

A little more effort, a lot more work

You haven't won an Oscar, you're not the undisputed leader in your field but you are good at what you do and people are increasingly realising it. So how about upping the ante? Auckland-based sound recordist **Ande Schurr** provides a bit of collegial advice.

Youth has its advantages. There's more stamina available when hearing the words "we'll add you to our list"; it spurs us to try again. And then there's the frequency of work. Working every day of the week doesn't seem as gruelling as it sounds when it means speeding up the attainment of a dear personal goal.

The following quote was blurted out by a respectable thirty-something DoP while pacing the streets of Devonport. We were waiting for a Japanese film star to finish her latte and the bitter southerly wind inspired some searching conversation...

"If I made more of an effort," he said, "I could bring in a couple of hundred thousand dollars each year."

I think many of us could relate to this. We have the equipment, the technical proficiency, the energy, and the time but what we lack is a systematic way to market ourselves.

I often ask the camera folk I work with how their work is going and what they do to promote themselves. The answer is typically a variation of "work comes and goes" and/or "knock on

doors". In my honest opinion, that's nonsense.

True, we can't control the economy, nor the budgets of clients and the regularity with which they engage a



A Schurr thing: Sound recordist **Ande Schurr** on the set of **Stephen Sinclair's** feature **Russian Snark**.

production house, but what we can greatly influence is who they ring when looking for a technician. And that is based almost solely on the frequency of our respectful, intelligent and friendly communication with them.

I will outline a system of marketing

that has worked well for me and made consistent work a reality. You will need to take only one hour every two weeks, along with the regular checking of and replying to incoming emails (immediately if possible). I credit this system with lifting the frequency of my sound work from one to three days per week to four to seven days on a dependable week by week basis.

You will need:

- Microsoft Outlook;
- One hour (more or less depending on how large your contact list is).

Step one: Gather all your contacts onto one list in Outlook. Clear your desk of other people's business cards and scribbled down contacts and enter the details into Outlook.

Step two: Categorise the contacts in Outlook using the provided coloured labels (right click on a contact; categorise; all categories). Rename the categories to times and dates based on how regularly they wish you to contact them. For example I have the following categories:

- Sound: two weeks (my most regular

communication – mostly production managers)

- Sound: one month (next most regular – usually producers)
- Sound: three months (those who don't directly employ me but need to know I am still alive!)
- Film General (other technicians and non-client contacts).

Step three: Email each of them a brief personal message at the time interval you have already decided in Step two – a quick hello and briefly list your available days over the coming weeks.

Step four: As you make new contacts, insert them immediately into your contact list under the correct category. If they are new potential clients who you have not heard of before then ring them to start the ball rolling. ●

• Ande Schurr (ande@fieldsounds.co.nz) works on productions ranging from feature films and TV drama to commercials and corporate videos. His website (www.fieldsounds.co.nz) has just had a facelift and offers tips and articles to the sound community.