Consumer Protection Board, Better Business Bureau and other consumer agencies. Ask if this company has had complaints filed against them and how those complaints were resolved.

In closing, it is important to discuss rejection. As we have mentioned before, becoming a successful model takes hard work, beauty, a good personality and self confidence. Without self confidence, you cannot be a successful model. Rejection is a daily part of a career as a model. It is important to understand that you should not take rejection personally. The truth is that you may never know why an agency or a client turned you down. There could be many reasons such as the agency already has several girls that currently look like you, but that doesn't mean in the future they may not need someone with your look. As for the client, they usually know the face they are searching for, but remember there will be other campaigns and other clients. So it is all about the timing and a little luck wouldn't hurt. To avoid being scammed, remember to do your homework, use your common sense and thoroughly investigate a company before doing business with them. There isn't an easy way to break into modeling. If there was, think about how many models there would be.

Other Discovery Opportunities:

Scouting Companies - These companies conduct meetings, seminars and other events as part of a national tour to discover new talent. They send out scouting teams to your area, usually establishing a temporary headquarters at a local hotel. You may hear about these opportunities through an ad on your local radio or television station. After an initial meeting, you and literally hundreds of other young people will be invited to attend what is called a regional event. Over a two-day period, you attend seminars by industry professionals, agents and scouts that are flown in from around the world, by the scouting company. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to walk the runway, show your photos and meet with 40-50 agencies. This opportunity usually costs between $400-$600 for the registration fee. Travel & hotel costs are extra.

Modeling Conventions - Unlike a scouting company, a modeling convention is usually attended by talent from modeling schools or small agencies that have been trained to compete for the convention. During the convention, there are often demonstrations and seminars, as well as competitions. At the end of the convention, awards are presented to the top winners from each category. Depending on the size of the convention, the amount of agencies in attendance may vary. This opportunity usually costs between $800-$5000 for the registration fee (Please note that variation in price for a convention is often due to the length of the event, which is usually between 3 to 7 days). Travel & hotel costs are extra.

Internet Scouting - Within the last few years, the advances in technology and the growth of use on the internet has caught the modeling industry off guard. There are many legitimate web sites on how to become a model and a growing number of traditional modeling agencies are using the Internet to promote their models. But beware: the Internet provides a tremendous opportunity for unscrupulous individuals to take advantage of aspiring talent's dreams. Having your picture on an Internet website may not be an effective way to find modeling work or representation, while costing you money. Check references and find out how many models have been hired or placed with an agency after having their photographs posted on a particular website. Check out the web site with your local CPB or BBB to see if there have been any complaints.
Our advise...be cautious!