



GETTING STARTED IN VOICE OVERS

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED IN THE INDUSTRY

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Meet The Industry

A voice-over is the voice of an unseen narrator, a recording performed by a voice talent that gives life to characters, tells a story, or sells a product.

Free career resources and advice is available, job opportunities are bountiful, and the costs associated with getting started and building a home recording studio are at the lowest they have ever been thanks to online marketplaces and the global village.

Broadcasters from the old school of presenting are using their highly developed instincts and production skills to land jobs from other radio and television stations around the world.

Singers and stage actors from the theatre are exercising their vocal versatility, performing as voice actors in animation, film, and documentary narration as well as producing music beds and jingles for commercials.

Salespeople, former telephone marketers, and educators with great voices are flexing their persuasive musculature in commercials, telephony, and educational voice overs with the gusto and ambition of jockeys at the gate, waiting to unleash their voices on the world.

These are just some of the people who make up the voice industry. **This guide will help you to make the leap into voice overs develop your career.**

What is a Voice-Over?

A voice-over is the voice of an unseen narrator, in a movie or a television broadcast. It is a recording performed by a voice talent that gives life to characters, tells a story, guides you on a tour, or directs your telephone calls.

Usually, professional voice talents are enthusiastic, funny, charming, are flexible, and interact well with other people. They have the ability to take direction or criticism from others and can interpret copy to sell a product, concept, or a message.

Who is a Voice Talent?

A voice talent is a voice-over professional who interprets a script to meet a specific commercial, leisure, or educational goal. Voice talents provide the voices that you hear during a commercial on television, imaging on the radio, podcasts, narrators for film, voices for movie trailers, telephone systems, educational resources, and a wide assortment of web and kiosk applications.

Another name for a voice talent is a voice actor. A voice actor (or voice artist) is a person who provides voices for computer and video games, puppet shows, amusement rides, audio dramas, dubbed foreign language films, and animation works (including cartoons, animated feature films, animated shorts), and radio and television commercials.

The Online Voice-Over Industry

Overview of the Online Client

“Client” is a generic term that includes producers, casting directors, advertising agencies, marketing executives, and independent businesses or organizations – basically anyone that desires to purchase a product or service is a client. You will find that most clients have similar needs. Their voice over projects are well defined, including an idea of the voice type they are looking for, a sample of the script to be read, their budget range, and their deadline. **Most clients understand that you are a professional** and will treat you with respect when it comes to communications and payment.

How Clients and Talents Interact

Gartner Research has shown that **80% of online business transactions start with a search.**¹ These clients either click through natural/organic search listings or paid advertisements that are relevant to their particular search query. **Clients search the Internet looking for voice over talent** and are lead to either a voice over marketplace or to an individual voice talent website. Once a client has all of the information they need to make an informed decision, they will hire a voice talent for their project.

Voice-Over Marketplace

A voice-over marketplace is a site that facilitates interaction and transactions between buyers and sellers of voice-over services, also known as clients and voice-over talents. Marketplaces offer a wide range of voice-over talent for clients to choose from, often allowing them to post a job for talent to audition for. Clients are drawn to marketplaces because they can gather a significant amount of data quickly while accessing a generous database catered to meet their voice-over needs. Explore each marketplace and the opportunities available to you to make an informed decision before joining. [Voices.com is a great example of a voice-over marketplace.](#)

Summary

Key points to remember

The key objectives of this chapter were to introduce you to voice-overs, the voice-over marketplace, and how to conduct business online. There are many reasons to become a voice-over talent, including the opportunity to work from home and realize a dream

¹ Gartner Research

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Learn from the Masters

If producing your own voice-over work seems like a daunting task, there are professionals who work from their own recording studios who are eager to help you succeed.

Before you drive a car you need to learn how to drive. While that may be obvious, starting out as a voice actor presents its own stipulations such as learning how to use the instrument (your voice) and the talents you were born with. Just because you have been talking all your life doesn't mean that voice over will come naturally to you!

Voice acting is an art, and very truly, it is acting. Although most voice work is recorded in the privacy of your own studio away from the glare of the cameras, a voice over will serve as a performance for the hundreds if not thousands of people who will receive the message you are giving voice to.

Studying with a voice over coach who will help you to assess your talent and develop your skills is the best preparation and nourishment that you can invest in to build a solid foundation for your voice over career.

Before the home recording studio, or calling agents for representation, it is more than advisable to consult a teacher of voice over who will instruct, mentor, and prepare you for a lifetime of using your voice to make a living.

When you are ready, your instructor will encourage you to record a professional voice over demo. A voice over demo is a brief sampling of your capabilities that demonstrates your personal style, brand and highlights your natural talents.

Finding Help on the Internet

Helping you grow in your career

Voices.com provides service and support to both clients and voice talent with online help sections, a Frequently Asked Question database, and answers questions by both telephone and email. Voices.com is a reputable, transparent organization with clear, focused goals and open business practices. Explore the site and the opportunities available to you to make an informed decision and read testimonials from both voice talent and clients that have used their site.

Website:

<http://www.voices.com/faq.html>

Coaches & Teachers

It's not only helpful but quite wise to enlist the services of a voice coach or vocal instructor before jumping in the deep end of the voice-over pool. There are cases where the roles of voice teachers and coaches vary, however, **their principal objectives are to see that their clients improve their technique, style, and overall vocal health.** Some talents will bring their voice-over work to their coach to ask for advice. This is not uncommon, however, an even more common reason for approaching a voice coach is to prepare for recording a voice-over demo, especially if the demo is a first effort by the student.

Classes, Tele-classes, Seminars

Voice coaches can teach you how to warm up your voice, how to breathe properly, assume a proper posture for voicing, and help you to develop unwavering intonation, phrasing, fluctuation, elasticity, versatility, and allow you to explore the potential of your voice in a friendly and secure environment. Classes can either be private or public depending on the arrangement selected with the instructor. Many talent prefer individual coaching sessions to group lessons.

Since many of the coaches are in large centers such as New York City or Los Angeles, **tele-classes are offered via the telephone enabling talents that do not live in the same city or state as their coach to still participate and learn from their mentor.** Coaches may teach tele-classes on a weekly basis with a curriculum that they would like to teach for a matter of weeks. These classes can be short or can run for over an hour. Again, these could be private coaching sessions or, as is increasingly becoming the norm, group lessons taught in an ongoing educational course format.

Seminars are almost exclusively on location. The very word 'seminar' means a conference or meeting for discussion or training, a term often used to describe lectures given at universities and colleges. A seminar gives participants the opportunity to interact directly with the instructor and their peers in a public place. The organizer of the seminar, most likely the teacher themselves, lectures on a given topic and has a question and answer segment. Lecturers may also take questions throughout their presentation and even be accompanied by guest speakers.

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Plan Your Demo

Research, write, and edit. Three simple steps that will make a world of difference.

Planning Your Demo Content

Step by step development

The first thing that you'll need is a marketable voice-over demo. Your demo will present your voice to clients. They can listen to it and evaluate your services first hand. Creating a variety of voice-over demos rounds out your portfolio showcasing the styles of voice-over that you can perform.

Since nearly everyone has heard a radio program, you should **expect that your listeners have grown accustomed to hearing material produced in a certain way**. Here is a suggested framework for mapping out your production.

5 Voice Over Roles - Which one are you?

Over the centuries, the art of communicating with other people about a given purpose and the transmission of the spoken word, the most powerful, persuasive, and distinctly human tool in any marketers arsenal, has evolved to the degree that you don't have to be in the same room to get a message across, even the same country for that matter.

With all of the advantages this new world and new media bestows, it is very important that a message received is a message that is understood, believed and acted upon.

Much of this depends on the copy writing and voice over skills of the messengers, which brings us to five different character roles you can perform as a voice talent to get the message of your client across in a direct and effective way. Let's explore these types of character roles in detail.

1. Instructor

When teaching someone on what to do, for example, a corporate training video or children's game, the voice over best suited for this kind of project is a straightforward, didactic and educated voice. The role of this particular voice talent is to instruct or provide information to fulfill a specific goal or purpose.

2. Real Person

Projects requiring a more casual approach often benefit from relatable, genuine voice overs. These voice overs are referred to as "Real Person" voice overs, commonly known as the "regular guy" or

the “girl next door”. The character is homegrown, sensible, and friendly with a touch of familiarity and provides a more intimate interpretation that instills trust.

3. Spokesperson

A Spokesperson can be on camera or off camera depending on the medium you are using. The role of a spokesperson is generally played by a confident, charismatic person able to promote a cause, product, or service with ease and authority. A voice over of this nature needs to be driven, optimistic and assured.

4. Narrator

Storytelling is where the Narrator is most at home. Omniscient, courteous and honest, a Narrator’s job is to provide an audio landscape for a listener, briefing them on background information, posing questions, and providing solutions as they guide their audience through a program or documentary. Narrators can be male or female, and the most important factors are that they can communicate clearly and engagingly.

5. Announcer

The Announcer, often heard live at events, on commercials, promos or introducing segments for podcasts, is a product of the broadcast age, most celebrated at its height in the Golden Age of Radio and early television broadcasts. Announcers can introduce an idea and assertively make a call for action at the conclusion of a commercial advertisement or short video. One common misconception is that an announcer has to sound like an announcer from decades ago, however modern announcers act more like Narrators, and in many cases, adopt the Real Person approach.

Sample Demo Recipe

A blueprint for your voice-over demo

Shoot for a demo length of **60 - 90 seconds**. Keep voice-overs moving, and limit topic coverage to 5 or 6 segments. Try to **use different vocal tones or ranges to break up the content, pace, and tone** of your demos. Use musical backgrounds (known as jingles or music beds) or other non-music interludes (referred to as stagers, sweeps and ID’s) to transition between topics. These topic breaks are typically described as bumpers or sweepers, giving your listeners the time they might need to digest the content you just presented.

Ideal Duration of a Voice-Over Demo

The voice-over demo can range between 30 seconds to 2 minutes and 30 seconds. **For distribution on the Internet, it is best to keep your demo to 1 MB in size** or approximately 1 minute in duration. A 1MB file delivers optimum download speeds while maintaining the highest quality of digital audio.

Demo Outline

Your table of contents

Here's an example of a demo outline:

- Demo intro monologue (who you are and the subject of your voice-over demo): 5 seconds
 - Segment 1: 15 seconds
 - Segment 2: 15 seconds
 - Segment 3: 10 seconds
 - Segment 4: 10 seconds
 - Segment 5: 5 seconds
 - Closing remarks (thank audience for listening, contact information / website plug): 5 seconds
 - Closing music jingle (optional): 5-8 seconds
-

How to Write Your Script

Writing relevant copy

Research all components of your chosen application in order to deliver the most relevant material to your audience. Your writing style should be conversational with friendly language, selecting a variety of topics in order to accommodate your listeners. If you are compiling a theme demo, for example, commercials, you'll want to make sure that there is a variety of commercials targeted to a diverse audience.

If you prefer to record from royalty-free scripts instead of writing your own copy, there are a few samples in the bonuses from [*The Voice-Over Script Collection*](#) for you to incorporate into your demo. Each of these samples has a description of the character, artistic direction for your voice acting, suggested background music, and sound effects.

Applications of Voice-Over

- Television Commercials
 - Television Imaging and Station Identification
 - Radio Announcers
 - Radio Commercials
 - Radio Imaging and Station Identification
 - Business Demonstrations
 - Business Presentations and Corporate Videos
 - Voicemail, On-Hold Messaging, IVR (Interactive Voice Response)
 - Entertainment and Celebrity Impersonations
 - Character Voices and Cartoon Voice Actors
 - Video Game Voices, Computer Game Voices
 - Audio Books, Books on Tape
 - Educational Videos, CD-rom, e-Learning
 - Government
 - Medical
 - Foreign Language Voice Overs
 - Translation Services
 - Music
 - Jingles
 - Music Composition, Music Production
 - Podcasting
-

Summary

Key points about planning your content

In this chapter, we talked about the importance of planning your voice-over demo and gave you some ideas about how to organize your demo including a sample recipe. Now that you know what is required in the pre-production phase of developing your demo, we can move ahead to the actual recording of your demo. In the next chapter, we'll discuss recording equipment, software, basic recording techniques, and how to add music, sound effects, and most importantly, your voice-over.

4

Record Your Demo

Recording your voice is easy when you build a solid studio and use the right tools.

Local Recording Studios

An alternative to purchasing your own equipment

In this section, we will be looking at how to build a relationship with a local recording studio. You can work with a studio to have them record and engineer your recording.

If you do not have the means of investing in your own recording equipment at this time it is best to **develop a business relationship with a local recording studio**. You can find recording studios by looking them up in your phone book or yellow pages.

Questions to Ask a Recording Studio

What to ask a recording studio before your first session

Call at least three studios and be sure to ask all the questions you need to, in order to feel confident with your new partners.

- What is your hourly studio rates?
- What kind of vocal microphone do you have?
- Do you have a royalty-free music library?
- Do you have a sound effects library?
- Do you have script to make a voice over demo?
- Can you deliver finished work for me?
- Do you have an ISDN connection?
- How do you require payment?
- Do you accept cash and credit card?
- How much notice do you need to book my session?
- Are you open on evenings and weekends?
- What is your cancellation policy?

Attending Your First Session

How to prepare before going to the studio

Before you book for your first session be sure to rehearse your scripts in advance. **Being prepared will save you time in the studio and money** while affirming your professionalism.

When you arrive at the studio for the first time, be sure to properly introduce yourself. Building a good business relationship starts as soon as you make your first contact. Building a relationship with a local studio is a must if you don't have your own home studio. Ask for a 10% discount on all studio sessions, agreeing that you will work exclusively with them for the next year. Be prepared to put something in writing if you opt for this exclusive arrangement.

Building Your Own Home Recording Studio

Construct a solid foundation

If you have the will and technical skills, building a home recording studio is preferred.

This way, you can work from home and record at your convenience. You can set your own hours and also have the flexibility to record custom auditions for clients. Although purchasing a home studio is a considerable financial investment, it is better in the long-term and will save you time, resources, and money, particularly when you have to record revisions for a client.

Computer Based Recording

Record using your computer

One of the biggest trends in recent audio production involves **merging digital recording with computer technology**. The recording of audio onto a computers' hard drive allows you to edit and manipulate your sound files. This data can be stored as a sound file such as .wav or .aiff.

There are multiple advantages to recording and editing your voice-overs using your personal computer.

- The ability to record long and uninterrupted narration.
- Digital editing. Quickly and easily remove unwanted background noise or embellish the audio track with music and sound effects.
- Digital Processing. Add effects to your voice, such as reverb, or echo, and master your entire demo for sonic clarity.

PC Computers

Minimum voice-over requirements for PC

According to Gartner Research, Windows-based PC's account for 90% of all computers worldwide. If you have purchased your personal computer in the last three years and you're running Windows XP, your system should be more than adequate to record an audio file with a microphone, and then save the recording as an MP3 file.

- Personal Computer
 - Intel Pentium 4 or equivalent Processor
 - Windows 2000 / Windows XP / Vista
 - iTunes for PC
 - 1 GB of available disk space
 - 512 MB of RAM
 - Audio Line In and Audio Line Out
-

Mac Computers

Minimum voice-over requirements for Mac

Recently with the launch of Apple's iTunes, it shows that Apple is committed to the digital revolution. Since most iPod owners are also Mac owners there is also a lot of great software available for the Mac platform.

The misconception that the Mac is simply too expensive or that they are only for students and artists is quickly being proven wrong. Apple also sells the Mac Mini, a scaled down version of the Mac that allows previous PC owners to make the switch but still keep their monitor, keyboard and mouse - all for just \$499.

- Mac G3 or better
- Mac OS X
- iTunes for Mac
- 1 GB of available disk space
- 512 MB of RAM
- Audio Line In and Audio Line Out

Microphones

Amplify your voice

Whether you are using a Mac or PC, you will need a microphone to record your voice into your computer. One option is to purchase a microphone (or you may already have one) with a 1/8th inch jack. This is the size of the jack or audio line in port on your personal computer.

Dynamic Microphone

Marshall Electronics

The MXL2001-P is a great microphone that is capable of handling numerous recording tasks competently. The MXL2001-P is a straight-ahead, plug-and-play type of instrument without any controls whatsoever, yet it records with a nice, open sound that will cut through just about any mix. Such characteristics make this **microphone a good choice for the smaller studio** that focuses most of its efforts on the recording of popular music. In terms of workmanship, these products have a look and feel that is the mark of well-made equipment.

<http://www.mxlamics.com/>

Condenser Microphone

Neumann

The TLM 103 is **the ideal large diaphragm microphone** for all professional and semi-professional applications requiring the utmost in sound quality on a limited budget.

By utilizing the tried and true transformer-less circuit found in numerous Neumann microphones, the TLM 103 features yet unattained low self-noise and the highest sound pressure level transmission. The capsule, derived from that used in the U 87, has a cardioid pattern, is acoustically well-balanced and provides extraordinary attenuation of signals from the rear.

<http://www.neumann.com/>

Audio Interface

Griffin iMic - USB Audio Interface

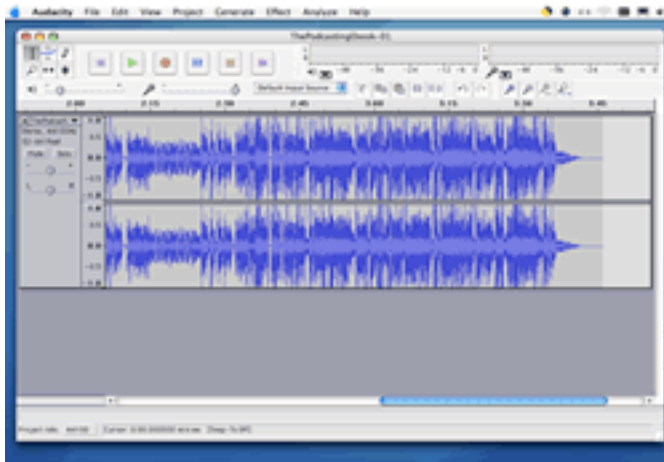
The iMicTM **universal audio adapter** is a USB device that adds stereo input and output to your Mac or PC. Connect virtually any microphone or sound input device to your iBook, PowerBook, PowerMac or other Mac or PC with a USB port. Yes, iMic supports both Mic level and line level input. It also supports line level output for connecting speakers or an external recording device.

iMic's audio is superior to your computer's built-in soundcard because it uses USB for the audio signal. USB isolates the audio signal from the noisy electronics in your computer, giving you higher-quality sound when you record and higher-quality sound for external speakers.

[Go to Voices.com](http://Voices.com)

The iMic is a must-have device for people who are serious about high quality audio in their computer. But don't take our word for it. Check out some of its reviews to see what others are saying about iMic. Then get iMic for remarkable audio performance over USB.

<http://griffintechology.com>



Recording and Editing Software

Audacity

Audacity is a **free, easy-to-use audio editor and recorder** for Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems. You can use Audacity to Record live audio, convert tapes and records into digital recordings or CDs, edit Ogg Vorbis, MP3, and WAV sound files, cut, copy, splice, and mix sounds together, change the speed or pitch of a recording, and more.

Download for free:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

Audacity tutorial: http://www.transom.org/tools/editing_mixing/200404.audacity.html

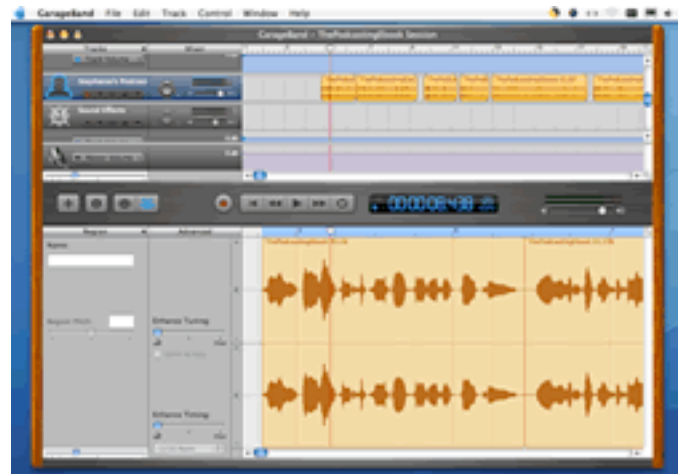
Recording Software for the Mac

GarageBand

GarageBand lets you **easily perform, record and create your own music**. Whether you're an experienced or aspiring musician. Or just want to feel — and sound — like a rock star. With the new version of GarageBand, you can even record multiple tracks at the same time.

Website:

<http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/>



Recording Studio Set-up & Process

Understanding the complete recording process

To gain insight into the recording studio and how audio is recorded, you should have a basic understanding of what recording engineers call the ‘**signal flow**’. Basically the signal flow is the path by which sound travels from source to destination. In creating a voice-over demo, the source will be the human voice and the destination will be an MP3 file.

Here’s a step-by-step outline of a typical voice-over signal flow.

1. A person speaks to create a vocal sound from their mouth.
 2. The vocal sound is detected by a microphone.
 3. The microphone passes the signal along the microphone cable.
 4. The end of the cable is plugged into a mixing board or digital interface.
 5. The mixing board or digital interface is plugged into a computer.
 6. The computer records the signal using recording software.
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Summary

Key points about audio recording technology

In this chapter, we looked at many different tools to help you record your voice. There are 5 options for recording your voice into a computer.

1. The computer’s internal microphone
2. USB microphone, plugging the microphone directly into a USB port on your computer
3. Professional-grade dynamic or condenser microphone. Plug your microphone into your preferred audio interface and then plug the audio interface into your computer. If you have a sound card installed in your computer, you can most likely plug your microphone directly into the audio input jack of the sound card.
4. Calling a professional recording studio.
5. Portable voice recorder for mobile and location recording.

As you’ve just learned, a vocal studio can be setup using free tools from the Internet and your existing computer system, or for a modest financial investment, you can opt to build a professional-grade recording studio. Here is an outline of both a basic and professional studio setup.

Basic Recording Studio

- Personal Computer
- Microphone
- Recording and editing software

5

Build Your Business & Your Brand

Set the musical tone, immediately distinguishing your voice-over demo.

Realizing the Dream

Starting your own business

You've made the decision that you would like to become a voice-over talent. Now what? In order to be successful in this endeavor, **you'll need to develop a plan that you will commit to.**

To run an efficient online voice over business, you need to have the tools of the trade. Here is a shortlist of the essentials that you will need to operate your voice-over business online.

Essential Home-based Business Technology

- High-speed Internet connection
- Personal computer, printer
- Business software MS Word, Excel
- Accounting software such as Quicken, QuickBooks, MS Money is recommended
- Telephone w/ voicemail
- Fax

Brand Your Voice

The importance of branding

Your personal branding is very important, and if successfully mastered, it will set you and your offerings apart. Many professionals choose to keep their real names, however, selecting a stage name is also an option. This gives you the freedom to create a unique voice-over persona and will help separate your work from your home life. You can select a memorable name, a unique name, basically any name that you feel suits you and is in line with the services you provide. Be sure to select a name that is easy to remember, easy to say and spell, and is non-offensive to others. Check to see if the name you would like to use is available, and if no one else has it, look into your own personal website. If the domain name you desire is available, you have an opportunity to purchase it and secure your brand name on the Internet.

Branding your voice-over business is one of the most important objectives that you will achieve before you market and promote your voice. Effectively branding your business will send consistent messages to your audience, establishing your brand image and purpose.

By taking the time to plan and brand well in advance of the release of your first voice-over demo, your efforts will go a long way and quickly differentiate your demo from similar offerings. Selecting a name for your company, securing a domain name for both your voice-over website and blog, picking colors, creating a logo, language, music, sound effects, slogans, and voice-over imaging are all important aspects of branding your voice-over career.

Drafting Your Vocal Description

Your mission statement

A crucial aspect of your personal branding includes the way that you describe your voice and your services. A client should be able to learn about you in as few words as possible. Summarize your offerings, about 15 words or less to keep client interest, particularly when you are promoting yourself in advertisements or at a voice-over marketplace. When you have your vocal description completed, start thinking about a phrase that best reflects your voice-over services. A slogan is a powerful and memorable device that will serve you well if properly crafted and placed.

Writing your vocal description is a necessary step in the branding process. When you are drafting the description of your voice, make sure that it features your strengths, specialties, and unique characteristics. **This description should be no more than two to three sentences long.**

Selecting a Name

Personify your services

When selecting a name, be sure that the name of your business reflects you as a professional voice-over talent. For example, your name could be Jane Doe Voice-overs, Jane's Voices, or Johnny Voice-over. **Make sure that the name you choose is also available as a domain name online.** Try to make your name unique but easily understood and recognizable.

Picking Colors

Visual appeal

When choosing colors to represent your voice-over services, it is important to select complimentary colors, that is, colors that go well together. Once you have picked the colors that you will brand your services with and use on your website, create a logo incorporating those selections to further brand your voice visually.

Colors often have certain emotions or connotations associated with them, for instance, the color yellow is often associated with the sun, cheerfulness, and innovation, whereas blue may be associated with the sea, tranquility, and freedom.

If your business already has an official color(s), you may wish to incorporate those same colors into your branding scheme for the website.

Creating a Logo

Your optical ID

A logo is the most readily available representative of your voice. Your logo can accompany press releases, be used as a link to your site, for advertising purposes, and give potential audiences a glimpse at what you and your voice are all about even before listening to your demo.

Logos are very important. **When designing your logo, remember that it is often the first impression of your voice.** Bearing this in mind, your logo should be friendly to all age groups and sized appropriately, making sure that it does not take up more than the normal allotted dimensions for logos. Incorporate the colors that you chose for your voice to further enhance and unify your visual branding.

If need be, you can outsource logo design to a freelance graphic designer or firm. If you are able to design your own logo, tools such as Macromedia Fireworks and Adobe PhotoShop are good programs to achieve your branding goals. If you already have a logo, you could further brand your image by incorporating your business logo or design a variation of your corporate logo to strengthen and reinforce your brand.

Slogans and Tags

Quick branding for your voice-over business

Take a good half hour or so to brainstorm slogans and tag lines for your voice-over services. **These short snippets can be used to instill, validate, and affirm your brand.** Perhaps you will use your slogan on your website, business cards, and in your demos. A good example of slogan branding is the tag line that Bob Barker on The Price Is Right says at the end of each episode, “Get your pets spayed or neutered”. A bit quirky, yet memorable and forever synonymous with the show.

Summary

Key points about branding

In this chapter, we talked about how important it is to make your voice stand out by branding all aspects of your voice-over business. Refer back to this branding guide to as you progress in your planning. When inspiration strikes, have a good brainstorm and jot down as many ideas about your vision as possible and use the results to brand your voice-over business.

6

Creating a Presence

Learn how to give yourself a web presence by building a Profile, executing a branding strategy online, and offering additional services.

In this chapter

The Main Idea

Building Your Own Website

Participating at an Online Marketplace

What to look for in a marketplace

Importance of Creating a Stunning Web Page

Summary

The Main Idea

Visibility is the most significant dynamic for any business, particularly in a field where professionals compete directly with each other. You can achieve visibility by investing in your own website or by subscribing to an online marketplace that gives you your own web page, where you can include your voice over information.

Building Your Own Website

How to build a website

We covered this area quite extensively in the previous chapter, but here's a brief recap. If you are considering building your own site, you will first need to register a domain name. You can check to see if the domain name is available by visiting <http://www.networksolutions.com> or <http://www.register.com>. If your preferred domain name and extension is available, for example, www.yourname.com you can purchase the domain name and move ahead with selecting a hosting company to host your site.

Technology can be imposing, so if you would like someone else to build and manage your website, you will find no shortage of people who can provide these services for you. Be aware that webmasters will have their own set of fees in addition to the fees that you will be responsible for including hosting, domain name renewals, enhancements to your hosting package, and any technical support that you may require.

Participating at an Online Marketplace

As mentioned earlier, there are some great job websites that will help you find voice-over work. These sites are referred to as an 'online marketplace' - where clients and voice talents can connect to complete a project.

What to Look For In a Marketplace

- The ability to manage and change your content on your own without a fee.
- A good number of projects that you can audition for every week.
- The ability to be contacted directly by a client without the neutral party intervening.
- Diverse advertising opportunities for voice talent to attract a variety of clients.
- Opportunities for voice talent to be found in multiple ways.
- A trustworthy and transparent site with open business practices.
- Good customer service and support, both online and offline.
- An innovative and proactive web content provider.
- Active marketing campaigns on your behalf.
- Responsive to voice talent suggestions.
- Easy to navigate.
- A professionals site where you will feel proud to be featured.
- Access to resources and templates that will save you time.
- A consistent track record of voice-over jobs.
- Accountability.
- Personal contact.
- Acknowledgment in the press.
- Integrity.
- A good variety of testimonials from both voice talents who use the service and clients who have experienced the service first-hand.
- Considerate to the needs of the voice talent.
- Looking out for the talents best interest.
- Easy to use auditioning system.
- Efficient system that provides you with a record of auditions submitted.
- Free from overt advertising.
- Annual membership fee can range between \$99 and \$199.

Importance of Creating a Stunning Web Page

Building a Profile will give clients a better idea of who you are and the kinds of services that you can provide. An online presence is very important. If you don't have your own website, you will need to invest in a membership to a site such as an online marketplace that will provide one for you. If you want to try one of these sites without making a financial commitment first, Voices.com offers a Guest membership that gives you visibility, hosting, and a place to run your voice-over business online.

Include Your Vocal Description

As mentioned in the personal branding section, your vocal description will be your first impression for the majority of clients that encounter your site or web page.

Showcase Your Logo or Visual Image

An alternative to the traditional headshot is a graphical representation of you or your services. The most common image selected by voice-over talent is a microphone, simple and to the point. To stand out from the crowd, you may want to consider a more unique offering. Consider hiring a graphic designer or experiment with font types using your name, colors, and slogan.

Mention Your Credits

Be sure to recognize the major companies and organizations that you have completed work for. You can include a 'partial client list' or include all that apply. Keep this list up to date to show that your services are sought-after and that you continue to be active within the industry.

Highlight Your Languages and Accents

The global marketplace has brought together people from all walks of life and broken down physical boundaries in addition to language barriers. Voice talents that are able to speak fluently in multiple languages have a distinct advantage over their peers and can charge a premium for translation and performance services.

Suggest The Styles and Ages that You Can Perform

Often times, clients will seek a specific age of voice talent to connect with their audience. You may be capable of performing voice ages younger or older than your actual age, all of which should be documented and recorded as samples for clients to review. Clients also search by accents, for example, the British accent or Southern Belle, USA. Including the timbre of your voice (your vocal range), i.e. bass, baritone, alto, soprano is also helpful for clients looking for specific voice types.

Describe Your Studio

Every client wants to hear that you can get the job done, but they also want to know how you will do it. Although most clients will never ask for technical information, it's good to have it handy. Including a description of your high-quality studio equipment, which is also a costly investment, may help justify your fee structure.

Here are the main studio details that you should include:

- Microphone
- Recording software
- Mixing board
- Other special equipment (compressors, reverbs, delays, etc.)
- Methods of delivery (MP3, CD, FTP access, phone patch, ISDN, etc.)
- Royalty-free music and sound effects library
- Turnaround time (i.e. 24 hours).

Provide Your Rates

Voice-over is a competitive marketplace, and you will need to decide how you will be quoting for your services. Will it be by word, per spot, per hour, per package, per project, per market, or per page? These are all items that you should consider before you put together your rate card. For more information regarding rates for quoting, see “Online Auditions”. Once you have compiled your rate card, you will need to decide whether you will disclose your rate card openly to clients or if you would rather leave the arena open for negotiation on a per project basis.

Offer Your Methods of Delivery

Know ahead of time what methods of delivery you can provide. Include FedEx, UPS overnight shipping of a CD, MP3 via email or FTP file upload.

Consider a Headshot

Many voice talents opt not to reveal their visual identity, however talent with an acting background or on-camera experience are more comfortable with marketing their personal image as a representation of their corporate voice over image.

Summary

In this chapter, we looked at how to further brand yourself as a voice-over talent, your online presence, how to create a Profile for clients to view, the kinds of information that clients seek when hiring a voice talent, and services that you could add to your voice-over business offerings.

7

Promoting Your Voice

Now that the hard work is done, it's time to start spreading the news. Begin by reading this chapter about promoting your voice.

In This Chapter

Reasons To Spread The Word
Truly A Global Audience
Online Marketing
Search Engine Optimization
SEO Summary
Summary

Reasons To Spread The Word

Reaching your audience

Promoting your demo is the fulfillment of your overall mission as a voice talent. If you don't promote your voice, at least initially, who else will do it for you? Remember that you invested time, energy, and love into your craft and that it should be shared with your intended audience. How better to start gaining clientele than to actively promote your voice?

Truly A Global Audience

Market Research

According to recent surveys by Middleberg/Ross and the Pew Internet Project:

- 68 million Americans go online daily
- 30% use a search engine to find information
- 27% go online to get news
- 98% of journalists go online daily
- 92% do it for article research
- 76% to find new sources and experts
- 73% to find press releases

Online Marketing

Online marketing consists of two main elements. Search engine marketing and email marketing. An effective online marketing campaign will deliver equal attention to both areas, as they are inter-related and support one another. Creating a strategy that consistently represents who you are and what you have to offer will build trust, and generate a degree of brand recognition. Let's explore the world of search engine marketing.

Search Engine Optimization

"169,400,000 people in the US access the internet. 92% of these people query search engines" - Nielsen Netratings²

Being found in the major search engines is vital to anyone who conducts business on the Internet. There are only three steps you need to take if you want to quickly increase your site's visibility in the search engines. The three steps are: positioning, optimization, and link building. In this short tutorial, you'll learn how to make both your personal website or your Voices.com website more visible in the search engines.

The Major Search Engines - Google, Yahoo and MSN

When clients have needs, they search for specific phrases or keywords on a search engine and only have a few seconds to scan each of the web page descriptions that the search engines display. Be sure that you show up for the search terms that best reflect your voice over services.

Link Building & Link Popularity

"Link building" simply means getting other webmasters to link from their websites to yours. Generally, these link relationships are reciprocal, meaning that you link to them, and in turn, they link to you. These links will bring in traffic on their own, and help you establish a credible reputation for your website.

Link building is an important part of search engine positioning, because search engines look at these links as a "vote" for your website, and they will boost your rankings accordingly when other sites link to you. Notably, links serve as pathways for search engine spiders.

Participating in a link exchange with other websites is the best way to develop external links that point to your website. [Exchange links with Voices.com](#)

² Nielsen Netratings

Search Engine Optimization Summary

Developing an effective search engine optimization strategy is key to receiving traffic at your website and your personal web page, and ultimately, getting you voice over work. Take a few minutes now to apply what you've learned. See the results of your efforts as search engines update your new content.

Search Engines & Internet Directories

Once you have optimized your website or web page, the next step is submitting your URL or website address to the search engines and internet directories so they can include you in their search results.

The Voices.com Search Engine

Voices.com's search engine displays your voice description on the results page. This is your opportunity to describe your voice and your services while incorporating relevant keywords for the search. Your description provides an overview of what you can do for the client, and boosts your search results.

Summary

Key points about promoting your voice

In this chapter, you learned about how important it is to actively promote your voice. With your new database of web directories to submit to and ideas on how to increase your search engine rankings, you are on your way to making a splash and gaining an audience.

Go For It

Now you have tools and knowledge - put them to use!

Ready to take the next step? Start your experience today by joining Voices.com, the #1 Voice Marketplace. Enjoy access to business and voice over resources, friendly customer care representatives, and create your very own voice talent website for free to showcase your voice and highlight your abilities.

To launch your career, [create your free account at Voices.com](#)