THAT’S VOICEOVER!

Where Voiceover Careers Are Born & Reborn

Join Celebrated Voice Actors, Creative Directors, Talent Agents and Casting Directors and Ignite Your Career!

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Les Trent is a New York-based senior correspondent. He joined CBS Television Distribution’s INSIDE EDITION in the fall of 2000. Trent was one of the first journalists to bring the incredible story of Ted Williams, the homeless man with the Golden Voice, to America’s attention. He also reported the disturbing story of Jodi Barrus, the Iowa High School teacher wrongfully accused and acquitted of having sex with one of her students. Trent has covered such high-profile stories as the Super Bowl, the 9-11 attacks and the heartbreaking aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He was one of the first journalists to report from inside St. Rita’s Nursing Home, where 34 elderly residents perished after being left behind during the height of the storm. Trent has covered breaking stories around the world for more than a decade. He was on the 2004 and 2008 campaign trails interviewing the presidential candidates. The New York Observer praised Trent for his insightful and persistent questioning of then U.S. Sen. John Edwards and declared that ‘Trent “stole the show” at the presidential hopeful’s Manhattan press conference. Trent has provided INSIDE EDITION’s coverage of the Cannes Film Festival over the years, and he traveled to Rome for a Vatican screening of the CBS miniseries on the life of the late Pope John Paul II, scoring an interview with actor Jon Voight about his starring role as the late pontiff.

Prior to joining INSIDE EDITION, Trent spent five years as an on-air correspondent for King World's “American Journal.” He also served more than 10 years as a local reporter in San Francisco. He started his career in Buffalo, N.Y., where he has been inducted into the Buffalo Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Trent is a graduate of Seneca College in Toronto, Canada, and resides in Newark, N.J.

Joan is the co-creator of That’s Voiceover™ and the Society of Voice Arts and Sciences. She’s a voiceover spokesperson for Neumann Microphones and the author of Secrets of Voice-over Success: Top Voice-Over Actors Reveal How They Did It. She donates all royalties from the sale of the book to the Alzheimer’s Association. Joan is also featured in the following books: Daughters Of Men by Rachel Vassel (2006), Career Clinic by Maureen Anderson (2007), Put Your Dreams First: Handle Your Entertainment Business by Thembisa Mshaka (2008), Signed, Your Student by Holly Holbert (2010) and Dream Reachers II by Betty Dravis (2011). And Joan’s got it goin’ on as a voiceover actor: winning five Telly Awards for her narration and on-camera performances. Joan is also among the cast of narrators, playing 45 female roles in the bestselling audiobook, Those Boys Have All The Fun: The Inside World of ESPN. Other projects include promos for ABC’s “The View”, the Royal Wedding promos on HLN and the TBS campaign for HBO’s Sex And The City series and Sex And The City 2, the movie. Other clients include Grand Theft Auto, CNN, ESPN, Showtime, Nickelodeon, Chase Bank, American Express, Nick at Nite, ABC News, CBS Sports, Lifetime, Lexus and Spike TV. Joan has been the announcer for numerous live entertainment venues: The Muse Awards for Women in Television & Communication, Promax/BDA, The Vision Awards, The Moving Image Salutes Will Smith and Julianne Moore and The Matrix Awards. In addition to being a working voiceover actor, Joan maintains a private coaching practice in mid-town Manhattan, where she teaches advanced voiceover craft and technique, and offers career guidance for long-term business success. She works with both professional voiceover actors and newcomers, teaches part time at New York University, Western Kentucky University and The Actors Institute (NYC). Joan co-writes a monthly column for Backstage Magazine called Voiceover Exchange.
DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

9:00 am
Registration
Get yourselves checked in, say hello to your amazing exhibitors, say hello to friends, then hit the auditorium and fasten your seat belts for the super sonic experience of VoiceScapes.

10:15 am
Performance Palooza
By VoiceScapes Audio Theater & Hear Now Festival
Brace yourself for the sonic experience of your life! VoiceScapes Audio Theater presents a fast-aces series of LIVE original audio dramas with an award-winning cast of master voice artists. The cast: Sande Sherr, Robin Miles, Barbara Rosenblat, L.J Ganser, Sue Zizza, Butch D’Ambrosio, and Tom Curley.

11:00 am
There’s Money In Your Radio II
Hosted by Joe Cipriano, Author and Voice Actor
This was the sleeper session of 2016, so we amped it up and brought it back for a second round. Legendary voice actor, Joe Cipriano, once again, unleashes the power of radio for voice actors, and tunes in to how to position yourself for career gains and success. Don’t touch that dial. The panelist: Craig Schwaibl, Pat Garrett, Nate Zeitz, Lynn Hoffman, Eric Romanowski, and David Kaye.

11:50 am
What Producers Want
Hosted by Rudy Gaskins, CEO & Chairman, SOVAS™
As a former TV executive, and Emmy Award –winner, Rudy Gaskins knows a thing or two about what producers want from voice actors. In this session, he draws out the psyche of the key gatekeepers at NBC, BET and the Today Show - revealing what you need to know about delivering performances that get noticed. Say hello to: Brooke Steltzer, Jose Prat, Miranda Patterson, Patrick Trettenero, Roderick Beltran and Val Nicholas.

12:40 pm
Intermission: 20 minute

1:10 pm
Microphone Mastery For Voice Actors
Presented by Christopher Currier
Manager, Trade Marketing Americas | Pro Audio Solutions | Sennheiser Electronic Corporation
Is the voice actor only as good as his or her tools? Those tools include a myriad of analogue and digital devices, computer software, hardware, apps, acoustics, and more. Of course, the absolute ruler is the almighty microphone. And no one is more intimately familiar with its use, than expert Sennheiser equipment specialist and voice actor, the incomparable Christopher Currier. Christopher teaches and tantalizes as he demonstrates the magic of the microphone, and invites brave audience members on stage for some revealing experiments.

2:00 pm
SOVAS™ Presents
2017 Backstage Vanguard Award for Arts and Humanities
Recipient: Nancy Cartwright
Best known as the spiky-headed underachiever Bart Simpson, Emmy Award-winning voice actor Nancy Cartwright is also the unique voice behind Simpsons’ characters Ralph Wiggum, Nelson Muntz, and Rod Flanders. In addition to her work on “The Simpsons”, Nancy has continually expanded her acting arena, taking on the voice of Chucky in Nickelodeon’s “Rugrats” and Rufus the Naked Mole Rat in Disney’s new hit show “Kim Possible” – all in keeping with her history of playing popular characters on such animated series as “Richie Rich”; “Animaniacs”; “Pinky and The Brain”; “The Critic”; “God, The Devil and Bob”; “Mike, Lu & Og”; as well as Chuck Jones’ final work, “Timberwolf”. In selecting recipients for this unique honor, SOVAS™ and Backstage Magazine look first within the community of people who contribute to the world of voice acting. Voice acting alone is not the key. The selection is inspired by exploring the range of ways an individual’s work and life define an archetypal standard that inspires others to be their best selves. We honor Nancy’s storied career as an actor, voice actor, writer, feature film producer and philanthropist. We celebrate her willingness to stand at the vanguard of what is possible for future generations. We acknowledge an artistic and humanitarian influence appreciated around the world.

Nancy’s award will be presented by inaugural Vanguard Award Winner for Education - longtime friend, teacher, and colleague, PAT FRALEY. Pius, from Inside Edition, Emmy-nominated, Sr. Correspondent, LES TRENT, will sit down for a revealing one-on-one interview that may allow a bit of Nancy’s magic to rub off on us all.

MIDDAY

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Exhibitors Reception (Fully Catered)
Lunch and beverages will be served. Our sponsors will be out to play. They’ll bring you up to date on the latest in audio technology, web design, voiceover training, news and more. Most of all, this is an opportunity to get your networking on, enjoy friends and meet new ones, and to share your knowledge and learn from others. Inspire and be inspired.
DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

3:45 pm  
**Speed Dating With Your Demo Reel**

Roy “Uncle Roy” Yokelson hosts one of the preeminent events in all of voiceover. This is not to be missed. Ticket holders by interview only.

An exclusive one-on-one networking event where voice actors, meet in 6-minute sessions with some of the most amazing producers, talent agents, and casting directors in the business. This exclusive event admits 25 attendees who have been pre-approved. This is a fast-paced rocket ride to that gives each actor multiple points of views on their marketing tools, career strategy and networking skills. Actors meet the people who can make an absolute difference in their careers. Anything can happen and it probably will. Sponsored by Sennheiser, Nuemann and Backstage.

3:45 pm  
**Audition Spotlight™ For New York’s Own PIX11 Round 2**

Just before what could possibly be the biggest voiceover moment in their lives, 30 finalists will step up to the mic for round two of the Audition Spotlight™, where they’ll compete for a paid voiceover booking. The winner will voice a TV Promo Campaign, be awarded a talent contract with Vanessa Gilbert of Solid Talent Agency, and take home gifts that include a brand new MK8 Studio Microphone from Sennheiser.

4:00 pm  
**VO Coaches Corner**

For the first time ever, That’s Voiceover!™ Career Expo brings you the Coaches Corner, where top voiceover coaches, from across the country, pay it forward by giving it away. Robin Armstrong moderates. Meet them on the exhibition floor, where you can pick their brains, drain their knowledge banks, and pump them for insight and career guidance. You have a question? They’ve got answers. Looking for insight to boost your career? This is your lucky day. Joining Robin Armstrong: Anna Garduñd, Dave Fennoy, Chris McGinn, Shelly Shenoy, and Joe Cipriano.

PRIMETIME SHOW

6:10 pm  
**Get Your Brand On**

From the hit news magazine, Inside Edition, Emmy nominated LES TRENT, hosts a powerhouse panel of industry pros, to uncovers the successes and failures of building a brand. Branding can be a very vague aspect of marketing, but you’ll walk out of this seminar with a crystal clarity. Meet the branders: David Katz, Celia Siegal, Debra Deyan, Doug McVilie, Pat Fraley, and Rachael Naylor.

7:00 pm  
**Million Dollar Voices**

Author, performer and SOVAS™ co-founder, Joan Baker, brings color, magic and opulence to the inspiring career journeys of some of our most revered voice actors. As in any pursuit, the voice actor’s journey is full of both challenges and successes. And no two journeys are alike. The key to longevity would appear to be in how we navigate the challenges and appreciate the successes. Through the sharing of candid anecdotes and insights, from this very special cast, we hope to touch, move and inspire. The Cast: Bob Bergen, Debbie Hirata, Malikah Mallette, Rodd Houston, Scott Parking and Sylvia Villagran.

8:00 pm  
**Society of Voice Arts and Sciences J. Michael Collins Academic Scholarship Announcement**

See who wins the coveted SOVAS™ J. Michael Collins Academic Scholarship. The entrants are all ticket holders who will be sitting in the audience awaiting the verdict of the SOVAS™ Board of Directors. One unsuspecting attendee will hear his or her name called. The winner selected based on having demonstrated a compelling determination to achieve their dream of succeeding in voice acting, even in the face of life’s hardships, and sometimes insurmountable odds. On this night, he or she will know that their dream is still alive.

8:15 pm  
**Audition Spotlight™**

Under the bright lights New York City, before a live audience of industry peers, with agents and producers scrutinizing every nuance of every performance, 6 talented finalists will square off for the Audition Spotlight™ Grand Prize. But only one of them will bask in the white hot spotlight of victory. The grand prize is a paid promo booking with New York’s PIX11, a talent contract with SOLID Talent Agency, a brand new MKH 8 Studio Microphone from Sennheiser, and VIP tickets to the Voice Arts® Awards 2018. What a day! I mean, really? Your questions have been answered, you’ve learned things you didn’t expect, you met some of the best people in the business, cultivated new relationships, made new friends, and now your cup runneth over with new inspiration. Now, it’s time to celebrate it all, over decadent desserts and refreshing cocktails. Unwind a little and let networking take its course. We’ll see you tomorrow on the red carpet at the Voice Arts® Awards.

9:15 pm  
**Academic Scholarship Announcement**

J. Michael Collins

Society of Voice Arts and Sciences

Million Dollar Voices

Under the bright lights New York City, before a live audience of industry peers, with agents and producers scrutinizing every nuance of every performance, 6 talented finalists will square off for the Audition Spotlight™ Grand Prize. But only one of them will bask in the white hot spotlight of victory. The grand prize is a paid promo booking with New York’s PIX11, a talent contract with SOLID Talent Agency, a brand new MKH 8 Studio Microphone from Sennheiser, and VIP tickets to the Voice Arts® Awards 2018. What a day! I mean, really? Your questions have been answered, you’ve learned things you didn’t expect, you met some of the best people in the business, cultivated new relationships, made new friends, and now your cup runneth over with new inspiration. Now, it’s time to celebrate it all, over decadent desserts and refreshing cocktails. Unwind a little and let networking take its course. We’ll see you tomorrow on the red carpet at the Voice Arts® Awards.

9:15 pm  
**Voice of Gods and Goddesses Reception**

What a day! I mean, really? Your questions have been answered, you’ve learned things you didn’t expect, met some of the best people in the business, cultivated new relationships, made new friends, and now your cup runneth over with new inspiration. You’re an insider. Now, it’s time to celebrate it all over decadent desserts and refreshing cocktails. Unwind a little and let networking take its course. We’ll see ya tomorrow on the red carpet at the Voice Arts® Awards.

10:15 pm  
**Goodnight.**
SPEAKERS 2017

SATAUNA HOWERY
Live Announcer/Daytime
That’s Voiceover™

JIM CUTLER
Voice Actor/Creative Director
Audition Spotlight™ Juror

NANCY CARTWRIGHT
Voice of Bart Simpson
Producer/Philanthropist

JEANIE KHANKE
Senior Director, Public Relations
Muhammad Ali Center

TOM CURLEY
Producer/Voice Actor

PAT FRALEY
Teacher/Performer
Backstage Vanguard Award Winner

CRAIG SCHWALB
Program Director
WABC Radio

PAT GARRETT
Voice Actor
Radio Imaging

LYNN HOFFMAN
Voice Actor
Radio Imaging

NATE ZEITZ
Talent Agent
CESD Talent

ERIC ROMANOWSKI
Demo Producer
Ear Blowing Audio

SANDE SHERR
Voice Actor
Founder, VoiceScapes

BARBARA ROSENBLAT
Actor/Narrator

L. J. GANSER
Narrator

SUE ZIZZA
Founder
HEAR Now Festival

JOE CIPRIANO
Voice Actor
2-Time Voice Arts® Winner

DAVID KAYE
Voice Actor
Radio Imaging

CELIA SIEGEL
Talent Manager/Brand Builder
Cielia Siegel Mgmt.

MIRANDA PATTERSON
Sr. Supervising Producer/
Writer, NBC News

BUTCH D’AMBROSIO
Writer

TOM CURLEY
Producer/Voice Actor

RODERICK BELTRAN
Creative Director, Branded Content, BET

JOSE PRAT
Creative Director
Today Show

BROOKE STELZER
Producer/Writer
NBC News

DOUG MELVILLE
Chief Diversity Officer
TBWA Worldwide

RODERICK BELTRAN
SVP, Partnership Creative
NBC/Uni

J. MICHAEL COLLINS
Voice Actor/Coach/Producer
Voice Arts® Winner

DAVID KAYE
Voice Actor
Radio Imaging

RUDY GASKINS
Chairman & CEO
SOVAS™

VAL NICHOLAS
VP, NBC News

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Voice Actor/Coach/Producer
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Creative Director
Today Show

BROOKE STELZER
Producer/Writer
NBC News
With over 50 years of experience, Backstage has been the most trusted place for actors to find acting jobs and career advice.
THE TIMID PERFORMER’S MANTRA
When preparing to do an audition, we performers occasionally become concerned whether a choice we are considering making is “too much,” or “risky,” even though we know of the importance of getting attention in auditions. When that occurs for you, consider this mantra - “Why not? They’re already not hiring me.”

VIBRATO THROAT WIGGLE
This is nothing but handy. Take hold of a little skin on the throat area around your vocal folds and gently wiggle the flesh up and down as you talk or sing. You can control the tempo of the vibrato by wiggling faster or slower. This is great for doing higher voices that would have a faster vibrato when singing.

THE STEVE MACKALL QUOTE
A constant reminder to my students and me from a wonderful voice over performer, Steve Mackall: “Doing the job is easy. Getting the job takes the skills.”

WRITE LIKE A TELEGRAPH MESSAGE
Email messages did not take the place of correspondence, they took the place of “telegraph messages.” Stop. Keep all your communications in email short and to the point. Stop.

START WITH THE ALMIGHTY LOG LINE
A Log Line is a brief statement that yields the basic story of a script, a piece of copy, an excerpt, even a book or a movie. It is essential that every time you get a script or any other piece of copy, you come up with the Log Line. Why? You can’t realize a story unless you know it, and that’s our job. A tip: Start considering the Log Line with the conflict or problem in the project. The center to all stories is conflict.

SIX WAYS TO SLEAZE TECHNIQUES
Here are six ways to sleaze up a character. Try them out using this line: “Hey there. I haven’t seen you before around these parts.”

• Suck your teeth. I imagine you don’t believe in flossing. Suck some air in between two teeth.
• Snort. Give a “loose snort” on your inhale. Adds that “lack of control” factor.
• Constrict. Choose a couple of words in your phrase where you constrict your throat for no particular reason.
• Drippy Nose. Do this by moving some saliva to the tip of your tongue. Press your tongue against your hard palate. Draw in air. You’ll get a “frying sound.” You do this at the end of a line, or after a sneeze.
• Sigh. Sigh through the whole line. It reads great for low-ball characters. Prepare for this by taking in more air than you need prior to your line.
• Repressed Burp. All it takes is to close your mouth, fill it with air rapidly while you put a bit a tone in it, then release the air out of your mouth quietly. So sleazy.

A COOL HEAD AND A WARM HEART
Fine acting comes from the heart not the head. The great 19th century American actor, Joseph Jefferson, once said, “as for me, my acting is better when I keep a cool head and a warm heart.” What I gleaned from the quote is that good acting is from the heart, yes, but always with solid text analysis, which comes from the head.

NEVER PLAY THE BANG
If a sentence ends with an exclamation mark (a “bang” in the printing business), challenge yourself by coming up with a different way of giving it meaning besides just getting loud. Let all the other actors do that. I like getting very intense and quiet.

THE ALMIGHTY UNDERLINED WORD
Nine times out of ten, the “good dog” actor in me sees a word that’s underlined in a script or in copy and “Rover” wants to say it louder than the other words. There are seven other ways of emphasizing a word: Get quieter, higher, lower, pause before, after, elongate the word, or truncate the time saying the word.

BILL SADLER’S “ONE THING AT A TIME” TECHNIQUE & EXERCISE
Bill, a wonderful character actor, has a reputation for playing “multidimensional” characters. He once said to me, “Pat, I can only do one thing at a time.” He shared his technique.
1. He figures out how many dimensions there are to a character.
2. He then “assigns” a different “read” or performance to each aspect in the text and that way he avoids generalization and does “One Thing at a Time.” He lets the audience make his characters “multidimensional.”

RAISING STAKES
We you get down to it, all mediums of performance require, “raised stakes.” That’s a term from gambling that infers that when there is more money on the table, the gamblers are more attentive, or “passionate”. Ask yourself this question when you confront a script or copy: How high to I do raise the stakes? With an audiobook project, you raise the stake just a bit. With animation, usually a great deal. Your objective is to make your performance more passionate than the average bear.

GIVE THEM MORE THAN THEY ASK FOR
This is particularly true when you audition. Always remember that producers are thirsty men in the desert. They’ll only drink a glass of water, but they want to get it out of a lake. Be a lake. After you get the job, they usually only want the glass of water from you.
SPEED DATING
With Your Demo Reel
Hosted by Roy “Uncle Roy” Yokelson
Saturday, November 4th, 4:00pm - 5:30pm
The Times Center, New York
Only at THAT’S VOICEOVER!

“Let’s book beautiful jobs together.”

Meet agents, casting directors and TV network creative directors. Learn what they look for from voice-over talent.

Get Demo Reel feedback and expert career guidance.

*VO talent selected based on pre-approval interviews conducted prior to the event date.

Sponsored by

Congratulations to the nominees!

AMERICA’S ONLY ARTS NETWORK CELEBRATES THE SOCIETY OF VOICE ARTS AND SCIENCES™ FOR CONTINUING TO ACKNOWLEDGE, HONOR AND SUPPORT TRUE TALENT AND ARTISTRY WITHIN THE VOICEOVER INDUSTRY.
Do You Need Actor Training to Do Voiceover?

To act or not to act? That is the question.

Whether acting is “needed” to pursue a successful voiceover career is a common concern—especially among emerging VO talent—stemming from two main sources: First, acting training means time and money. Second, there are many successful voice actors who don’t have acting training. Both are worth considering, but they can also be misleading, stemming from a place of scarcity.

Many non-actors are surprised and dismayed to discover that acting training is invaluable to a successful voiceover career because, aside from the extra money, it also means a longer timeline for getting to their dream job. For others, the idea of performing scenes in front of a class can be overwhelming. One of the reasons they chose voice acting was because it was off camera, so to speak.

However, the question of whether acting training is needed is an honest one. Let’s look at it from a different angle: Do you need to pass the bar exam to talk about the law? Do you need a medical license to offer remedies to the sick? No. You can do both as long as they don’t conflict with the law. This makes the answer to our question more conspicuous, but it warrants a more thoughtful explanation.

Just as stage acting, TV acting, and movie acting are all forms of acting, so too is voice acting. The art of voice acting starts with a script with the voice actor’s job is to faithfully interpret the script and render a vocal performance, usually under the visionary guidance of a director.

Traditional actors have been doing voice acting since the start of talking pictures, before anyone called it “voice acting.” It was a technique used to reveal what a character was thinking and as narration to enhance storytelling.

As for the many successful voice actors who do not have traditional acting training, some have developed clever tricks and gimmicks that resemble acting and work brilliantly within a narrow spectrum of performance. Others have a natural proclivity for acting and are therefore able to learn solid acting techniques on the job, becoming proficient over time.

“So why can’t I just learn on the job,” you ask. The answer? Competition and a revised industry trend that demands acting skill to convey authenticity over salesmanship. Yesterday’s voice actors didn’t have the same level of competition against trained actors. Nor were they required to recreate the level of nuance and subtly common in acting. Now, it’s demanded by today’s market place.

Good acting has always been required in animated cartoons and is one of the reasons trained actors are hired to do them. It’s not enough to be able to create a unique character voice—the actor has to be able to stream that voice through the range of human emotions, on cue. That takes training.

Good acting suggests the performance is organic, authentic, and empathetic. The requirement for good acting has become true for commercials, promos, and video games. Consumers vehemently distrust sales people (announcers) and they don’t want to be pitched by them. Consumers want to hear from “everyday” people who share their concerns.

At the same time, video game enthusiasts don’t want B-list performances from their favorite characters. They are fully invested in the gaming experience and demand the same investment from the acting. Authenticity is essential to establishing trust in your relationship with an audience; acting training allows you to develop the skills that lead to authentic performances. The “conversational read” is just shorthand for good acting.

The good news for anyone hoping to bypass acting in their pursuit of a VO career, is that taking an acting class is an incredibly eye-opening, life empowering, thrilling, therapeutic journey most people love more than they ever imagined. You’ll learn a solid rehearsal process, develop practical techniques, cultivate improvisational skills, build your confidence, and expand what you have to offer as a performer.

So do you need acting training to do voice acting? To work at the highest level, yes. Will acting training enhance your expertise, and by extension, your opportunities as a voice actor? Absolutely. Is there any good reason not to get acting training? No. Do agents and casting directors give added consideration to voice actors with traditional acting training? They do, absolutely.

The world of voice acting embraces all kinds of voices to reflect the diverse universe in which we live and the unending imagination of artists and crafts people. From voices as squeaky as a mouse to those as thunderous as a god, there is room for all. And yet, as far as the “acting” aspect goes, there is only room for those who are good. Training will help you get there.
Congratulations to all **Voice Arts® Awards** Nominees & Winners!

And Best Wishes to **That’s Voiceover!™** Attendees for a Brilliant Voice Over Career

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You deserve a microphone that delivers all the natural color and character of your voice.

**You deserve a microphone that delivers all the natural color and character of your voice.**

**Explore**

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Is Voiceover Acting Undervalued?

When it comes to voiceover and its value, you don’t have to look far for an answer. Voiceover fulfills the requirements of a global communication network the world depends on. The value of voiceover (pre-recorded speech) is unequivocal. This is true on the most basic level of communicating information, not just for marketing, entertainment, and recreational use, but in emergency related industries where life and death are at stake. We’re not just talking about robotic voices like Siri.

When you incorporate “acting,” as in voiceover acting, you integrating a level of skill and technique that enhances the communication, makes it clearer, more meaningful, more effective in achieving its goal. No one would argue with the importance of effective communication or the pursuit thereof. Effectiveness is the value voice actors bring to the table.

Voiceover as a communication tool, and voice acting as a means for realizing the most effective use of this tool, can be viewed together as a single, powerful aspect of human communication. Indeed, one’s mind cannot hold the ubiquitous need for recorded language across the vastness of the media universe.

If you were to take voiceover out of the equation, the world would practically come to a stop. Cars would literally come to a stop because drivers are more dependent than ever on GPS to get to their destinations. Children would be dumbfounded by destinations. Parents and educators would lament the loss of a voiceless animated cartoons and video games. Advertisers would depend on consumers to read their TV commercials and radio could say goodbye. Multi-billion dollar industry in educational toys that talk, Advertisers would depend on consumers to read their TV commercials and radio could say goodbye. The problem comes into play when you have people joining the ranks of professional voice acting for the most basic level of communicating information, not just for marketing, entertainment, and recreational use, but in emergency related industries where life and death are at stake. We’re not just talking about robotic voices like Siri.

Producers of multi-million dollar products will toss out crumbs for the voice actor, even though the final product cannot be completed without it. And like pigeons in the park, when the crumbs hit the ground, a flock of hungry voice actors is waiting to descend upon the pittance. You can find voice actors advertising to perform a 30-second script for five bucks! Unfortunately, this is not an aberration. The devaluation of the work starts with the individual voice actor. If the actors are willing to take less, they’ll get less. SAG-AFTRA has fought and continues to fight for fair labor practices, including standards for salaries. SAG-AFTRA’s fight reverberates so powerfully that even nonunion actors benefit from their long, hard-fought battles.

Even a novice can hear the difference between highly trained and untrained. Union talent are now the teachers and coaches who train the newcomers. As a result, there is a substantial influx of highly trained, nonunion voice actors into the hiring pool and this blunts the union’s advantage, causing the supply to outstrip the demand, leaving more actors scrambling for less pay.

We could go on. In fact, we encourage you to consider other ways that your life and the world is impacted by the use of recorded speech as a singularly defining feature of the 21st century. Voiceover permeates our lives like the air we breathe. And, like air, we don’t think about it until it’s in short supply.

Clearly, voiceover and voiceover acting is of inestimable value.

As much as we depend on the inestimable value of voiceover for global communications, the flood of people joining the ranks of professional voice acting is diluting the monetary gains across the board. It’s a simple matter of supply and demand. The more people you have competing for the same job, the less money the voice actor, even though the final product cannot be completed without it. And like pigeons in the park, when the crumbs hit the ground, a flock of hungry voice actors is waiting to descend upon the pittance. You can find voice actors advertising to perform a 30-second script for five bucks! Unfortunately, this is not an aberration. The devaluation of the work starts with the individual voice actor. If the actors are willing to take less, they’ll get less. SAG-AFTRA has fought and continues to fight for fair labor practices, including standards for salaries. SAG-AFTRA’s fight reverberates so powerfully that even nonunion actors benefit from their long, hard-fought battles.

The devaluation of the work starts with the individual voice actor. The problem comes into play when you have unenlightened voice actors who rationalize the acceptance of unfair, humiliating salaries. They say, “Someone else will do it if I don’t.” They say, “I’m still training and this is good practice.” They say, “This is more of a hobby for me. I don’t care about the money.” Can you imagine if quacks infiltrated the larger medical industry, convincing the public that they can save on medical care? Those who lowball pricing have to be shown that they’re pointing a gun at their own foot?

Pay to play sites regularly post jobs as low as $25. Book authors strike deals with narrators to record entire books on the promise that they’ll get paid if the book sells. Pay to play sites regularly post jobs as low as $25. Book authors strike deals with narrators to record entire books on the promise that they’ll get paid if the book sells. Pay to play sites regularly post jobs as low as $25. Book authors strike deals with narrators to record entire books on the promise that they’ll get paid if the book sells. Pay to play sites regularly post jobs as low as $25. Book authors strike deals with narrators to record entire books on the promise that they’ll get paid if the book sells. Pay to play sites regularly post jobs as low as $25. Book authors strike deals with narrators to record entire books on the promise that they’ll get paid if the book sells.

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Why Voice Actors Should Learn to Think Like Producers & Directors

There are two employment hot spots in the world of voiceover acting. One is the buyer—often identified as the producer, director, or account manager—who provides the job, chooses the winning audition, and pays the bills. The other is comprised of talent agents, casting directors, talent managers, and websites that facilitate relationships between buyers and voice actors. Let’s call this group the facilitators.

These two groups (buyers and facilitators) can be combined under one umbrella that covers the voice actor’s employment opportunities. Though the buyer is at the top of the food chain, it’s important to include the facilitators for two critical reasons. First, many buyers insist that the voice actor come through a known, credentialed facilitator, like a talent agent. Second, even if the voice actor gets the job through direct networking, he or she benefits from engaging a facilitator to manage the administration, leaving the voice actor free to focus on the creative. Of course, there are scenarios where anything goes, but we’re focusing mainly on high quality jobs with respectable salaries, long-term prospects, residuals, etc.

The buyer operates on behalf of advertisers, like Pixar, McDonald’s, Mercedes, American Express, Random House, Starbucks, etc. These advertisers are the ultimate source of the work and their influence governs the strategy employed by the front line buyers who interact with the voice talent. What’s important for the voice actor to recognize is that the buyers for whom they audition and with whom they work, are thinking about how to best accommodate the needs of the advertiser; they’re not acting in a vacuum. In this regard, they serve several masters, some of whom are in the room during the recording, others who are standing by to hear the result.

The voice actor needn’t be thinking about all these moving parts when recording a project, but a general awareness of the buyer’s process breeds respect for the team and the relationship of which the voice actor is now a part. The buyer is usually working on several time-sensitive projects on any given day, each requiring different voice types, different writers, music composers, artists, on-camera actors, set designers, budgets, etc. The buyer is the ultimate problem solver at the center of the creative process. The problem that matters most to the buyer is the one that has to be solved today.

Knowing this is important because it shapes the way you interact with the buyer when seeking to sell your services. When voice actors send demo reels to the buyer, for example, they’re assuming the buyer operates like an agent (or facilitator), taking the time to curate and categorize voices for later use. But buyers don’t do this—they hire agents for this purpose. It’s the agent and other facilitators who must think in terms of maintaining a relevant stable of quality voices actors from which to choose when the call from the buyer comes in.

Buyers divide into two camps: product type and production quality. On the product side, you have the actual projects, like TV and radio commercials, audiobooks, video games, toys, radio imaging and so on. On the quality side, you have various degrees of expertise and financial support. Some buyers are highly-trained, experienced marketers overseeing global brands, while at the other end of the spectrum could be a first-time, self-published author trying to find someone to record a book for a potential royalty share.

In other words, not all buyers think alike and the voice actor has to tailor his job searching tactics accordingly. Make the effort to put yourself in the shoes of the buyer. The difference between how you approach a seasoned advertising executive versus the owner of a local used car dealership is in understanding what motivates each. Major brands take a macro approach to reaching large, multifaceted audiences from national to international. The used car dealer takes a micro approach to reach a specific local audience.

If the voice actor develops a personal brand strategy designed to impress the major league buyers, it will also impress the minor leagues. However, when making direct contact with the buyer, the voice actor benefits by adjusting brand messaging so as not to undersell the majors nor overwhelm the minors. If the buyer works exclusively through agents, for example, respect this etiquette. This doesn’t mean you can’t reach out directly, but make sure your agent’s contact info is appropriately featured. Even if a job doesn’t immediately materialize, your agent will appreciate the new contact and remember you fondly.

The buyer manages both the creative and the administrative process. However, the voice actor and agent split these duties. The voice actor focuses on the voiceover performance and agent handles the administrative issues like scheduling auditions and bookings and collecting payments. Because voice actors are in direct contact with the buyer during recording, they also play a critical role in cultivating a positive business rapport. Simple things like being punctual, attentive, friendly, agreeable, and flexible can mean the difference between one booking and twenty.

Buyers and facilitators are professional marketers. They are literally sales people. They are highly acquainted with day-to-day sales strategy and tactics. Don’t take their skill for granted. In fact, go out of your way to understand and appreciate what they do. When they choose you as the voice actor, it reflects on their expertise. As a voice actor, you must bring value to the table, not just gratefulness for the booking. When you book a job, you become part of a team. Be a team player. Knowing how buyers and facilitators think is the best way to earn their trust and build a lasting relationship.

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Thanks for helping me find my voice. 
Love and congrats. 
- Alex Hyde-White

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