

# The **BEST** in the **BUSINESS**



*Commercials  
Organizing &  
Recapture Initiative  
Member Toolkit*



#BestInTheBiz

[SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz](http://SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz)



The **BEST** in the  
**BUSINESS**

Dear SAG-AFTRA Leaders and Members,

**Our union is embarking on a comprehensive, multi-faceted commercials organizing and recapture initiative and your participation is vital to your future.**

The commercials industry is quickly evolving and we must evolve with it. To protect and expand work opportunities for professional performers in commercials, we are asking for you to get involved. SAG-AFTRA members must act.

In this package, you'll find detailed information on the initiative that will equip you for action, including:

- **Mythbusters:** crucial and accurate data on union and non-union commercials;
- **Membership Advantages:** the concrete advantages of SAG-AFTRA membership;
- **About the Initiative:** information on what the union is doing to ramp up commercials organizing; and
- **Key Discussion Points:** suggestions for effective dialogue and social media interactions.

The information in this toolkit – prepared by the members of the Commercial Performers Committee – will help you engage in conversations with fellow members, working non-union performers, talent agents and managers.

Let's get the facts out at auditions, on sets, in workshops and on social media.

Together, we can have a real impact on increasing work opportunities under this contract. Please join us in this important initiative. Visit **SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz** for additional information and register to receive updates on our ongoing organizing efforts in this area.

In unity,

**Ken Howard**  
*President*

**David White**  
*National Executive Director*



For instant access to The Best in the Business webpage, scan this QR code with your smartphone.

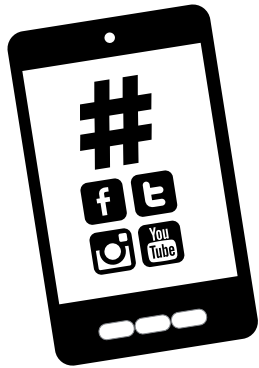
**SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz**

Report non-union commercials to nonunionspotinfo@sagaftra.org • t/877.280.6705 • f/323.549.6605  
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD-AMERICAN FEDERATION of TELEVISION and RADIO ARTISTS • AFL-CIO



## Things You Can Do.

Join the movement: Visit [SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz](https://SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz) to sign up and access all the information wherever you are.



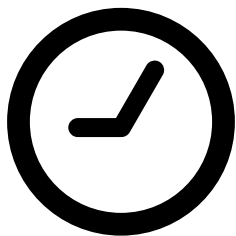
### Use Social Media

- ➔ Tweet about the initiative using the hashtags **#bestinthebiz** and **#getpaid**.
- ➔ Spread the facts on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Reddit forums, everywhere!
- ➔ Create digital messages telling us why members are the Best in the Business and why professional performers working under a union contract is the only way to go. Check the guidelines on our website at [SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz](https://SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz), then shoot, edit your message and upload directly to the website.



### Hit the Streets

- ➔ Use the information provided to talk to performers at auditions, on set and at workshops.
- ➔ Contact your local office for materials like flyers and information cards that spread the message.
- ➔ Talk about the campaign with your agent and manager. Hand them the campaign card and start a dialogue.



### Go Big

- ➔ Host a meet up, pick a time and place and invite friends and colleagues using the hashtag **#bestinthebiz**.
- ➔ Host a house party to discuss the campaign with fellow performers and industry colleagues. Sign-up others to help get the word out.

## ●●● ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

**S**AG-AFTRA's member-driven commercials organizing and recapture initiative will expand and protect work opportunities for professional performers in commercials by:

- ➔ Successfully enforcing the contract with those producers signed to our agreements that try to produce non-union.
- ➔ Researching and analyzing the non-union commercials industry to develop effective strategies.
- ➔ Working with agents to discuss non-union commercials and coordinate efforts.
- ➔ Outreach to and educating casting directors.
- ➔ Working with agents and casting directors to streamline the casting clearance process.
- ➔ Creating a student commercials agreement to help train the next generation of commercials producers.
- ➔ Encouraging political candidates to hire professional performers under union contracts for campaign advertising.
- ➔ Coordinating information and efforts with other industry unions.
- ➔ Outreach to and organizing non-union advertisers and agencies.
- ➔ Developing targeted campaigns to recapture work opportunities in such sectors as the retail market, the toy industry, the car industry, etc.
- ➔ Organizing Spanish-language advertisers and ad agencies.
- ➔ Researching and organizing digital media agencies.
- ➔ Holding meetings in 25 markets to create targeted campaigns.
- ➔ Approaching governments and tourism offices to encourage them to produce union commercials.
- ➔ Approaching major players in the union movement to assure that when they advertise, they hire professional performers on union contracts.



## ●●● MYTHBUSTERS

**MYTH: Non-union commercials pay well enough to make a living.**

**FACT:** On average, union commercials easily pay 10 times more than non-union commercials. Here are three actual non-union commercials, compared to three similar union jobs:



Electronics

### NON-UNION WORK

\$600 for as many hours as it takes  
\$0 for Internet use & new media  
**\$600 TOTAL**

### UNION WORK

\$627.75 for 8-hours work  
\$5,022 for 1-year of Internet use & new media in perpetuity  
**\$5,649 TOTAL**



Soda

\$750 for session plus 1-year of Internet  
\$1,250 for 1-year of TV  
**\$2,000 TOTAL**

\$627.75 for 8-hours work  
\$16,267 for 1-year cable and Internet  
**\$16,894.75 TOTAL**



Underwear

\$2,000 buyout for session,  
worldwide TV & Internet  
**\$2,000 TOTAL**

\$627.75 for 8-hours work  
\$25,432.15 for 1-year foreign TV, U.S. cable, in-store & Internet  
**\$26,059.90 TOTAL**

**TOTAL NON-UNION EARNINGS:**  
**\$4,600**

**TOTAL UNION EARNINGS:**  
**\$48,603.65** *Plus you get pension and health benefits!*

**MYTH: Pre-members earn a lot working non-union.**

**FACT:** A 2014 survey of 1,100 pre-member performers revealed that the vast majority earn very little. Over 80% earned less than \$10,000 per year and only 5% earned a decent living. These performers are also very concerned about the lack of pension and health benefits of non-union work.

**MYTH: Agents make more commission by booking clients on non-union commercials.**

**FACT:** Let's do the math. Even if an agent were capable of negotiating a commission as high as 40% on \$2,000 for a non-union commercial, they would still only earn \$800 in commissions. But, a commission at 10% on a union job which pays \$16,894 means the agent collects \$1,689.40 in commissions.\* We can help agents and each other by expanding union jobs.

\* BASED ON ACTUAL UNION AND NON-UNION EARNINGS.

**MYTH: I'm better off staying non-union because of the work opportunities.**

**FACT:** If you're serious about your career, staying non-union means being exploited longer.

**MYTH: Nothing is being done about the growth of non-union commercial work.**

**FACT:** There is a lot going on. Our union has launched a major initiative to grow commercial work opportunities under our contracts, working directly with industry professionals and strategically targeting employers around the country. Join our campaign at [SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz](http://SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz) to learn how you can help.

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## ● ● ● MEMBERSHIP ADVANTAGES

*Future members may not be aware of all the advantages of SAG-AFTRA membership. Here are some of the benefits ...*



### **Your Contract**

SAG-AFTRA negotiates contracts with minimum rates, residuals, pension, health and retirement contributions, and safe on-set working conditions.



### **You've Got Support**

If anything goes wrong on the job, the union's team of experts has your back.



### **You're a Professional**

With a SAG-AFTRA card, producers, casting directors, agents and directors know you're a true professional. And you get exclusive deals and discounts through Union Plus.



### **Your Agent and Manager**

Top talent agents and managers prefer to represent SAG-AFTRA members.



### **Your Education**

From workshops to classes with casting directors, the union and its partners provide a wealth of educational services.



### **Your Health**

When you meet eligible earnings thresholds, you and your dependents have access to health and life insurance.



### **Your Retirement**

When you work under SAG-AFTRA contracts, employers make contributions toward your retirement fund.



### **Your Collective Strength**

SAG-AFTRA lobbies on issues that impact your life, such as artists' rights, digital theft, runaway production and more.



### **Your Awards**

Members can vote for SAG Awards honorees and receive nominee screeners.



### **Controlling Your Destiny**

As a member, you shape your future through participation in the decision-making process at local and national levels.





## MEMBERS

**T**alk to your fellow members about the importance of solidarity, the benefits of membership and about our commercials organizing and recapture initiative. This effort will be a success if we all work together.

Here are some key points for discussions with members:

- ➔ Your union is expanding work opportunities for all members who work in commercials, and SAG-AFTRA members are a critical piece of this multifaceted initiative. Its overall success is possible only if we remain unified, ensuring that non-union projects must make do with sub-par talent and don't have access to the best in the business: our members.
- ➔ Non-union work allows producers to pay less and avoid paying residuals and retirement benefits, and subjects performers to longer unpaid work hours and potentially hazardous working conditions.
- ➔ Non-union work undercuts the union's ability to negotiate the best contracts possible. If non-union producers can hire the best in the business for next to nothing, they have no incentive to go union. Working off the card contributes to the growth of non-union work.
- ➔ As part of this initiative, SAG-AFTRA is increasing enforcement of Global Rule One, which states that members must work under union contracts. Consequences for working off the card include fines, suspension and expulsion from the union.
- ➔ It's important for members to help our initiative by joining the effort at [SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz](http://SAGAFTRA.org/BestInTheBiz) or sending all information about non-union commercials to [nonunionspotinfo@sagaftra.org](mailto:nonunionspotinfo@sagaftra.org).



## ●●● PRE-MEMBERS

There are performers who are eligible to join SAG-AFTRA, but remain non-union. For someone who wants a serious career, staying non-union only means being exploited longer. Every professional performer who remains in the non-union talent pool undercuts the livelihood and work opportunities of all professional performers. We need to talk to these performers at auditions, on set and in workshops or classes to counter harmful myths.

### Here are some key points for discussions with pre-members:

➔ Pre-members earn far less than their union counterparts. In 2014, the union surveyed pre-member performers who work on commercials. About 68% earned \$5,000 or less per year; 81% earned less than \$10,000. Only 5% earned over \$50,000. On average, you need to work 10 non-union commercials to earn the same as one union commercial.

➔ Working under SAG-AFTRA contracts gets you residuals, access to health insurance and retirement benefits, timely payment and safe working conditions.

➔ Working non-union undermines your future. If you work on a non-union beer commercial, it could run forever without further payment. Since your face will be perpetually associated with that product, you might never be able to do a union commercial for any beverage — ever! If you work on a union beer commercial, the advertiser needs to continue to pay you to keep you from doing a spot for a competing beer company.

➔ If you want to be a professional performer, you shouldn't do non-union work. It harms you and it harms your community. If you accept low wages and poor working conditions, advertisers will have no reason to use legitimate union contracts.

➔ A payment plan and loan options are available to help new members pay their initiation fees. Call your local office. Loans are available through SAG-AFTRA Federal Credit Union at (800) 826-6946 or, in New York, at the Actors Federal Credit Union at (800) 2-ACTORS.





## ●●● AGENTS & MANAGERS

**W**e know you value your relationship with talent agents and managers. Your success and theirs are one and the same, which means the member-driven commercials organizing and recapture initiative benefits everyone. Give them details about the project and let them know they can be part of the solution. By cooperating with SAG-AFTRA, your professional representatives can help us reclaim and expand commercials work opportunities.

**Here are some key points for discussions with agents and managers:**

➔ Earnings under the SAG-AFTRA Commercials Contracts are still growing, totaling \$1 billion of income for professional performers per year, with only a small decline in the number of union commercial jobs over the past nine years. However, with the growth of Internet and new media commercials, coupled with the massive increase in the number of TV channels, earnings should be increasing substantially more.

➔ Reversing this trend and recapturing this work is a top priority for SAG-AFTRA.

➔ Since performers are paid significantly less for non-union work, agents and managers earn less too. Most agents and managers recognize that non-union production is hurting business.

➔ Union commercials can easily pay 10 times more than non-union spots. An agent earning the standard 10% commission on a union commercial still earns more than an agent struggling to get paid for a non-union commercial.

➔ Professional representatives are also in an ideal position to encourage eligible non-members to join. Give your representatives SAG-AFTRA information and fliers they can provide to new or potential clients.

