

Travel reporter Part 1

Specialties · By Simon Townsend · 4 min read

How to land a job as an on-camera reporter on a travel show

Part 1

As I said in my letter to you?. my students all say they would love to be a journalist/presenter/reporter on a top TV travel show like Getaway or The Great Outdoors. And why not? In such a job these 14 rewards are yours:

1. You travel the world - first class - for free
2. You visit exotic locations
3. You meet interesting and fascinating new people every day
4. Your day-to-day travel is remarkable, often bizarre (from a submarine to a balloon)
5. You stay in fantastic accommodation
6. You work hard and it's demanding, but it's also non-stop fun
7. You eat and drink fabulous food at no charge
8. You experience wondrous entertainment - nightclubs, dance spots, concerts - at no cost
9. You work with and learn from clever, experienced producers, directors, researchers, writers

cinematographers and sound-recordists

1. You are very highly paid
2. You become famous
3. You have the deep professional satisfaction of seeing your work broadcast nationally on

high-rating, prestigious shows

1. You collect wondrous memories - tales to tell your great grandchildren
2. You gather a professional background that later allows you to move on to top jobs in TV

Interested? Here's how to win the job:

1. DON'T apply in writing. Those shows get 100 written applications a week from experienced on-camera people from all over Australia. Plus 1000 applications from hopefuls who have never been on TV. These shows each hire maybe one or two new reporters a year. You are going to apply with your own DVD of your own travel story.
1. Watch and record all travel shows. Every week, week after week, watch and record from free-to-air TV shows such as Getaway and The Great Outdoors. Get access to pay-TV and watch and

record all the travel-type shows, especially on the National Geographic channel, the National Geographic Adventure channel and especially the channel called Travel and Living. Do you measure up to all the presenters you see?

1. Don't be a hopeful dreamer. Only people who have the sunny personalities of travel reporters have any hope of securing the job.
1. Assess yourself. Do you have the personality needed? Can you smile easily and readily? Can you laugh without it seeming a false and forced laugh? Are you a self-assured person who gives out positive vibrations? Do you make friends easily? Can you work happily with strangers, even though under the pressures of timetables and deadlines? BE HONEST!!! Can you answer "yes" to all these questions?
1. With a friend, do an amateur screen test. Get ready by putting on bright, attractive and appropriate clothes. Have your hair done anew. Put on a bit of makeup whether you're male or female.
1. Doing your private screen test. Your friend takes video of you in say, your local park. You walk around showing the camera the trees, shrubs, benches, statues, fences, etc, and making up your words, you wax lyrical about how wonderful it is to be there. Ask your friend to keep you in a medium shot (head to waist) as YOU are more important than where you are for the purposes of this private screen test.
1. Assess yourself on-screen. Do you in fact have that really sunny personality? Do you smile easily and readily? On-camera, do you laugh without seeming false and forced? Do you have an on-camera personality as attractive as the people you've been studying? Do you speak smoothly, fluently and without umm-ing and err-ing and fluffing your lines?
1. "Share the experience". This is an expression of my friend and colleague, the famous TV producer/director Harvey Shore. This means looking up the barrel of the lens like it was your friend, and including it in everything you do, and smiling and talking to it like a friend. It's important to relate to the audience. You can't see them, but they see everything you do and react accordingly. So let them see you sharing the experience with them and acting like they are your valued mates.
1. How do you LOOK? Must you be good looking? Well, you should "look good" (whatever that is), which is different to being "good looking" (whatever that is). Travel shows don't need conventional good looks. Rather, you must have all the attributes of personality, character, energy and talent. If you're also "good looking" that won't hurt your chances. Assess yourself brutally honestly.
1. Excited or exhausted? If you feel excited at this point in reading this long FactSheet, move on. If you feel exhausted - that it's all too much to do, that there must be an easier way - give up now. Being a travel reporter is not for the unenergetic, the self-doubters or the faint-hearted.
1. The point of this FactSheet. Are you now ready to construct your job application? You are now going to make your own video of your own travel story suitable for The Great Outdoors or Getaway.

TICK ONE: This is all too scary ? I'm not ready ? Yes I'm ready ?

1. Go back through all your recordings. Pick one travel story you like and you believe you could re-create. That's what you're going to do - you are going to recreate that one story with all your own video footage and with you as the star of your own story.

1. Isn't this going to be troublesome and expensive? Yes.

- You must have the spare time
- You must have friends, relatives or colleagues who will help out
- You must have pay for the trip for you, a director/cinematographer and a soundman
- You must have pay for accommodation and food for you three
- You must have pay for the cost of editing and making DVD copies

TICK ONE: Sorry too rich for me ? I don't care, I'm in ? I'll pay for it somehow ?

1. Ready? If you get to this No. 14 point, email me again and ask for Part 2 in which I explain exactly how to create your DVD travel story.

Reprinted from The Wonderful World of Journalism. Written in the spirit of Simon Townsend's journalism craft advice. Visit simontownsendjournalist.com for the full archive.