



VO MARKETING BASICS

Where to Start, What to Do,

How to Begin



voicecoaches

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A black and white photograph of a person wearing a headset, viewed from the side, working at a laptop. In the foreground, a professional microphone is mounted on a stand. The laptop screen displays a software interface with various data points and graphs. The background is a bright, slightly blurred window. A solid orange vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

VOICE OVER MARKETING BASICS

Welcome, and congratulations! By reading this book, you're taking a step toward exploring a new and exciting endeavor. Building success in voice over is like starting any new business: it takes persistence and hard work. The difference is that you're not starting a pizza shop or opening a nail salon... your product is your voice. And now it's up to you to get the word out!

We know that when it comes to self-marketing, it can be difficult to know where to begin - and taking those first steps can seem daunting. To help, we've put together a quick guide with some of the insight we've gathered over the course of decades in the voice

over industry. By taking some time to gain perspective, you'll begin to understand what you can do to give yourself the best chance of success in voice over - and you'll be on your way to developing a self-marketing plan that builds on your unique strengths and fits your individual goals.



1

FOCUS ON DEVELOPING SKILL.

First thing's first: focus on developing technique and skill as a voice actor. It's normal to want to jump right into marketing yourself as a voice talent and going after recording sessions - after all, that's the fun part! But before you jump headfirst into your self-marketing efforts, it's very important to make sure you've first taken the time to learn about the field of voice over, develop voice acting technique, and practice the skills you'll need to work at a professional level. And we think you'll find that developing those skills and growing yourself as a voice talent will be an enjoyable and exciting experience for you.

Think about it: you wouldn't open a pizza shop without learning how to make pizza first. Unfortunately, over the course of our many years in the industry, we've worked with countless voice actors who showed up to the job with very little knowledge or professional skill - and the result was a recording session where progress was forced, the other professionals in the room grew frustrated, and the end product was less than satisfactory.

On the other hand, we've also worked with many voice actors who showed up to the session prepared, demonstrated a depth of knowledge and practical skill, and were able to work effectively with their fellow professionals. Everyone involved in the session walked away in a good mood, satisfied that they'd delivered a great product.

Which of these voice actors do you think we'd be more likely to hire again for future work: the one who was clearly underprepared, or the one whose skill ensured a successful recording session and a happy client?


This is why it's so important to take the time to learn and develop skill as a professional voice actor. Anyone can show up and try to read copy - but the professionals you'll work with will quickly know the difference between a voice actor who's underprepared and one who's invested in their skill and their technique. And when the success of a session and the quality of the product is on the

line, casting professionals will likely choose the individual who we know we can count on to get the job done.

This gives you a great advantage! By understanding that casting professionals prefer to cast voice actors with industry knowledge and technical voice acting skill, you can give yourself a huge advantage by simply taking the time to learn - exactly like you're doing right now by reading this book. Focus on building skills that showcase your voice's unique personality and strength range. Make sure you develop a voice over demo that showcases those unique strengths and demonstrates your technical skill. Enjoy the process of learning about this exciting field and about your own voice - and that knowledge will benefit you greatly moving forward!

Think about it - your voice is your resume! Taking the time to invest in your own development will be a great asset to you in the future.

Always look for opportunities to build skill in this field. Focus on your unique voice personality and strength range.



Develop a voice over demo that represents your unique strengths and update that demo throughout your career.



2

DEFINE YOUR GOALS.

The word “goal” means different things to different people - and that’s also true when it comes to voice over. After you’ve taken the time to explore your voice’s own unique personality and strengths, you’ll likely have a better idea of the type of voice over work you might be best suited for. Similarly, learning more about this industry and developing skill can help you to better understand where you might fit within it. Taking this knowledge about yourself, your voice, and your voice over interests and applying it to your marketing efforts can be a great way to define personal goals that will help you to stay motivated and committed to your success.

What does “success” in voice over mean to you? Maybe it means you’d like to book your first job, or maybe you’d simply like to do more voice over work than you’re currently doing. Maybe you’d like to explore voice over work in a different sector, like character voice or audiobooks. Perhaps you’d like to take your technical skill to the next level, or maybe you’d simply like to enjoy yourself and have fun as you explore a new interest. Whatever you picture when you think of the word “success,” setting a series of realistic goals will help you get there.

When it comes to setting goals, it can help to get specific. For example, the goal, “I’d like to do more voice over work,” is fine, but a little broad; a better, more focused goal would be, “I’d like to book 5 voice over jobs in the next year.” By adding some specifics, you’re helping yourself to stay on course and pursue your goal more effectively and directly.

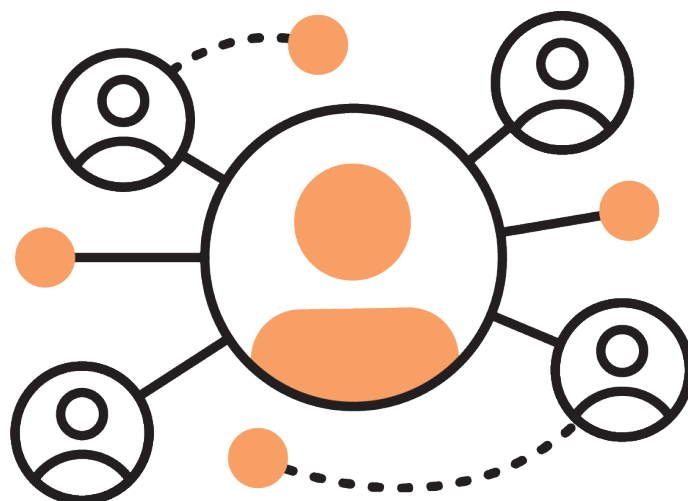
Ultimately, regardless of what your goals are, they should be tailored to what makes you unique as a voice over artist. Get excited about your goals! Write them down, tell your family and friends about them, and set aside time to work toward making them a reality for yourself.



Set manageable, achievable goals.

Define smaller goals that will act as steps toward reaching your larger goals.

Focus on specific goals rather than broad ones. Write down your goals and share them with your friends and family.



3

CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OF A RELATIONSHIP-BASED APPROACH.

Picture this: you're a casting professional tasked with finding a voice actor for an important client project. It's your job to meet the client's expectations in a timely manner.

Faced with these expectations, you're presented with two options: hire a voice actor who you've worked with before and you know you can count on to be professional and skilled, or take a chance on a new voice actor with unknown skill and professionalism.

Who would you choose?

If you said you'd go with the option you're already familiar with, you're not alone. Voice professionals, like professionals in any industry, often prefer the familiarity of a voice actor they know they can count on from past experience. They prefer to work with actors who they're familiar with and who they know can do the job reliably and effectively. Think about it - given the choice, would you rather go with an option you know will work, or take a chance on something new?

Knowing this as you market yourself, you might try looking at it from this perspective: instead of looking for a voice over "job," try looking for a voice over "relationship." Because once you have that relationship in place, the chances you'll be called back for more work from the same source in the future are much higher.

While you'll always be looking for first-time work opportunities, concentrate on transforming those first-time opportunities into repeat customers. By most business estimates, it costs five to seven times as much to attract a first-time customer compared to the cost and effort required to attract ongoing work from an existing customer - and that applies to voice over as well! So once you're given a single opportunity, work to build that opportunity into a long-term relationship.

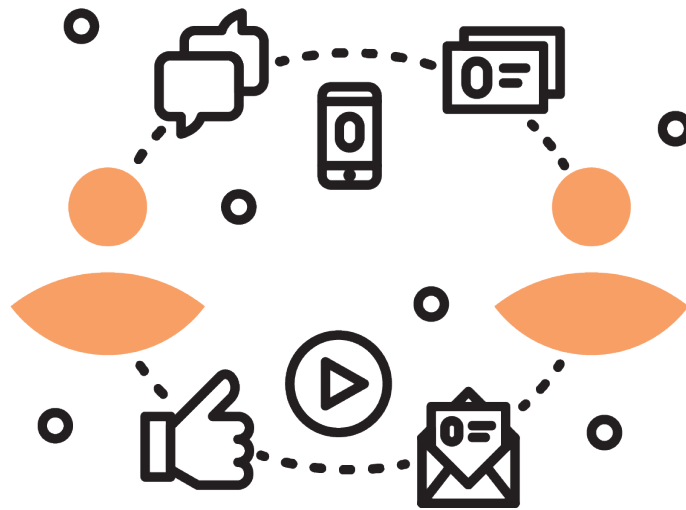
Practice effective, organized follow-up communication. Arrive on

time to sessions and be courteous and professional. Continue to develop and practice your skills so you can deliver the best voice over product possible. All of these efforts add up. The goal here is to make it so that the next time that client needs a voice actor, they think of you first.

The benefits of building long-term repeat work relationships are broad. You'll spend less time trying to convince clients of the value of your service... they've worked with you before, so they already know! You'll gain a greater understanding of your own personal strengths, and you'll have a stronger network of clients that is much more likely to result in referrals and more work in the future.

Understand that voice professionals, like professionals in any industry, often prefer to work with people they become familiar with.

Use this to your advantage and practice a relationship-based approach to build long-term repeat work opportunities.



4

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION THAT WORKS FOR YOU.

When it comes to marketing, communication is key. Once you've made an initial professional contact, follow up consistently. This goes for existing clients as well - whether you've just updated your demo or you recently completed a big voice over job, let them know!

As you're approaching your professional communication, it's always important to use a courteous tone and make your message concise. This goes for any kind of communication, from

email to phone calls to thank you notes. And speaking of types of communication, don't just rely on one medium! While sending an email might be the easiest and quickest way to follow-up with prospective clients, your message might be easily missed or end up in a spam folder. Instead, it may be more effective to utilize more than one method for initial communication and managed follow-up. For example, after you've sent an email, you might try a different follow-up method, like a handwritten thank-you postcard, to reach your contact. This helps ensure that even if they typically favor one type of communication over another, they'll still get your message.

For any form of communication, it's very important to make sure your name and contact information are clearly present. Your goal is to make it as easy as possible for a potential client to contact you for a work opportunity.

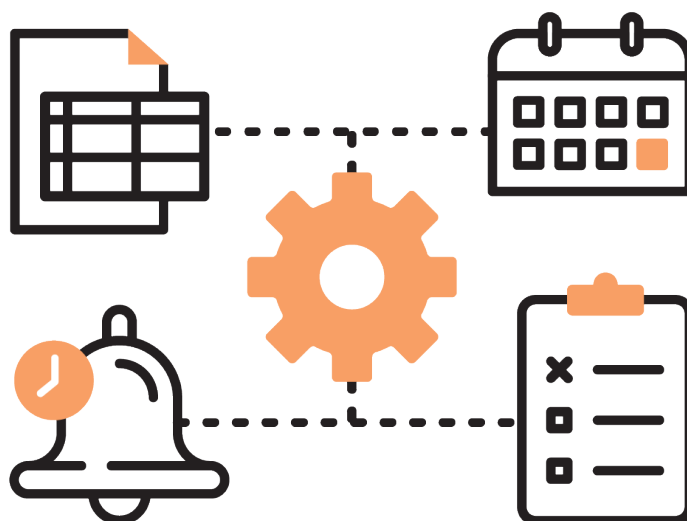
As you're developing an effective professional communication strategy that works for you, you may also want to consider developing branding that helps your communication stand out and present as a cohesive effort. The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers." Consistent, thoughtful branding can lead to strong brand recognition, which means added ease for clients seeking your services.

In your case, a brand can be as simple as your name and as complex as a customized logo. It doesn't have to be complicated! The important part is that once you've chosen a brand, all of your marketing materials, from your website to your business cards and any other promotional materials you use, should incorporate your brand exactly and consistently.

Use various mediums (email, thank you notes, phone calls, etc.) to get your message across. Don't just rely on one method!

Use a professional tone and concise messaging, and always make sure your name and contact info are present.

To help make your marketing efforts more cohesive, develop branding that works for you and your individual style. It doesn't have to be complex, but it should always be consistent.



5

STAY ORGANIZED.

When you're just beginning your marketing efforts, it may be easy to keep track of your professional contacts. But six months from now, when you've reached out to possibly hundreds of people with your demo, organization becomes very important. Staying on top of who you've contacted, what you've sent, and how those individuals responded will become an increasingly important component of your long-term success in voice acting.


For some, being naturally organized is easy. For many of us, however, staying organized can get tricky - and it requires making

a concrete plan and sticking to it.

There are many methods you can use to stay organized, from spreadsheets to calendars and reminders to written schedules. Find the method that works best for you and your personal marketing style. Regardless of the method you choose to organize your contacts, one of the easiest ways to bring some order to your communication process is to try and set aside specific days and times for that communication. Scheduling your communication is a great way to stay on top of your workload. Maybe you decide you'll do all of your follow-up on Sunday afternoons, or you promise yourself you'll spend at least 2 hours a week reaching out to new contacts. No matter what your specific strategy is, writing it into your routine will help you to stay on track and prevent yourself from feeling overwhelmed.

Choose an organization system that works for you to keep track of your contacts.

Make a note of people you meet and be sure to follow up.



Schedule a specific day or time for communication and follow-up.



6

PRACTICE TALKING ABOUT WHAT YOU DO, AND TELL EVERYONE!

Don't keep your voice over a secret... you never know who might be able to help you! Often, there are people who you encounter in your day-to-day life who may have a connection that's a benefit to you - and all you need to do to make that connection is tell them.

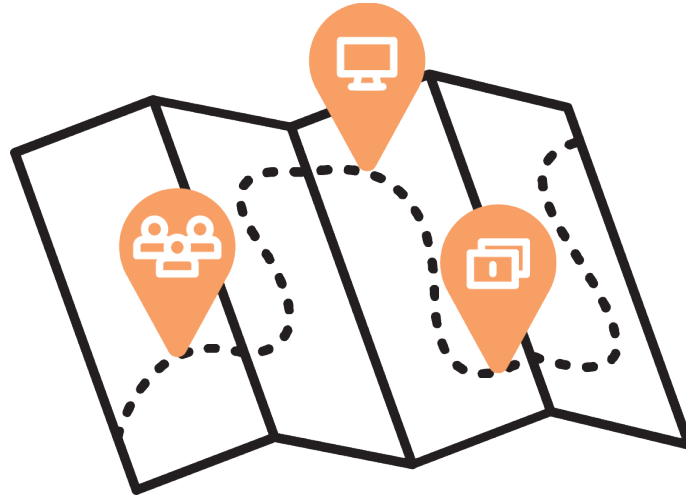
As a new voice actor, it may feel a little weird to introduce yourself as a voice actor - and that discomfort is completely normal. Now, however, it becomes important for people to know that voice over is a service you provide. So practice! Develop an "elevator pitch"

that quickly and clearly conveys who you are and what you do. The idea is that you should be able to share important information about yourself in about the time you would have if you ran into a potential business contact in the elevator. While you'll often have more time to introduce yourself, being clear and concise is always a good idea.

Practice your elevator pitch. Try it out on friends and relatives until you feel comfortable and natural delivering it. Keep the energy upbeat and relaxed, and get to the point. And then, when you're out and about and you get an opportunity, take it! Try to have a business card or another quick way to share your contact information and your demo readily available as a follow-up.

Develop an elevator pitch and practice it.

Be proud of what you do! Don't try to hide it. Tell everybody - you never know who might be able to help you toward your goals.



7

PURSUE MULTIPLE AVENUES.

You've heard the saying before: don't put all your eggs in one basket. That saying holds true when it comes to voice over. There are many ways to pursue work in this industry, and the methods you choose will depend on your own voice, your goals, and your personal strengths. For some, this may mean telling everyone you know that you do voice over and joining regional advertising clubs and other business organizations to make professional contacts. For others, it may mean subscribing to area business publications to look for opportunities to reach out and offer your services. Still others might work to build effective online and social

media presences to market yourself. In our experience, marketing is most effective when it's tailored to what you do best - and also when it's a combination of efforts along multiple avenues like the ones listed above.

One of the ways an independent voice actor can go about looking for work is through the use of online voice over marketplaces. Though web-based voice over marketplaces can certainly provide opportunities, they're by no means the only marketing outlet available to you, and they're certainly not an easy way to find work. You should keep in mind that when you enter these online marketplaces, you're one voice among many, many other actors all competing for the same opportunities. While marketing yourself online can be fruitful, it's only one facet of your self-marketing strategy, and there are no shortcuts.

Work through multiple avenues to build relationships and foster professional opportunities. Go out into your community and join business organizations where you'll meet people who may be potential clients. Spread the word about your services. Read professional publications to look for opportunities to reach out with a congratulatory message and include your demo for consideration. Get creative - there are so many ways to market yourself! And we'll say it again: don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Don't rely too much on one avenue! Build a marketing strategy that uses multiple avenues to pursue work opportunities.

Though web-based voice over marketplaces can certainly provide opportunities, they're by no means the only marketing outlet available to you. In addition, never confuse web-based marketing as an easy way to find work.

Through regional business organizations, advertising clubs, and area business publications, work to build real work relationships in and around your own community. These relationships can offer years of work opportunities.



8

DON'T GIVE UP!

This one might sound simple, but we mean it. Most people give up. Voice over isn't easy... if it was, everyone would be doing it!

Like anything else, building success in this industry happens as a result of hard work and persistence. There is no “easy way” - but you can certainly have fun during any step on your path! As you work toward your own goals, finding enjoyment in the process can be a great way to keep yourself moving forward. Above everything else, remember that this should be fun! And whether you're developing technical skill, going after your first jobs, or

working to explore new areas of this exciting field, that enjoyment will always help to carry you forward and motivate you to keep pushing yourself.

Enjoy the process!

Every day you stick with it, you're automatically doing more than most of your competitors will.

We invite you to check back at our website voicecoaches.com for regular updates. For the past ten years, we've published a podcast called Voice Coaches Radio, where we talk about all things voice over - and the best part is, it's free! In addition, we also offer introductory seminars for individuals interested in pursuing the voice over field.