

Voice-overs

Speaking voice track for ads or promos, podcasts, story narrations, audio books, corporate training products.

Can also be film dialog replacements.

Voice-over Demo

An example, usually of an ad, that incorporates typical sound track elements, and track processing. It showcases the voice, and serves as an audition.

Your Goal

Get a message across with feeling, as if you mean it, as if you know the listener personally.

- People should not notice your voice.
- Don't invent odd characteristics.
- Voice must sound natural, relaxed, and *believable*.
- Don't try to be someone else.
 - Everyone has particular vocal personality strengths.
 - What character do you *naturally* sound best as?

Don't sound phony, but...

- It would be better to be a bit over the top, than never to put enough emotion in it.
- Speak more *slowly* than you would for a normal conversation.
 - The audience needs to hear every word.
- Put some *natural animation* in your voice.
 - Avoid monotones.
- Have someone listing and coach you.
 - Proof-listen. Anyone can do this.
- Don't stop after an "OK" version. Try it again.
 - It will improve! Invest some time.

This is not about reading

You should never sound like you are reading something, even if reading it well.

- However, don't look away from the page.

So read it over to yourself several times first, and think about the pronunciation.

- No hesitations for unusual phrases.
- Which words should be emphasized? Mark them.

When recording your voice, try to think of the *mic as the ear of your listener*. Picture your listener, *have an opinion*, and *read the script as if the words were coming to mind that instant*.

- Try to smile when you read.
- People don't want to guess how to feel. You must put it in your tone.
- Example: think of the difference between a snarky teen "sorry!", and a sincere "sorry."

You and the microphone

- The distance from the mic should be about the same as the distance between your thumb and pinkie when making a hang-five gesture.
- Move closer to the mic when you lower your voice & back away when speaking louder. Also move closer if you want a warmer sound.
- Don't look away from the script. Play to it. It is easy to lose your place, and your train of thought.
- Consider using a pop shield, and I'd suggest trying to work *slightly off-axis*, as talking to a point just to the right or left of the mic will prevent bursts of air and drops of saliva ruining your recording.
- I'd also recommend wearing headphones *over one ear only*, as this allows you to judge volume and listen for clipping and plosives on the recording, *while also hearing your natural voice*, which makes it easier to focus on the message in your tone.

Process steps

1. Record each several times, listen right after you record it, & save the best.
2. Then cut and paste the best phrases together.
 - Compression will help later, but the better it is before compression, the better it will sound after.
3. Then edit timing,
 - Must be evenly paced, with no awkward spaces.
4. Then adjust EQ
 - Clear and warm. Never harsh.
 - Avoid over-emphasizing esses.
 - Must be almost warm but not boomy
 - Proximity effect is your friend.
5. Then add mild compression.
 - (Also possibly de-ess.)

Then add a background music pad

- Must be from drbraukmann.com
 - Pick one that supports the energy level, calm or exciting?
 - Mood/message: serious or lighthearted?
 - Watch out for music masking your voice.
 - Your voice is most important & must be heard easily.
- Don't make the mistake of using non-licensed music!
- The prepared music pads are most likely already compressed.
- Let's not add potentially distracting effects or sounds this time.