

Voices.com

**How To Become A
Successful Voice Actor**

Introduction

Voice actors are constantly attempting to answer the question, 'How can I be more successful?'

While there's no doubt that becoming a professional voice actor takes time, training and dedication, what 'success' actually looks like in practice is harder to quantify.

This report compiles survey data from voice actors and coaches around the world - along with Voices.com's internal data and in-house expertise - to illuminate what successful voice actors engage and invest in, in order to foster a thriving business.

Specifically, we examine how advanced voice actors operate their business in regards to:

Talent Development

- Training/Coaching
- What VO Coaches Do
- Identifying the Right Coach
- Online Voice Over Coaching

Home Recording Studio Tech

- Home Studio Setup Needs
- Microphones
- Recording Software
- Headphones
- Other Home Studio Needs

Auditioning

- Time Spent on Auditions
- Number of Daily Auditions
- Keys to Successful Voice Over Auditions

Marketing Strategies

- Voice Actor Online Branding
- Voices.com Voice Actor Profile
- Voice Actor Websites and Social Media
- Voice Over Demos
- Client and Voice Actor Referrals
- Expanded Service Offerings

Conclusion

By highlighting these tried and true strategies and practices, as well as providing expert tips and tricks, this information aims to help every voice actor along their journey to achieve new levels of success.

Talent Development

Training & Coaching

Natural talent is a great starting point for anyone interested in a career in voice acting, however, the impact of training on the success of one's career can be significant.

On Voices.com alone, voice actors who list that they've received training:

Make 13% more on a job-per-job basis.

Book 21% more jobs

As a further testament to the importance of ongoing education, voice over coaches also put their money where their mouth is.

What Voice Over Coaches Do

Voice over coaches offer a wide range of services, including audio production education, demo production, accent training or reduction, character voice development, marketing your voice over services, and so much more.

However, coaches don't only help voice actors with vocal technique; they also help with the technical and business side of the industry as well. Coaching is a tried and true way to gain the skills necessary to start and grow your voice over business.

Identifying the Right Vocal Coach

In order to achieve success with a coach, your training needs have to align with the coach's expertise, and your styles need to mesh too. The best way to find your coaching 'fit' is to do a trial session or interview call, where you can get a feel for the instructor's style and whether or not you really 'click.'

Online Voice Over Coaching

Our digitally-connected era is allowing voice actors to access top voice coaches from all around the globe. Remote or online coaching offers the same benefits of working in-person, plus the added benefit of helping to strengthen students' level of comfort with using technology, which is an integral part of the industry.

Home Studio Tech

Home Studio Setup Needs to Meet Your Needs and Standards

Building a home studio can feel like one of the more complex and expensive aspects of launching and running a voice over business. What gear to purchase, which software to use and how to set up one's studio are among the most widely-discussed topics in the voice over industry.

While the investment doesn't need to be substantial to yield excellent results, understanding what gear other professional voice actors are using can act as a guidepost for those who hope to acquire gear that meets or exceeds an acceptable standard.

Voices.com research looked at what pro actors used in each of these areas:

Microphone types and brands

Voice over recording software

Headphones

Microphones for Voice Actors

The type of mic and the brand that voice actors prefer varies widely. It's important to understand which mic works best for one's specific vocal qualities.

Despite how personal the microphone selection process is, some types of microphones are more popular.

Top 5 Most Popular Types of Microphones for Voice Actor

In order of popularity based on what talent have listed in their Voices.com profile:

Condenser (41%)

USB (40%)

Cardioid (8.5%)

Dynamic (7%)

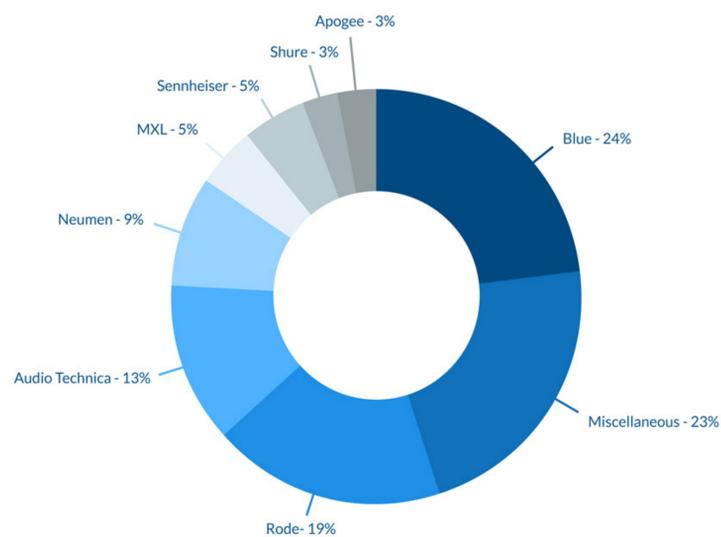
Ribbon, Omni, Figure 8, Other (3.5%)

Home Studio Tech

Top 3 Most Popular Microphone Brands for Voice Actors

Blue appears to be leading the popularity race - with 23% of respondents saying that their mic of choice is one of the brand's popular models - like the Snowball or the Yeti.

Not far behind is Rode (almost 20%), and the miscellaneous category, which captured a mixed bag of brands from AKG, Flureon, Electrovoice and more.



Top 3 Microphone Brands

Blue (24%)
Rode (19%)
Audio Technica (13%)

Recording Software for Voice Overs

There is a wide variety of audio recording software options that range in price range from free to hundreds of dollars.

Preference of recording software is personal, and low cost to free options can be just as effective and competitive as more expensive packages. However, sometimes voice actors may find that an investment in software is worth making for various reasons, from the program's capabilities, to personal opinion over sound quality.

Home Studio Tech

5 Most Popular Audio Recording Software Brands

According to data on voice actor profiles on Voices.com, these are the most popular software programs:

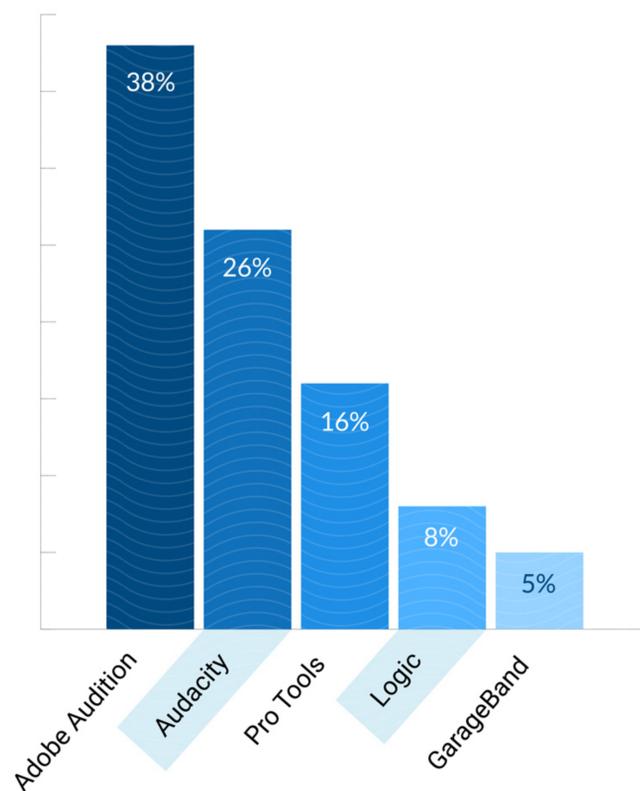
Adobe Audition (38%) (subscription \$20.99 USD/month)

Audacity (26%) (Free)

Pro Tools (16%) (\$24.92 - \$599 USD)

Logic (8%) (\$279.99 USD)

GarageBand (5%) (Free - Standard on all Macs)



Headphones for Voice Actors

Compared to microphones and audio recording software, headphones don't get nearly as much discussion or attention, but, they are arguably one of the most important pieces of equipment in a voice actor's toolkit.

Home Studio Tech

Top 5 Headphone Brands Preferred by Voice Actors

Voices.com survey data reveals that the most popular brands of headphones used are:

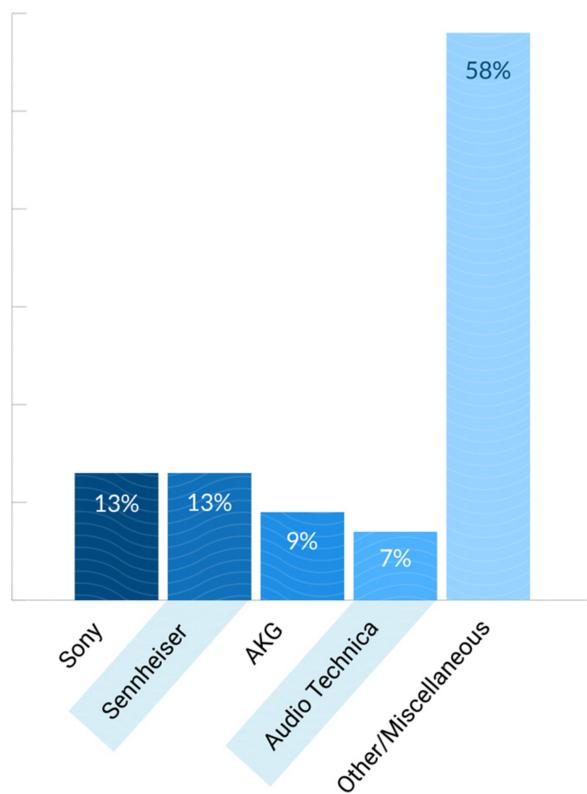
Sony (13%)

Sennheiser (13%)

AKG (9%)

Audio Technica (7%)

Other/Miscellaneous (58%)



How Voice Actors Use Headphones in the Studio

95% wear headphones while recording voice over and for playback/editing

5% only wear headphones for playback/editing

Auditioning

How Much Time Should Be Spent on Voice Over Auditions

There's no two ways about it - voice actors need to audition often in order to become successful. But what is 'often,' exactly? And how much time should you dedicate to auditioning?

A Voices.com survey revealed that professional voice actors divide their time equally between auditioning and completing voice over jobs (spending approximately a 1:1 ratio recording auditions vs. recording jobs).

However, in order to build a business, beginner voice actors have to spend twice as much time recording auditions. This group's ratio is closer to a 2:1 division of time between auditioning and working on jobs they've won.

87% of beginner voice over artists spend just under 10 hours a week auditioning and less than 5 hours a week recording jobs.

Number of Daily Auditions

Voices.com internal data shows that voice actors who audition 7 or more times a day make approximately \$20,000 more per year than voice talent who audition less than 7 times a day.

The Key to Successful Voice Over Auditions

So what's the most important aspect of your audition - if you want to book the job?

The first consideration may seem obvious, but it's often overlooked - you must be the right voice for the job. Being selective in auditioning for jobs that you're qualified for (e.g. noting language, style, vocal age, etc.), is the first key.

But beyond the basics, creating an emotional connection with your performance is what seals the deal (not bidding the lowest).

In fact, the statement "The performance or vocal qualities connect emotionally with my audience," emerged as the top consideration in a Voices.com survey of clients, with 70% agreeing that this aspect of the audition was very important to their casting decision.

Marketing Strategies

Successful Voice Actors Market Themselves Differently

Successful voice actors have a number of marketing strategies in their back pocket. Some of the most effective tools that they leverage include:

- Online Branding and Presence
- Voice Over Demos
- Client and Voice Actor Referrals
- Expanded Service Offerings

Here's how voice actors rated the importance of various marketing tactics:

	Creating a Professional Website	Having an Online Social Presence	Talking About Past Clients & Projects	Offering Audio Production Services
Professionals	78%	52%	60%	71%
Beginners	45%	38%	41%	50%

Voice Actor Online Branding

There are many elements to online branding. For voice actors, some basic elements include:

- Voices.com Voice Actor Profile
- Personal Website
- Social Media

Voices.com Voice Actor Profile

With hundreds of thousands of jobs posted by the world's most reputable and loved brands, it's no surprise that Voices.com is the world's largest marketplace for voice actors.

It sounds simple, but when it comes to creating a great Voices.com profile, voice actors increase their chances of successfully landing work by having completely filled out all the fields. A complete profile (each field filled in) is essential in calculating an actor's VoiceMatch™ score.

Voice Actor Websites and Social Media

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Online Channel	Professionals	Beginners
I use a professional website to promote myself	78%	45%
I use Facebook for self-promotion	75%	48%
I use LinkedIn for self-promotion	71%	36%

Leveraging promotional channels online may also lead to an increase in the number of voice over jobs talent book, as an established, consistent, online presence is a signal to prospective clients that they are working with a professional.

A voice actor's online presence helps a producer feel great about their decision to hire that specific talent, and can inspire even more clients to seek them out.

Voice Over Demos: the Best 'Business Card' for Voice Actors

Voice over demos have been referred to as a voice actor's calling card.

When it comes to adding voice over demos, more is more. In 2017, those voice actors who had 7 or more different demos uploaded to their Voices.com profile experienced:

290% increase in hire rate

312% increase in earnings

300% increase in being 'favorited' by listeners (Clients use the 'favoriting' feature when they want to shortlist demos as a way to stay organized and connected to voice actors whose voices they like)

Voice Actor Websites and Social Media

Why is this the case?

One explanation may be that by creating a demo for each of their specific skill sets (e.g. a French demo, commercial demo, narration demo, etc.) - and properly tagging each - these voice actors are helping Voices.com's search engine find them. The tags that voice actors select on their demos, are the same tags that clients select from to search for voice actors. The more properly and thoroughly tagged demos a voice actor has, the more opportunities they have to show up when a client is looking for that skill.

Additionally, voice actors typically only have a window of seconds to win over potential clients. If the listener doesn't hear what they're looking for right away, they'll move on. By serving up clearly labelled and focused demos, these voice actors are hitting two birds with one stone: getting the most from the listener's attention span while also meeting their expectations.

One easy way to build up your bank of demos, is by asking clients for permission to use audio samples from completed projects.

Client and Voice Actor Referrals are Key to More Voice Acting Auditions and Jobs

Building a referral network among both clients and other voice actors can be a powerful marketing tool - helping voice actors land even more jobs and auditions.

The bigger your network is, and the better your relationship is with peers, the more you stand to gain as a voice actor.

Cold Calling isn't Likely to Win New Connections

If you're thinking of growing your network with old fashioned cold calling, you may want to think again.

60% of voice actors stated they never make cold calls to potential clients in an attempt to sell them on voice acting services.

Client Testimonials the Key to New Business

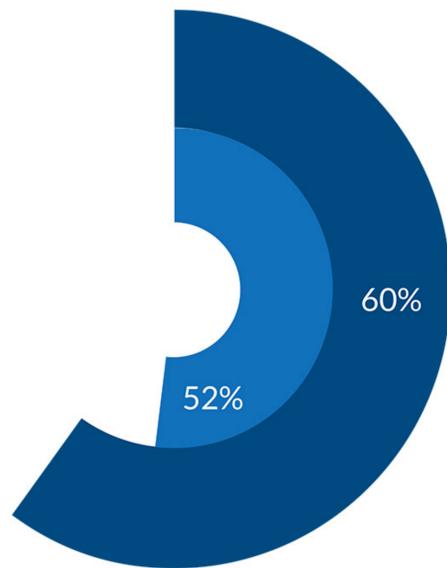
Leveraging goodwill from your previous clients can be incredibly beneficial towards building your voice over business.

Expanded Service Offerings

Voice actors who provide additional services, like translation, voice over in various accents, languages and dialects, or post production services, increase their overall earnings, even when they outsource the tasks to third parties.

A Voices.com survey revealed that the most common additional service offered is post production services (60%), such as splicing a recording into several files. However, 52% of the time, this service was actually coordinated with a third party. This is good news if you're a voice actor without the time or skill set to offer the service, but are willing to outsource the tasks.

60% of Voice Actors provide post production services. Of that 60%, 52% use a 3rd party service.



Conclusion

Becoming a Successful Voice Actor Requires That Business and Performance Come Together

Data in this report paints a picture of a successful voice actor: an individual who is organized, focused, and business savvy, as well as in possession of well-developed talent that they maintain through continued education.

Professional voice actors spend almost half their time auditioning for work, and are actively engaged in self-promotion via a personal website, Facebook, and LinkedIn (at the very least). On Voices.com, the additional keys to success lie in a complete profile and creating and accurately tagging over 7 demos, to maximize Voices.com's search algorithm, as well as deliver immediately on a potential client's expectations.

For those who are just beginning their voice acting career, this report highlights some of the many strategies that you can learn, adopt and adapt from established professionals, in order to increase your overall success within the industry and embark on an exciting and fulfilling career, on your terms.

About the Data

Data supporting this report has been assembled from four main sources:

A 2018 survey of a sample group of over 100 Voices.com voice actor members and affiliated coaches.

2017 Voices.com data collected from information hosted on public profiles of voice actors (e.g. profiles that list equipment used, additional skills, etc).

A 2015 survey of voice actors from around the globe. Approximately half of the respondents self-identified as a professional (52%), and half (48%) identified as a beginner.