

Ultimate Voiceover

SECTION ONE:

THE VOICEOVER TEST DRIVE:

Since both of my parents worked for General Motors a combined 75 years, let's take a test drive around the Voice over business.

Here are some quick answers to some common questions?

How do I get started??

You get started by first, by taking a class, or getting coaching to see how well you read copy. The teacher or coach needs to assess your level of experience so they can best direct you to the right class or coaching regimen. He or she will see what related experience you have, like acting, improvisation, singing or public speaking. Section 2, GETTING STARTED will present this process in full.

Can I make a lot of money in voiceovers?

You may have a voice that lulls birds out of trees or you may have a voice that sends people running. Either way, there is not clear way to determine the amount of money you could make in the VO business. It depends on how your voice sounds yes, but also what connections you make and how much perseverance you have in building your business over the years. The marketplace decides all our fates. You could make a ton or perhaps a check once in awhile. Either way, it beats working in a coal mine or tarring roofs in Houston.

Can I just do this business part-time?

Yes, and yes again. The voice over business is a part-time profession with full-time rewards if your commercials bring in residuals. A residual is extra money you make for your commercial being broadcast. You must be a member of either union, AFTRA or SAG to receive residual payments. As you are reading this, you could be making some money right now. Isn't that great??

What are the unions in voiceover??

The two major unions are AFTRA, the American Federation of Television and Radio artists headquartered in NY or SAG, Screen Actors Guild, located in Los Angeles, Ca.

Do I need to join a Union?

I am biased here. I have only done Union work through AFTRA and SAG. With a union you get better pay and benefits like health care and a pension if you qualify. However you can find plenty of available non-union work where you don't have to compete with seasoned pros or face the celebrity factor. Getting work is the goal, doesn't matter which hole the oil gushes from, just as long as it comes out.

Can I do cartoons??

Yes, if you want to live in LA, that would be Los Angeles, not Louisiana. That is the center of the cartoon universe. I have done animated character work in Chicago but it is for commercials, not actual cartoons. See my work at loopytalk.com. Work with a long time pro in that market and find out what it is like. It's not easy, but nothing is, that is worth your time and energy.

Am I too old to do voiceovers?

Better younger than older, but if your voice has a strong or interesting quality, and you read well and connect easily with people, give it a shot.

I would recommend also doing some on-camera and print to round things out. Might be the opportunity there when you are on the other side of 50.

How do I get an agent?

First, know if you are qualified. That is where the teacher or coach comes in. Secondly, each market has a group of talent agencies with qualified voice over agents. You should have a strong demo before seeking agency representation. Unless an agent sees you on stage or in some other performance medium, you should count on your training and demo to get you through the door.

What the heck is on a demo??

A voiceover demo consists of short pieces of commercial copy that highlight the quality of your voice. Each piece should be a bit different to show the range of what you can do.

How much should I pay for a demo?

A good voiceover demo should be under \$3000.00 or so. That is for the recording and scripts alone. If there are multiple weeks of teaching involved the cost could be higher. Please watch what you spend here. Make sure the demo producer is experienced and not over charging you.

In conclusion: the voice over business is a business, not a charity. You need to invest in yourself and your materials, like a voice over demo to begin. You need to build up clients, hopefully those who will audition and hire you again and again. Make sure you like this process before you sell your house or tell your boss where to go. Keep your day job or night job and give it a shot if you really love it. Why not ? It could become a fun new part of your life!! SEND OTHER QUESTIONS TO JEFF@ULTIMATEVOICEOVER.COM!!