

Your Voiceover Demos

After having launched or repositioned hundreds of successful voice over careers for individuals all over the nation, I've seen recurring patterns for new talent that are always concerned about their first voiceover demo. These concerns are justified. Just as the tension and fear seems to "melt" after the first spot for the new talent gets recorded in the studio, and they are amazed at how much they *really sound* like a commercial when they hear the first spot played back in make-shift post, with music and any other effects, all of a sudden the new talent realizes how much of this process is in the production hands of the producer, even though driven by what the talent puts on the track. That however, is not necessarily solely by what the talent has contributed. Soon, the talent realizes that the task of producing audio-visual works is an overall team based production process, with most of the 'final' at the discretion, editing and post work done by the Producer. A good producer should be able to make any artist sound like the snap-shot of real life, getting the best out of any talent to create the lifestyle positioning and "theater of the mind" which vicariously impresses the listening audience into the media's job known as "selling".

Hopefully, a good talent has been trained to know the nuances and styling of good voice over copy interpretation, acting and delivery, but when the new talent sees how much a good coach, director and producer can do for them and the entire food chain of the communication's production process, they usually then become relaxed from their initial fear. It's understood that the fear and anxiety stem from a new talent's simple desire to do well! Personally, in over 31 years of doing this teaching, training, coaching, directing and otherwise developing new talent, I haven't seen or heard a bad demo, or more correct and important, a "wrong" demo, go out of my hands yet. I can't afford for that to happen.

There are countless opportunities for new talent to get low-cost, budget priced studio demos. Personally, I'm saddened and dismayed when I see anyone offering packages of "get your demo made AND get a mailing list" of everyone to send it to. There is no wealth of information, no set of skills imparted, no fostered mentor and apprenticeship taking place, nor any rationalization in the world for the same set of people, professionals unfortunately, who must get inundated with the same "discount parameters" of being nailed over and over again by the next round of beginners who continue to send the same set of mass released demo tapes from the same template. Just what does that type of submission do for you, hopeful or just getting started?

If anyone tells you that a "list mailing" of the demo once it is done will get you the work you're after, they deserve to have their books reviewed as to how much client work they're really doing themselves. Voiceover will always be based upon smart promotion, leverage, relationships, comfort levels, a talent's unique branding and style, specific products, services or brands being promoted, needs at the time, relationships, affinities, relationships, and what and who people prefer to spend their creative time with Monday through Friday, and in some cases overtime when production schedules are under the gun.

If you are considering getting your demo made by anyone offering you a discount bundled "get a demo and a list" for a half-a-buck break; Go, be happy and prosper, but I can't afford nor offer any other help except to listen to your demo after the fact and give you a critical break down or analysis – again, after the fact.

We are not a low budget studio, nor are our rates among the highest in the major metro markets. I know you can get a demo produced at a lesser cost. Again, anyone telling you "a demo" is not even interested in positioning you for "what type of demo" you will need to access "what type" of work you are angling for. Commercials? Telephony? Medical Narration reads? Real Estate or Travel Internet and PDA's? Regardless of doing one demo, two demos, three or four, it is unlikely you can match the quality, care and concern for what we get done for our clients.

Most studios will run the clock on an hourly rate. There is no clock when we do your demo. Whether you elect to come into Southern California and have your voice tracking and production done here, or if I am coaching you by phone patch in a studio in your own area to send your voice tracks back here for our mix and posting, our rates are all-inclusive and include all materials, so you don't have to watch the clock and feel like the fees are escalating or getting out of hand.

We give you a private consultation and evaluation to specifically find your abilities, your assets and your appropriate casting in the marketplace. While demonstrating your talents is a key concern, it doesn't do any good to promote a skill set that won't get you any work. So we take the casting market into consideration as to where your most beneficial and natural "castings" would be.

This includes our pulling copy for you, and of course if there is anything you feel you would like to have on your demo(s), from previous training copy, we will review that as well for the over all mix and "fanned out" representation of styles, content and industry focus within the demo. You will get the mix of copy choices and perhaps a few

alternates just in case, prior to the session for your review.

After your voice recording session, all of our time and efforts for producing, mixing and posting are done in house. This includes adding any music, sound effects, editing, and sequencing the order, dips and edit flows of your tape. We produce to the industry standards of what is expected on a voiceover demo, in review for the national market.

We generally have your masters ready in about 5 to 10 working days, and includes a disc of your Digital Audio Files (WAVs and Mp3s), and a master as reference audio CD. For those of you computer literates in the web world, you now get Mp3 files for your listening reference prior to our mastering, and you can use the studio grade Mp3 files for your web and email based marketing.

I have heard from a variety of pinnacled sources in both LA and New York, that for the pro level the national market average for a demo tape has risen to \$3,000.00. I can rationalize this if I am working with a professional who is already earning the six digit figure income from voice over and really is just having blockages and needs me as a coach to break them away from their own rituals which are preventing them from making a shift along with the market, and their own growth that isn't being reflected in their current or previous reels. New talent however is really a different story.

If you are serious about ongoing development and can still use training on an advanced level, consider the following curriculum packages along with making your demos. In other cases, you may be ready and need a pro-grade directed, coached and produced VO demo, as you haven't made one yet.

If you already have a demo, but realize that this is 2009, and that the market has changed, perhaps your demo is dated. If you haven't updated your work or made a new demo in over a year, you may have grown, new work may have brought you to new client perception, perhaps you have new work or ability to showcase, or media fashion and production trends have changed. In these cases - your existing demo is dated.

The following curriculum is available to you only if you have come through a preliminary voice over training course. I'll ask whom you've studied with, and particular areas of your focus. Of course if you have come from one of my referred Voiceover Instructor's courses, or from my previous 8 class program, I welcome your participation knowing that we can get you to the next step on the path to your voice over career goals, whatever they may be.

a) **The Advanced Voiceover Tele-class** –

Dig out your own psychological blockages and get into the voice acting delivery you are capable of. Learn stretch, emotional flexibility, concentration on set up of the listener's mental imagery, and multi part script work. This course is a 4-week teleclass – one hour to one and a half hours per class – meeting on Monday or Tuesday nights. It is offered eight times per year. Tuition is **\$ 495.00** ; includes all materials. Limited to just 6 participants each.

b) **Voiceover Demo** – Your complete all inclusive package includes private consultation over the phone, copy, voice recording studio session coach / director on site, here in our studios or remote by phone patch to the studio selected near you, music tracks and sound effects, all as needed, stock materials and supplies, studio multitrack mix, post time and mastering, digital post mixed and master digital files (s) delivered on one (1) Disc, and one (1) reference audio compact disc. Voice track recording sessions are produced at our digital multitrack facility here in Southern California.

just **\$ 1,600.00**

Again, keep in mind that in the major markets of New York, Los Angeles or Chicago, voice over demos are expensive propositions, or inexpensive propositions, and I now find myself cryptically quoting ABC's Gary Null, who has said that this business is made up of people who either rise to the top and become very good at what they do, or become very bad at what they do and work with the best of the worst.

My take on the market is I go along with the major casting viewpoints: You should treat your voiceover demo like an expensive proposition, only make your demo(s) when you are ready - and do not make one until you are. If I told you that the national major market average cost is about \$2,500 per demo, you would be prepared to invest that much at some time in your own skill set, your business and career. I do not believe in charging that much, but at the same time I do adhere to the belief that in buying excellence in your own production, you should adhere to the industrial guidelines of what is supposed to be on a professionally guided and coached voiceover demo, that is supposed to accomplish keeping you on the road to that six digit figure income, if that's what you want.

c) **Double Demos**. A single demo with Ron, for commercial or industrial narration, is just **\$ 1,600**. Since you'll already be in the studio at that time, if

you want to have a second demo produced, the second reel is better than 25% off, just \$ 1,200 for a combined reduced fee

Just **\$2,800.00**

The above package price includes the delivery of your voice over demos as digital Mp3 files, delivered to you by email for listening on your computer. The new enhanced studio grade technology allows you to hear the full stereo spectrum mix of your demo(s) before we master to CD and DA files (Digital Audio Files,) and the Mp3 files are also ready for your use as a marketing tool: in your web site(s), or e-mailing your demo to viable, prepared hiring prospects. The era of the Internet is here, in the "digital marketing" of voiceover talent and multimedia productions. So in addition to your receiving CD masters for duplication, and a reference audio CD, the Mp3 files compliment your full arsenal of media marketing tools.

Even though it is a less expensive investment and better value than just one demo for \$2,500 or \$3,000, this decision should always be based upon your preparedness and not the difference in costs. We bill our clients in two incremental charges, so you can take advantage of the incremental billings and payments to your credit card over the two billing statement cycle.

**** Those of you who want Animation Demos:**
Yes, you will be participating in a demo production with Ron who has directed, produced soundtracks and worked on a variety of productions for Mill Valley Animation, Sepp SA, Marvel Productions, Colossal Pictures, King Features, Central Park Media, Nickelodeon, FAO Schwartz, Disney and Universal...

HOWEVER: please call and consult with Ron *first*, to get a realistic handle on where the animation markets are, and where you reside or seek to do your business. Depending upon the metro market you are in, he will be able to advise what specific applications for what industries may or may not be relevant for your animation and characters quest, and if investing in a reel will be worth your endeavors.

Animation reels are more involved, and there are additional fees involved for getting you ready to work in cartoons or other animation character based work.

d) Advanced Class and Demo Combos – This is for talent who want to make a Demo, but aren't sure of their readiness. It affords them the ability to work with a coach for 4 weeks, as a run

up to doing their tape. Combined discount package prices for the 4-week teleclass course and a demo tape made afterwards: Advanced Class discounted by 10% Your single demo tape discounted by 5%. Advanced Class and Double Demo: discount of 15% off the Advanced class, 7.5 percent discount on the first demo, and the concurrent 20% off the second produced demo.

e) Demo Updates – If you need to have your reel updated, and you have either

□ New work from spots that you have done that need to be edited into your voice over reel. You can have the Demo Update package which includes editing you new demo together after consulting with Ron on what is going to be added, and what is going to be dropped, if the spots are brought in on previously recorded formats, just **\$ 600.00**

□ New work that you have been working on or feel better represents your current voice over delivery style capabilities. An update demo package to include editing in new material, actual voice script content to be recorded, voice over recording sessions included. Just **\$ 800.00**

** Neither of the above update packages apply to recreating an entirely new demo tape.*

Additional demos, such as a third or fourth demos for additional target markets, are also discounted at an average 25% to 35% in your package rate. If you are serious about the business, please inquire about the voice over marketing course that I refer to any or all qualified students or voice over clients, as a separate training course of study. Please call with any questions, and if you have a voiceover demo now that you'd like me to listen to, feel free to send it over for a critique. Please call me directly to book a demo or reserve your space in any of the advanced classes. I can be reached at 619 573 9919 or 310 779 9885.

Thanks and Best Regards,



Ron Knight

The Voice Over Coach and Director
Getting the Best out of The Best Talent

Chuck Marson in San Francisco wrote:

> As I was leaving the studio, the engineer did me quite a favor. He suggested it would be >educational for me to listen to the whole two-day product as he transferred it to the final > tape he sent to you.

>
> He was so right. Things I did not understand during the session, while up to my vocal cords in alligators, became clear right away. I heard my lazy enunciation, sibilant "s"s and dropped sentence endings plainly. Sometimes I was nasal in a way easy to avoid. Sometimes there was a singsong quality to my reading, sometimes a cockiness. Phrasing needs some planning. There were lots of such things big and little.

Mostly, however, I saw progress from take to take prompted by your coaching, which I thought was excellent. You were all there all the time. And I saw why the voice talent should defer to the folks behind the glass; they simply can hear how it sounds so much better than the speaker can.

I'm eager to hear the final product!

Chuck

Ron wrote:

Hi Chuck;

Well, that lesson would have come over time anyway. Rewarding as it is. One's first tape is always found with the little flaws that you know you "woulda-coulda-shoulda" done better - I always say "better" is not the operative word... different... is a better phrase. Its more empowering, and since there is no correct or incorrect choice, only an active choice, the producer can produce anything into a story or scenario.. and again... that's my job.

You should hear my first tape - or Susan's, or anyone's... :)

Your first tape gives you a calling card to get started - as your work grows and improves -you'll get copies of your better work from the engineers for your personal demo archive, and then each year you'll edit a new tape, and see how your work grows - selective by choice- selective by growth...

- Ron

Scott Smith in Dallas wrote:

"Wow! Sounds great! You are THE MAN! I really appreciate it. Turned out even better than I thought it would. Tom @ TMC's going to burn some copies for me. Do I just forward him this

Ron Knight – Your Voice Over Demo Tape

file? I'll send you one. Any good leads for an agent? Thanks so much, Ron! Thanks again. I've listened to it a dozen times today. It really does sound terrific."

- Scott Smith

Rita Washington in Washington D.C. wrote:

"Hi Ron,

"This sounds wonderful! I truly appreciated your Advanced class and had loads of fun. I would like to take advantage of this symposium."

"I am thoroughly enjoying your class. Keep them coming!"

"Looking forward to receiving the tape. Thanks for the concern. Thanks again for the heads up about the VO opportunity in present and upcoming technology. When I finally get out there, I will be totally ready to be competitive."

John Florian in Connecticut wrote:

"Hi Ron:

"You're packing a lot into the classes and I certainly enjoyed tonight's class. I'll appreciate your comments and another demo."

Richard Owen in Bakersfield wrote:

"Ron,
I got my first job! It will be something I can put on a resume and may lead to other local contacts. This is for a promo being produced at the local school district for a show at the local county museum. They want a cowboy sounding voice. I should be able to do that for them!"

Jeannine Ollivier in Houston wrote:

"Ron,

Just a line or two from Florida to say "Thanks for being such a Great Coach."

Todd Reichart in Princeton wrote:

Ron,

Again, thanks for your work and guidance on these demos. I am very pleased with the outcome. Your teleclass and the studio recording experience were both excellent uses of my time, and I think that you've gotten my voiceover career off on a good foundation. I'll happily recommend your classes and work to

others. (I see that you've reserved some juicy bits of info -- those seven deeply guarded secrets!)"

"I would like to thank you for the extraordinary voice-over class that I attended last year with you and the demo tape, Ron. Because of your valuable class and demo, I successfully completed my first television commercial: "THE KOOL ZONE" - :30 sec.TV spot airing on cable TV!

- Jeanne Intile, Harrisburg, New York

"The very first tape sent out resulted in my first paying job! It happened faster than I dreamed possible. Thanks to you and your staff for the completely professional instruction I received."

- Rosemary Strickland, New York City

"Ron,

Nice work on the demo. There are some excellent moments in there that would not have happened without your direction. You are the man! I can tell you are really putting a lot of thought and effort into this, and I appreciate it."

- Dan Popp, Cleveland, Ohio

" Ron! I am absolutely thrilled with both reels! THANK YOU for all your work on them and for investing so much of your creativity. Three phone calls from three different agents! I spoke to one agent with the feedback, and you were exactly right about her reasoning - she was certainly willing to work with this version. It's the people who are out there selling themselves (mostly direct, w/o an agent) and building good business relationships that are really doing well, SO, I think I'm in great shape with this amazing tool you've built for me...almost everyone that hears the commercial reel comments about the Verizon spot...and asks if that's really me screaming. GREAT move sticking that right in the middle like that, the positioning was wonderful to jolt them a little. Such an emotional roller coaster you created - it's fabulous! I'm growing more and more crazy about it by the day...and I was nuts about it from Day 1! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!! "

-Sandy DeLonga - Atlanta, GA

Joni Billings in Southern California, just starting out and wanting to do cartoons and commercials:

"Hi Ron,

I just listened to it...oh my gosh is that me!? I actually thought it was funny!...is my sense of humor warped??? I think you mixed it all up BEAUTIFULLY!!!!!! I can't get over how you blended it all together to actually sound like I know

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what I'm doing!!! How do you think I sound? I think YOU did awesome! THANK YOU!
Joni"

" Ron,

Thanks again for the great job you did for us at our convention in St. Thomas. Your creative skills really brought life to the show, and the feedback from our franchisees was fantastic. Your efforts resulted in the communication of key information in a very entertaining way. Not only were the franchisees impressed, but our upper management was as well. I've never seen an event run so smoothly. I'd like to get together again to see if you can out do yourself! Thanks again.

- Randy Edler, Sr. VP Marketing,
KFC – Kentucky Fried Chicken
International
A PepsiCo Company

Ron Knight is the best promotional marketing weapon and voice that I've never heard of... and he's all mine!"

- Bruce Soloway - ABC Network
Promotions, Executive Producer -
Sportsbusters on Prime Cable
Network, and President, Solovision,
New York

Ron,

I sent out my demos to selected markets and have gotten some good responses. The Arlene Wilson Agency in Atlanta has been keeping me busy with auditions. Some national stuff as well as regional. They pitched me to J. Walter Thompson for FORD. Studio Center wants to talk to me at the end of the month. Locally I nailed a statewide radio & TV account for one of the candidates in the Tennessee Governor's race. This afternoon a local studio called me for a session for a regional spot. Also sent a demo and got a weekly client in Nashville. Just this week got two more retail accounts through an agency in Omaha. I plan on dropping another dozen demos in the mail when I get back from vacation 7/22. Thanks for all your help...coaching and the excellent job in putting together my demos.

Sincerely,

Mike Carta

Please be prepared to discuss your interests for the following areas of the voice over market:

**Animation
Audiobook
Children
Commercial
Dialects
Narration
Promo
Trailer
Young Adults**

If you are unclear, a career and focus consultation with Ron will help assess strengths and targets as part of your demo package plan.