

VoiceActing Academy™

Master Class

Defining Your Market & Where You Fit In

As with any other entrepreneurial business, your success as a voiceover professional is directly related to your understanding of:

- who you are,
- how you approach your business,
- what you have to offer the marketplace,
- who you are working with, and
- the benefits derived from working with you.

With this knowledge you will be in a position to create an effective marketing plan intended to establish a memorable Brand for you and your services.

Building your brand is a multi-step process and can take a considerable amount of time. The essential aspects of your brand that we will develop during this workshop are:

- Your Vision Statement
- Your Mission Statement
- Your Positioning Statement (UPS)
- Your Selling Proposition (USP)
- Your Slogan

Additionally, you will be working to determine other suitable aspects of your brand including:

- Your visual appearance (colors and font styles)
- Your logo (if appropriate)
- Your audio signature (if appropriate)

The goal here is to create a strong and powerful image both in your mind and in the mind of your client, of the specific benefits and a solid reason for working with you.

This pre-event exercise is designed to help you to gather the information you will need as we work on creating your Mission Statement, your Positioning Statement, and your Selling Proposition.

As you work through this process, you will begin to find clarity and gain focus that will be brought together in your marketing, web site design, email composition, graphics design, and many other aspects of your business.

STEP 1: DEFINING WHO YOU ARE AND THE SKILLS YOU HAVE:

- Describe your predominant personality as specifically as possible, in terms of how you perceive yourself:

- Describe your predominant personality as specifically as possible, in terms of how others perceive you (you may want to work with a partner for this exercise.)

- What are your hobbies and interests, other than voiceover?

- In one short sentence, describe the business you are in:

- What aspect(s) of voiceover work do you enjoy most? Prioritize if more than one.

- ___ Performing
- ___ Copy writing
- ___ Creativity
- ___ Recording/production
- ___ Business
- ___ Marketing
- ___ Calling new prospects
- ___ Negotiating with clients
- ___ Learning new skills
- ___ Other _____

Defining Your Brand - 3 of 9

- Check off as many voiceover, business, office, and production skills as possible. Include ONLY those skills in which you feel competent. Add any skills you possess that are not on this list:

- General performance and audition skills
- Cold reading skills
- Character creation and development
- General acting ability
- Stage performing skills
- Dance training: _____
- Music training: _____
- On-camera performing skills
- Professional speaking skills
- Customer relations, direct sales (retail), or telemarketing skills
- An ability to create and sustain character, accents, dialects, attitude, emotion, etc.
- An ability to adjust vocal range and variety of tempo, rhythm, emotion, attitude, etc.
- Teleprompter skills
- Ear prompter skills
- Studio production skills (more than just basic recording of voice tracks)
- What software do you use? _____
- Music editing/Audio Production – Software: _____
- Working to video (video shooting and/or editing) – Software: _____
- Copy writing – type(s) of copy: _____
- Marketing/Promotion – describe: _____
- Negotiating fees and services
- Accounting/record keeping - Software: _____
- What other software are you using? _____
- Word processing: _____
- Spreadsheet: _____
- Writing business proposals
- Writing business letters
- Graphics/Layout design – Software: _____
- Website design – Software: _____
- General computer skills
- Specific computer skills: _____
- Other skills (list): _____

- List those specific areas of your business that you feel you need to improve, develop new skills, or delegate to someone else (Do NOT list any performing aspects here):

Improve:	New Skills:	Delegate:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Defining Your Brand - 4 of 9

- In what area(s) of voiceover work do you feel the most comfortable and competent?

- List those specific areas of your performing abilities that you feel you need to develop or improve:

- Identify your top 3 or 4 performance archetypes. Rank strongest to weakest (1 being strongest):

WOMEN

1. Woman in Authority (Mom, Teacher)
2. An Exaggerated You
3. Heroine
4. Kindly Old Lady
5. Mean Old Lady
6. Snob
7. Nerd (Wallflower)
8. Comic Relief (Side Kick)
9. Silly-Sound Character
10. High Silly-Sounding Character (Elf)
11. Sarcastic Woman
12. Mean Villainess (Witch, Stepmother)
13. News person (Reporter, Co-Host)
14. Unfocused Teenager
15. Tough Teenager
16. Airhead (Clueless, Bimbo)
17. Femme Fatale (Vamp, Seductress)
18. Sweet Little Boy
19. Tough Little Boy
20. Cute Little Girl

MEN

1. Man in Authority (Dad, Boss, Mayor)
2. An Exaggerated You
3. Hero
4. Kindly Old Man
5. Mean Old Man
6. Snob
7. Nerd (Geek)
8. Comic Relief (Side Kick)
9. Silly-Sounding Character
10. High Silly-Sounding Character (Elf)
11. Smart Alek
12. Maniacal Villain (Mad Scientist)
13. Mastermind Villain
14. Unfocused Teen (Surfer, Mall Rat)
15. Sleazeball (Producer, Agent, Sales)
16. News person (Anchorman, Ann-cr)
17. Large Gruff Man (Blue Collar)
18. Hick
19. Everyman (Reluctant Hero)
20. Intelligent Little Man

STEP 2: DEFINING YOUR IDEAL CLIENT & BENEFITS

- Who do you want to work for? Define your ideal client base by identifying at least TWO specific types of clients you want to work with.

Defining Your Brand - 5 of 9

- What do you do for your clients? Be specific in terms of services and products you offer.

- List at least three things you can offer your clients that make you unique:

- Identify at least three things your market needs:

- What is the ONE primary benefit you offer to your clients?

- What is a secondary benefit you offer to your clients?

- What else can you offer your clients as a benefit to working with you?

- Write two or three sentences that clearly demonstrate the benefits of a client working with you:

STOP HERE

You will work on the next steps during the VoiceActing Master Class

STEP 3: CREATING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

Your Mission Statement is a description of the purpose of your business and your long term goals. It is intended to be an internal statement of clarity to help keep you on track as your business develops, and is not intended for public consumption. In other words, although you might choose to use an aspect of your Mission Statement as part of your marketing or business promotion, you would probably never actually use the statement word-for-word in any of your marketing materials. That's the purpose of your Positioning Statement.

Your Mission Statement is organic. It is not intended to be a one-time only, set in stone statement of your business. Rather, it is meant to be a roadmap to guide your business decision-making process, and if your business has other employees, to additionally provide focus, motivation, and clarity. As your business grows, you may discover that the focus or underlying purpose of your business might change, so your Mission Statement should be reviewed every year or so and adapted as needed to adjust to changes as your business grows.

Your Mission Statement should answer the following questions:

1. What is the specific purpose of your business?
2. How are you organized to achieve your purpose?
3. What principles or beliefs guide your work?

Here's an example of the mission statement we use for our production company, *The Commercial Clinic*:

We strive to have fun producing highly creative and effective radio and television commercials that will achieve our client's advertising objectives, and provide voiceover for in-house productions and station imaging that will perfectly meet or exceed our client's needs.

Our goal is two-fold: 1) we want our clients to be ecstatically happy with the results they get from the commercials and other projects we produce for them, and 2) we want everyone involved in our company to make a nice enough living from doing what they love so they can afford to take a few weeks off each year for a nice vacation, put their kids through college and have a nice retirement to look forward to.

We're not the most expensive production company around, but we're not inexpensive, either. Our philosophy of making our clients sound great while keeping things fun allows us to be selective with the clients we work with—we don't accept clients who are looking for low-budget commercial production. We want our clients to know that we're very good at what we do, and we expect to be fairly compensated for our work.

Using the objectives, goals, and outcomes you created in Steps 1 and 2, begin the process of creating your own Mission Statement.

This will most likely be an on-going process, so don't be discouraged if you can't come up with a cohesive statement right away. You will also find that as you create your Mission Statement, you will tend to "tweak" or adjust the phrasing until you are completely comfortable with it.

Again, the purpose of your Mission Statement is to help keep you on track as your business develops... this is NOT part of your branding or marketing efforts. It's a good idea to print out your Mission Statement and post it someplace in your office where you can refer to it from time to time.

Defining Your Brand - 7 of 9

- List three specific objectives or reasons why you are in the business of performing for voiceover. These should be stated in terms of reasonable expectations and desires. For example, a statement like: "I perform voiceover so I can make a lot of money" may not be realistic. On the other hand, a statement like: "I perform voiceover because I enjoy the process of helping others to communicate their message" is both practical and reasonable.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- List three ideal goals or outcomes that will express your long-term objectives for being in business.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- List three ways in which you intend to reach your business goals and outcomes.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 4: CREATING YOUR POSITIONING STATEMENT

Your Positioning Statement (or “elevator speech”) should be only about 3 or 4 sentences and should be no longer than about 30-seconds in length.

Using the information you have developed in Steps 1 & 2, create a Positioning Statement in the following format:

I work with _____ and _____,
providing _____ and _____,
which results in _____ and _____.

The exact wording is less important than the identification of WHO you work with (your clients), the SERVICES you provide, and the BENEFITS of working with you.

As an example, here’s the Positioning Statement for VoiceActing, LLC:

We work with people who want to break into voiceover and with current voiceover professionals, providing expert training in performance and business skills designed to help them take their voiceover work to the next level and get more work.

- Identify two specific types of customers you work with:

1. _____
2. _____

- Identify two specific services you provide:

1. _____
2. _____

- Identify two specific results your clients will receive from working with you:

1. _____
2. _____

- Write a compelling Positioning statement:

STEP 5: CREATING YOUR USP AND SLOGAN

While your Positioning Statement is a statement who you work with, what you do, and the results to be expected; your Selling Proposition is a statement of what makes you different from everyone else in the marketplace. Your Unique Selling Proposition can be as long as you like, but will generally be best stated when boiled down to a few short sentences or a short phrase. Your slogan is a distillation of this statement and may become a key part of your branding, ultimately serving to create a strong identity and association of your business and services.

Here are a few examples of slogans we use for services we provide through VoiceActing, LLC:

- ***Changing Lives One Voice at a Time!*** (VoiceActing.com – VoiceActing Academy)
- ***The Magic of the Internet at your Command!*** (MagicInet.com)
- ***We Speak Your Language*** (MedicalNarration.com)
- ***Helping You Conduct Your Business!*** (ConductorsClub.com)
- ***We add Character to Your Productions!*** (CommercialClinic.com)

Each short phrase sums up the ultimate benefit of working with us, regardless of the services we are providing for a given client.

- Write a compelling statement in one or two sentences that clearly defines the ONE thing that separates you from your competition.

- Create a memorable, single, short phrase or slogan that is the essence of your USP.
