

Best Audition Practices for VO

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1. Don't just audition for all the jobs you see.

Unless you *really* need the practice, I strongly urge you to not just willy-nilly audition for every single job that comes along. And seriously, there are MUCH better ways to get practice. The problem is that if you audition for everything and you are not even close to qualified, you are wasting the time of the person listening. And sometimes memories are LONG in voiceover. So, try not to make a bad impression.

Instead, do the following:

- If you need practice find the many resources online who offer free scripts. Or, just read back commercials you hear, or e-books, or whatever you are trying towards – find those things and mimic what you hear.
- Be selective about the jobs you DO audition for. Make sure that you can deliver on what they are asking.
- If you are a fit, then audition for every damn job you see that fits you! As many per day as you can physically and emotionally complete.
- However, go back to the last two sentences above... memories are long. Don't make a bad impression. Be sure you are up to the challenge of the audition. Don't submit crap. It is better to walk away for an hour or overnight even, so you can rest and be ready to really deliver on the performance. If you miss the deadline, MOVE ON. There WILL be other opportunities!

2. A word on email/direct contact jobs

If you send out or receive a query for a possible job, BE SURE TO RESPOND TO EVERY EMAIL. It doesn't matter if you don't plan on taking the job. RESPOND.

If the answer is YES:

- Have a pre-edited template you can cut and paste in place, so you eliminate as many mistakes as possible. But personalize it, don't just cut and paste.

If the answer is NO:

- Politely decline. But ask if they have anything more and mention you might check back in the future
- Then add them to your email list

3. Performance – or How to WOW

- Posture
 - Sit up straight, or stand straight
 - Square your shoulders to the mic
 - If sitting, scooch up to the edge of the seat
 - Neck help up (proudly) so it is not scrunched up
 - This requires you to have good mic placement technique (see other handout)
- Your mind/thoughts/center
 - Place yourself in the scenario
 - Imagine the audience in the scenario
 - Imagine your role in the scenario
 - What does the script or script notes tell you about the scenario? Is it you and one other person? Is it a group setting?
 - If the script does NOT say specifically, then you have to extrapolate from the text.
 - Rule of thumb – MOST commercial copy can have a small to larger audience in mind (unless specifically stated). Think about it... the copy might suggest you are talking to a friend, but would you really say this to a friend in an intimate conversation: “Company XYZ has the BEST product in town! You won’t find a cheaper product, with a better value than XYZ. Go there now and buy this product!”

4. Script/Copy notation

This is not as hard as it may seem at first. The entire reason for marking up your copy is so that you can insert your own personal method of setting reminders as to how you should read a certain word or line. That's it. Beyond that you have a broad latitude of just how you want to go about doing that.

For me, I do not print scripts. I use Word, or whatever tool to keep it on screen and add my own tips from there. Here are some things I do.

- Add a return (new line) between lines that are clearly separate
 - Conversely, if the lines sound better read together, or closely, I might leave them on the same line
- Add ellipses (...) for a pause, or breath, or beat
- Add a dash (-) for a different pause... like a more abrupt or dramatic pause
- Bold for words that I want to emphasize in a manner that seems separate (like billboarding a company name or product or CTA)
- Italics for words with slightly different emphasis than a BOLD statement, like for dramatic effect
- Underline for something that might require something different than bold or italics, like for an up note or down note
- Of course, add any possible notes you might want to remember but be sure to make that text different than the others, perhaps a different color