

How to Find Your Team

If you frequent the many reporter and scoping forums that exist today, then you've heard at least one horror story about a scopist who didn't get paid by a reporter for work they'd completed correctly. On the other side of the coin, you've probably heard at least one horror story about a reporter who hired a scopist who didn't return the job or didn't scope the job as if he or she even knew the English language.

In this day and age of global business and Internet interaction, how should you go about finding someone to work with? How do you find someone who is trustworthy, ethical, and professional, especially when so much of the industry is handled through the Internet? Although nobody can be fully protected when dealing with an unknown Internet company, you can do some things to truly maximize the chances of working with a professional, ethical, and honest person. Here are a few of my suggestions for reporters and scopists when contacting each other for the first time.

1. Get a lot of contact information from each other. Before the first job is sent, talk together on the phone.
2. Don't work on an expedited or a large job as your first connection in building a relationship. It's better to work out style differences, format preferences, audio transfer, and other issues with a small job.
3. Make sure both of you are clear about expectations, turnarounds, rates, and payment schedules.
4. Don't hesitate to ask for references.
 - a. Reporters, any scopists serious about their job will be happy to ask reporters they've worked with to provide references. If they're new as a scopist, consider mentoring them.
 - b. Scopists, ask reporters for the name of scopists they've worked with in the past. If they've never used a scopist, help them understand what a scopist can do for their business.
5. Ask many questions.
 - a. Reporters should ask questions such as the following: Do you ever outsource any of the work that's sent to you? Where did you learn to scope? Do you read steno? Do you listen to full audio, intermittent audio, or scope with no audio?
 - b. Scopists should ask questions such as the following: Are you an official or a freelancer? Do you expect full audio, intermittent audio, or no audio? Are you looking for a full-time scopist or a backup scopist?
6. Understand that it takes time to build a relationship. You need a lot of communication, especially during the first few jobs when preferences are honed and questions are answered.
7. Expect to be treated and to treat each other as you would any other business relationship. As a reporter, you're hiring a business to perform a service for you, and as a scopist, you are a business providing a service. Treating each other well will go a long way in building a great reporter-scopist relationship.

Here are some ways to find reporters:

1. Post ads on the many forums.
2. Post ads in the JCR.
3. Post ads with your CAT vendor.
4. Be active on forums so people can get to know you.
5. Create a Web site if possible.
6. Let other scopists know you're available for work.

Here are some ways to find scopists:

1. Ask other reporters for names of scopists that they've used.
2. Ask other scopists if they can recommend someone.
3. Be active on the various forums.
4. Check with your CAT vendor.
5. Ask NCRA for a current copy of its *Scopist Directory*.

You can advertise or connect with reporters and scopists at the following sites: (Note: When this article was written, the sites below existed. Some of them may no longer be up and running, but be sure and search Facebook as a way to connect or advertise.)

- The Court Reporters Forum: <http://go.compuserve.com/CourtReporters>
- CSR Nation: www.csrnation.com/
- Court Reporters on Yahoo!: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Court-Reporters/>
- Keith Vincent's Site: <http://kvincent.com/html/scopists.html>
- NCRA Online Forum: www.NCRAonline.org
- Scoping Buddies: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ScopingBuddies/>
- Scoping Central: www.scopingcentral.com
- Scopists Support Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scopistssupportgroup/messages>
- Scopists.com: www.scopists.com/
- StenoSearch: www.stenosearch.com/
- T3: www.totaltranscripttransfer.com/findascopist.htm

CAT vendors and other organizations can be reached at the following:

- Advantage: www.eclipsecat.com/
- AristoCAT: www.aristocat.com/
- DepoBook: www.depobook.com/
- Depoman: www.depoman.com/
- NCRA: www.NCRAonline.org/
- ProCat: www.procat.com/
- Stenograph: www.stenograph.com/
- Stenovations: www.stenovations.com/

Any industry is always going to have some people who don't take pride in their work, who don't know what they're doing or believe their way is the only way to accomplish a goal, or who have no business even being in that industry. I would like to see scopists and reporters working together to find the best matches so that there are fewer horror stories in our industry and more successes. The goal is to have a productive and professional relationship while minimizing the problems that can arise out of global Internet business. It's a team effort, and I hope this information will help people to find their right team.

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(Note: When this article was written, Elite Scoping Services was still in business. Angie is now an Authorized Eclipse Trainer and a national and state convention speaker who speaks on subjects such as computer security, file storage, audio files, etc. Please see www.elitescoping.com for information on contacting Angie for Eclipse training or to have her speak at your convention.)