

4th Edition

Getting Started in Voice Overs

A Beginners Guide Getting Started in the Industry.

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Chief Marketing Officer and
Co-Founder of Voices.com



INTRODUCTION

This book will help you to...

- ✓ Learn about the industry and its key players
- ✓ Build a foundation for a strong business
- ✓ Gain an appreciation for the art of voice acting

Ask yourself these questions...

- ✓ Am I ready to become a freelance voice talent?
- ✓ Do I have some money to invest in recording equipment?
- ✓ Will I treat this like a real business and not a hobby?
- ✓ Are there supportive people in my corner who can help?

This book will help others...

- ✓ Get a glimpse into the voice over ecosystem
- ✓ Discover the scope of work available in the voice-over industry
- ✓ Gain a better understanding of the voice-over marketplace

What this book is not...

- ✓ A performance guide
- ✓ A get rich quick scheme
- ✓ An authority on agencies, guilds or unions outside of the online marketplace

Ready? Let's jump in!



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1. MEETING THE INDUSTRY

Welcome to a Fascinating, Growing Industry

A voice-over is the voice of an unseen narrator, in a movie or a television broadcast. It is an audio 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, 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.

Free career resources and advice are 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.

There are many reasons to become a voice-over talent, including the opportunity to work from home and realize a dream.

Who is a Voice Talent?

A voice talent interprets a script to meet a specific commercial, leisure, or educational goal. Voice talent 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, animated works (including cartoons, animated feature films, animated shorts), and radio and television commercials.



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Who are the Clients?

"Client" is a generic term that includes producers, casting directors, advertising agencies, marketing executives, and independent businesses or organizations - anyone that has a need to purchase a product or service is a client.

The Internet has introduced a new school of client. This new breed of client is open to trying new methods to achieve their goals, such as finding, hiring, and paying online for a voice talent who lives hundreds if not thousands of miles away. Gone are the days when voice talents were expected to physically attend an audition as the standard procedure for selecting a voice.

Clients, even those that run their own recording and production studios, are saving time and money simply because they do not have to organize and facilitate auditions on their premises. Studios who used to have their own pool of voice talent have now turned to hiring talent at voice-over marketplaces. 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.

Not only does a marketplace provide simplicity, it also provides a wide variety of voice-over talent for clients to select from. Outsourcing the voice-over saves them from performing unnecessary administrative responsibilities and enables them to work solely on the creative aspects so they can deliver a polished final product to their customers.



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Old Way, New Way

In the USA, the main centers for voice-over are NYC, LA and Chicago but you don't have to live in those cities anymore in order to be a successful voice actor. Technology has changed the playing field. You can live and work anywhere and be a successful voice-over artist, so long as you have a good Internet connection. Thanks to the Internet work comes to you from all over the world.

The Online Marketplace

A voice-over marketplace facilitates interactions and transactions between buyers and sellers of voice-over services. 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.

Who are we?

Voices.com is the industry leading website that connects businesses with professional voice talent. Radio and television stations, advertising agencies, casting agents, independent businesses and Fortune 500 companies all rely on the Voices.com marketplace to search for, audition and hire voice talent.

Established in 2004, the Voices.com team is united by a complementary set of backgrounds including the financial industry, computer science, sound engineering, vocal education, marketing and customer service.

Lead by co-founders David and Stephanie Ciccarelli, Voices.com's team of professionals offer the best in first class service and technology.



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CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITIES

Let's Start at the Beginning

Collectively, we work in an industry with eight decades to its claim and one that has undergone a phenomenal series of changes. Estimated to be a \$12.3 billion industry worldwide, voice-overs and language services penetrate all forms of both media and new media, touching the daily lives of nearly everyone in Western culture.

The first instance of a vocal recording intended for commercial use took place when Thomas A. Edison recorded a voice talent to serve as the voice of a talking doll in 1888. The next most successful recording of a voice over was recorded in 1900 by Reginald Fessenden who reported on the weather during a test. More familiar was the first cartoon voice over in 1928 by Walt Disney as Mickey Mouse in "Steamboat Willie." The following year, 1929, the first cartoon series produced, Looney Tunes, debuted in cinemas.

The Future of Voice-Overs

New milestones cause industry professionals to not only reflect on the changes of days gone by, but also to envision what the future has in store for the industry. What's amazing is that ideas once conceived to be in the distant future are here today.

The prospects for the voice-over industry have never been so bright! Revolutionary mobile devices such as the iPhone, iPod Touch and the iPad have made audio content available anytime, anywhere for download at the touch of a button.

The popularity of these devices mean that publishers are creating new content such as apps, games, audiobooks, magazines, podcasts, commercials and more. All this content requires voice-overs, which is great for you!



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The Home Recording Opportunity

In recent years, cost-effective manufacturing of digital recording equipment has allowed you as a freelance voice-over talent to invest in high-quality recording equipment at a reasonable price.

With the advent of new, more efficient technologies the costs associated with building a top tier audio recording studio have plummeted, making some aspects of the previously unattainable multi-million dollar studios of a decade ago available for somewhere in the neighborhood of a few thousand dollars today.

Performance Trends

The trend today is to sound like a "real person." While that may sound easy enough, you'd be surprised at how much work goes into sounding real without sounding contrived or fake.

The big announcer voice still has its place but, for commercial purposes, clients want a guy or girl next door voice that's easy for listeners to relate to. When performing commercial scripts the voice actor is trying to sound like they're talking to a close friend. This is often referred to as a "conversational" read.



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EVALUATING YOUR POTENTIAL

Doing a Self-Assessment

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 it doesn't mean that voice-over will come naturally to you!

Voice acting requires a well-rounded set of skills. In this section we'll take a look at some of the most critical skills aspiring talent should develop in order to have a fulfilling career as a voice-over artist.

There are many career self-assessment tools available to test your compatibility with a variety of industries and potential career paths. Your skills, abilities, interests, personality and temperament all play a vital role in the career path you choose.

Recognizing The Skills You Need as a Voice Talent

There is more to voice-over than just having a “good voice.” When it comes to a career in voice-overs, there are a number of qualities one should possess in order to do well. Whether you are a freelancer or work with an agent, or both, there are number of complementary skills and attributes that can help ensure you are headed in the right direction. Any of the skills you don't already possess can be learned by seeking out training in the industry.

At a minimum, freelance voice talent need the following skills:

- Acting
- Technology
- Business
- Marketing



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Can you read aloud without stumbling?

A skilled voice-over artist is able to read aloud with ease. If you stumble over your words and need to start over again then you need more practice. Try reading books, newspaper and magazine articles aloud. This is a great way to practice using a variety of writing styles which is something you'll encounter in the voice-over industry.

Do you embrace technology?

This one's important. Being a freelance voice actor means that you need to have the skills to operate audio recording equipment as well as provide a convincing performance. There are instructors in the industry who can help you become familiar with operating audio recording equipment and teach you how to put it to good use.

Do you have marketing know-how?

The voice-over industry, like all entertainment and media fields, is teeming with talented people. So how do you get noticed? Successful voice actors are savvy marketers. Marketing the services you can provide as a voice talent is critical. People won't know what you do or why they should hire you unless you tell them. There are hundreds of ways that you can spread the word about your voice-over services. Get creative!

Do you think running your own business is risky?

Most entrepreneurs enjoy the thrill of risk. Whether you have an agent or you're freelancing, you are running your own business - you are an entrepreneur. Part of running your own business is accepting and being prepared to take some risks.



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Studying With a Voice Coach

Performing voice-overs is an art and is, at its heart, *acting*. Whether you are interested in voicing business and education videos or television commercials and video games - you need to be able to act. Acting classes will improve your voice-over performance no matter what area of voice-over you are leaning towards. Studying with a voice-over coach will help you to assess your talent and develop your skills. It is the best preparation and nourishment that you can invest in to build a solid foundation for your voice-over career.

Taking a Workshop, Tele-classes or Attending a Seminar

Voice-over 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.

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.

Want to start learning right now? Listen to voice coaches by downloading our free podcast or search for "Voice Over Experts" in iTunes. <http://podcasts.voices.com>



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UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE

Over the centuries, the art of communicating with other people and the transmission of the spoken word, the most powerful, persuasive, and distinctly human tool in any marketer's 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 that new media bestows, it is 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.

The Instructor

When teaching someone 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.

The Real Person

Projects requiring a more casual approach often benefit from relatable, genuine voice-overs. These 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 of the script that instills trust.



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The 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.

The 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.

The 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.



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PLANNING YOUR DEMO

Preparing Your Demo Content

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.

Using the Demo Recipe

Shoot for a demo length of 60 - 90 seconds. Keep voice-overs moving, and limit it to 5 or 6 segments per demo. Here's an example of a demo outline:

- Slate or Intro (say your full name and the type of voice-over you will be performing): 5 seconds
- Segment 1: 15 seconds
- Segment 2: 15 seconds
- Segment 3: 10 seconds
- Segment 4: 10 seconds
- Segment 5: 5 seconds
- Closing remarks (contact information / website plug): 5 seconds
- Closing music jingle (optional): 5-8 seconds



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Writing Script for Your Demo

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 themed demo such as commercials, you'll want to make sure that there is a variety of commercials targeted to a diverse audience. Research your chosen niche in order to deliver the most relevant material to your audience.

Downloading Sample Scripts

If you prefer to record from royalty-free scripts instead of writing your own copy, there are a few samples in the bonuses from our [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.

More Tips for Your Demo

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.

Creating More Than 1 Demo

It's considered a best practice to create a separate demo for each category you're interested in working in. For example, if you plan on doing characters, record a cartoon or animation demo. If you also plan on recording commercials, create another demo with radio commercials. How about phone system recordings? Create another demo with phone system messages such as voicemail greetings or on-hold messages. The more demos you have, the easier it is for a prospective client to find the exact sample they are looking for.



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RECORDING YOUR DEMO

Local Recording Studios

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 performing a Local Search in Google.

Questions to Ask a Recording Studio

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

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.



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SETTING UP YOUR HOME STUDIO

If you have the will and technical skills, having 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 can be a considerable financial investment, it is better in the long-term and will save you time, energy, and money.

Computer Based Recording

One of the biggest trends in recent audio production involves merging digital recording with computer technology. The recording of audio onto a computer's hard drive allows you to edit and manipulate your sound files. This data can be stored as a sound file such as .mp3, .wav or .aiff. There are multiple advantages to recording and editing your voice-overs using your personal computer.

- Digital recording to record long and uninterrupted narration.
- Digital editing to quickly and easily remove unwanted background noise or embellish the audio track with music and sound effects.
- Digital processing such as adding effects to your voice like as reverb, or echo, and master your entire demo for sonic clarity.

Minimum Requirements for PC Computers

- Intel Pentium 4 or equivalent Processor
- Windows XP / Vista / Window 7
- 1 GB of available disk space with at least 512 MB of RAM
- Audio Line In and Audio Line Out and a USB port

Minimum Requirements for Mac Computers

- Mac G4 or better
- Mac OS X
- 1 GB of available disk space with at least 512 MB of RAM
- Audio Line In and Audio Line Out and a USB port



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Microphones

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 Microphones

The MXL2001-P from Marshall Electronics 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.mxlmics.com/>

Condenser Microphone

The Neumann 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 transformerless 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/>



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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

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.

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



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Putting It All Together in Your New Home Recording Studio

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.' 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.

As you've just learned, a vocal studio can be setup using free tools from the Internet and your existing computer system or you can opt to build a professional-grade recording studio.



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BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

Realizing the Dream

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. Here is a shortlist of the essentials that you will need to operate your voice-over business online.

Essential Technology for the Home-based Business:

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

Selecting a Name

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.

You can select a memorable name, unique name, or 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.



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Creating a Personal Brand

Your personal branding is important. If successfully mastered, it will set you and your voice-over business apart from others. Many professionals choose to keep their real names, however, selecting a stage name is also a popular option. This gives you the freedom to create a unique voice-over persona and will help separate your work from your home life.

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 your voice-over website, 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

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 service in about 15 words or less to keep the readers interest, particularly when you are promoting yourself in advertisements or at a voice-over marketplace. 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.

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 marketing device that will serve you well if properly crafted and placed.



For More Information

Contact your account executive to learn how we can help you succeed!

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Service & Support

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Coloring Your Brand

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

When choosing colors to represent your voice-over services, it is important to select 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 them to further brand your voice visually.

Creating a Logo

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.

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.



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CREATING A PRESENCE ONLINE

Getting Visibility Online

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 a online marketplace that gives you your own web page, where you can include your voice-over information.

Building Your Own Website

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 in an Online Marketplace

Having a presence online is critical to the success of any freelance voice-over professional and puts them on the grid for voice casting. You can participate at Voices.com, a marketplace that provides a steady stream of opportunities from clients around the globe. In the marketplace talent are acting as their own agents and can make decisions for themselves with regard to what they feel they are interested in and the services they are able to provide.



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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.
- 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 professional site where you will feel proud to be featured.
- Access to resources and templates that will save you time.
- Accountability.
- Personal contact.
- Acknowledgment in the press.
- A good variety of testimonials from both voice talents who are subscribed as Premium members and client who have used the service successfully.
- 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.
- Memberships with a variety of options and prices to suit your needs.
- Integrity.



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MARKETING YOURSELF ONLINE

Importance of Creating a Stunning Profile

Building a profile on a marketplace will give clients a better idea of who you are and the kinds of services that you can provide. 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, demo hosting, and a place to run your voice-over business online.

Showcase Your 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 though, you may want to consider something more unique. A graphic designer can help you experiment with font types, colors and can incorporate your 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 a complete list of clients you've worked with. 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.



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Suggest The Styles and Ages that You Can Perform

Clients will often 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
- Turnaround time (i.e. 24 hours).

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.

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. 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.



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9. REACHING A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

Reasons To Spread The Word

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

According to Middleberg/Ross and the Pew Internet Project:

- 68 million Americans go online daily
- 30% use a search engine to find information
- 92% do it for article research
- 76% to find new sources and experts

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 interrelated 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 Marketing

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. In short, this means having the right keywords on your profile, accurate information and then building links to your profile. These links can be from directories, your LinkedIn or Facebook profile or from blogs. Finally, remember to create a Facebook status update or Tweet about the page you're promoting. All of these efforts will increase your visibility in Google.



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GETTING PAID

SurePay Guarantees You'll Get Paid for Work

Most voice talent at Voices.com use SurePay to get paid for voice-over work. SurePay is Voices.com's escrow payment service and it is free for you. It enables a client to make a full deposit upfront and have the deposit held until the audio files are delivered through the Voices.com website. The Voices.com SurePay service manages payments made by VISA, MasterCard or through PayPal for you. You can control your payout preferences via the Billing Preferences link in your Voices.com account.

How does SurePay work?

The process starts when a client awards their job to you, the talent. The client deposits funds into an escrow account then finalizes the deadline and uploads their script. Now, it's up to you to record and deliver the audio files back through Voices.com. Once your client has approved the files, the funds will be released and payment issued either through PayPal or by check.

Deposits and Payments Received Through SurePay

If you have received a deposit or a payment for your voice over recordings through SurePay, it will be noted under "Payments" in your account for your reference and convenience where you can view "Held in Escrow" and "Payments Sent."

Setting Up Payment Preference

In your Billing Preferences you can check on your next membership payment, upgrade your account and select your preferred method of payment for SurePay.

You may choose one of two options:

1. PayPal - enter in your PayPal email address
2. Check in USD - make sure your mailing address is present in your profile



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Benefits of using SurePay, for Talent

1. Talent do not have to worry about making payment arrangements, it's all taken care of by Voices.com.
2. The deposit is made in full and talent know the money is waiting for them at the end of your project completion which means they can concentrate on the recording and not worry about the money.
3. Appearance of their name and link to Voices.com website in the Recently Hired List which means more exposure.
4. Mutual feedback can be obtained at the end of the transaction and appears in the Feedback link in talent account.
5. Dispute resolution

Benefits of using SurePay, for Clients

1. Talent do not get the money deposited for their services until client has download and accept the files. This means guaranteed satisfaction.
2. The funds are held in a secure escrow account.
3. Client is dealing with a reputable and well known company.
4. Payment for talent services can be made via PayPal or by phone with major credit card.
5. Dispute resolution and mediation is covered by the Escrow fee. If a resolution cannot be obtained with the hired talent then the deposit is refunded so that a new talent can be hired.



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Sample Rate Sheet

| Category | Time | \$ |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|
| Radio Commercial: Local / Regional | :15, :30 or :60 | 200 |
| Radio Commercial: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago | :15, :30 or :60 | 300 |
| Radio Commercial : National Network | :15, :30 or :60 | 1000 |
| Radio Station Promotion / Station Imaging | :05, 15 or :30 | 200 |
| Public Service Announcement on Radio | :15, :30 or :60 | 200 |
| Television: Local / Regional | :15, :30 or :60 | 300 |
| Television: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago | :15, :30 or :60 | 500 |
| Television: National Network | :15, :30 or :60 | 2000 |
| Radio Station Promotion / Station Imaging | :05, 15 or :30 | 300 |
| Public Service Announcement on Television | :15, :30 or :60 | 300 |
| Television Animation | 1 hr recording session | 300 |
| | Per additional studio hour | 100 |
| Non-Broadcast Corporate, Industrial and Educational | 1 hr recording session | 300 |
| | Per additional studio hour | 100 |
| Interactive Media / Multimedia | 1 hr recording session | 300 |
| | Per finished hour of audio | 500 |
| Audiobooks | 1 hr recording session | 125 |
| | Per finished hour of audio | 500 |
| | Per page rate | 125 |
| | Per word rate | 0.01 - 0.05 |

- Radio and television rates for unlimited airings in a 13-week cycle.
- Rates are in US Dollars for finished dry voice only. Any post-production required is \$100/hr.
- All rates are for reference only. Some voice talent may charge their own fees.
- Questions? Contact us at support@voices.com



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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! Enjoy access to business and voice over resources, friendly customer service representatives, and create your very own voice talent website for free to showcase your voice and highlight your abilities.

Take the tour here:

<http://www.voices.com/talent/tour/>



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Vox Daily Blog

A daily dose of voice acting news, articles, tutorials, interviews, intelligent conversation and business ideas. Perfect for voice talent, voice over coaches, talent agent, casting director or industry professional.

☐☐ [Voices.com's Blog](#)



Voice Over Experts Podcast

The educational podcast featuring renowned voice over coaches from US, Canada and abroad. Join us each week for pearls of wisdom and tricks of the trade to improve your voice over career.

☐☐ [Voices.com's Podcast](#)

Join The Conversation on Social Networks

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ABOUT VOICES.COM

Voices.com was established in 2004 and is now the technology and industry leading website that connects businesses with professional voice talents. Radio and television stations, advertising agencies and Fortune 500 companies rely upon the Voices.com marketplace to search for, audition and hire voice talents with the assistance of our innovative SurePay™ escrow service and our Web application.

The winner of several awards, including the 1to1 Impact Award, Customer Relationship Management Elite Award, and the DigiFest New Voices Award, Voices.com has raised its profile significantly this year ranking on the PROFIT Hot 50 recognizing 534% growth over the past two years. In 2012 Voices.com won “Business of the Year” from the Chamber of Commerce.

Clients include NBC, ESPN, PBS, The History Channel, Reader's Digest, Comcast, Bell Canada, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, ING, Western Union, Ford, GM, Jaguar, Firestone Tires, American Airlines, the US Army, the US Government and thousands more.

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