

sound advice

the most complete voice-over demo service

January 2005

"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value." -Albert Einstein

First Success Story of the New Year

We won't start the year by 'tooting our own horn'. We'll let Erik Pedersen do it for us:

HEY KATE: WELL, I SPENT AN HOUR WITH JOAN (VOICEOVER AGENT, STEWART TALENT CHICAGO) TODAY AND IT WAS REALLY, REALLY, REALLY FUN. I WAS TOTALLY RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE. I READ 4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COPY, A COUPLE TWICE TWO DIFFERENT WAYS, ONE PHRASE OF ONE, THREE DIFFERENT WAYS ETC. LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY...I TOOK HER DIRECTION LIKE A CHAMP. SHE WAS AWESOME, HER TALENT POOL IS SO DEEP, WE TOTALLY CONNECTED, BS'D FOR QUITE A WHILE, MET THE WHOLE GROUP ETC.

KATE, PAINFULLY OBVIOUS IS THE FACT THAT WITHOUT YOU AND WITHOUT EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED FROM (SOUND ADVICE) I DON'T KNOW HOW ANYONE IN THE WORLD WOULD HAVE A BLOODY CHANCE AT THIS STUFF. ALL OF YOUR LESSONS WERE PUT INTO ACTION. THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING ME WITH THE TOOLS THAT ALLOWED ME NOT TO EMBARRASS YOU AND MAKE A JACKASS OUT OF ME! I FELT I DID A PRETTY DARN GOOD JOB TODAY IN THAT BOOTH. I WAS PLEASED, BUT (NATURALLY) I AM STRAINING FOR MORE MEANING WITHIN OUR NUANCED CONVERSATION, WHICH I KNOW IS POINTLESS. JOAN GRACIOUSLY GAVE ME HER TIME, AND IS TOTALLY GOING TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN FOR ME. BOTTOM LINE IS, (I'LL) KEEP ON GOING (PURSUING) ALL THE OTHER AGENCIES SO I HAVE A CHANCE TO GET MORE EXPERIENCE. AT STEWART THERE ARE AT LEAST 9 GUYS ON JOAN'S SHORTLIST WHO ARE ABSOLUTE MACHINES, YA KNOW. BUT, I'M SENDING HER AN EMAIL (AS A 'THANK YOU' AND) AS A REMINDER, (TO REMAIN) ON HER IMMEDIATE RADAR. SO, THAT'S UNBELIEVABLE, DON'T YA THINK? SHE SAID WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMETHING SUITABLE FOR ME COMES IN AND I GET A CHANCE TO AUDITION. CANNOT ASK FOR MORE THAN THAT. TIME, LUCK ETC. WILL TELL. -ERIK PEDERSEN

Sounds like you're right on track. It was lean, clean and you're off without a hitch! Nice work, Erik. Could not have happened if you didn't APPLY what you were given here. The trick is: you have to go in there and actually run the distance. And that's just what you did. Very well done! Makes for a very pleasant start to the New Year, now doesn't it? -K

Updates

In my never ending quest to keep "The Sound Advice Encyclopedia of Voiceover and How to Be a Working Talent" updated, I have been spending a good deal of time refreshing the 'Speak the Speak' section. (I don't call this section the "Glossary" or the "Dictionary" because, by definition, it truly is in essence the real 'encyclopedia' portion of the book.)

IT OCCURRED TO ME YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A FEW OF THESE MORSELS IN THE NEWSLETTER, ALBEIT SWEET AND CONDENSED. SO I WILL ATTEMPT TO INCLUDE A SMALL PORTION EACH MONTH FOR YOUR WIT AND WISDOM. SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO:

AD— On a film set an 'AD' is an Assistant Director the person who expedites and coordinates a great many details for the Director

In advertising an AD is the acronym for an Art Director

An Art Director defines what a commercial is going to look like for commercial TV and commercial print. Though an AD is probably *least* likely to cast you for a voice over or on camera job they are the individual who have created the look and style and often even the storyboards (you may see at an auditions) that determine whether your 'type' suits the spot being produced.

It would benefit you a great deal as a talent to create something of a storyboard in your head as to what the commercial you're auditioning for looks like to YOU. By doing so you will activate your imagination which is an absolute MUST—it's what you were hired to do in order to define what you're talking about with any clarity.

It's important to note it's your job to show up with a full and active imagination. Taking on the role of an AD *for yourself* AT THE AUDITION is a great way to define what you believe is happening in the action of the piece. Believe me—it reads.

If you can see it we can see it. This is true for commercial work for film for television—as well as for stage ironically enough. Your imagination is your ultimate tool as a talent in any medium.

Artistic expression is not reserved to stage and film alone as common thought would have you believe. In fact you may discover as you *master* commercial work your performance skills in other mediums become far more *expeditious* and *on cue* as well. You'll probably find you're even more spontaneous and true to the concept and communication of the scene as you develop your commercial muscle as surprising as that may seem. And *that's* truly the definition of a versatile actor. You may find you'll get more out of commercial work than just a proper paycheck (Not that there is any harm in that.)

Back to The Front

Kate, I got *several* replies from talent agents listed on voicebank.net whom I emailed (regarding representation and whether they accept mp3 submissions of demos). Thanking me for *asking first* (before randomly forwarding my demo). "If you have a home studio setup, (then) you can send me a one-minute demo and I'll take a listen. *Thanks for asking first, by the way.* -Kristene" Great tip... in fact one email stated they weren't looking at all, but because my email was so polite, she asked me to send my demo... which I thought was nice! One agent is asking for my resume'... I have not prepared a resume. Any comments from you? -Jim Robesky

That agency is Lori Lins in Milwaukee, no doubt. Frankly, I don't believe in resumes for voiceovers. Your *demo* is your resume as far as a producer is concerned. Typically Casting Directors and Producers have no use for voiceover resumes. But Lori Lins *Management Group* (they have recently fine tuned their focus professionally) has a policy of asking for resumes from their voice talent. I like these folks very much so we will oblige them this minor detail. Clearly this is their way of having a point of reference for each individual talent to keep on file and directly at their fingertips. Not a bad idea. So, I put something together (see the example that follows) should you find you need a voiceover resume. You can fill in the blanks for yourself to suit your own situation. I added in my own two cents in this same font so you can distinguish my comments from content. Again, don't feel you absolutely **MUST** have a voiceover resume unless Lori Lins or another agency requests one. Most voice talent don't.

(I don't.) But, just the same...here's a sample voiceover (only) resume:

JIM ROBESKY

VOICE-OVER

AGE RANGE: 30-40

WEB ADDRESS: WWW.JIMROBESKY.COM

CELL #: 555.555.5555

E-MAIL: JIM@JIMROBESKY.COM

CLIENT LIST/EXPERIENCE

CVS PHARMACY

TOMMY'S TUNES

SEARS

PHILLIPS

JOE BLOW'S AUTO

DELL

CISCO

PIZZA HUT

(NOTE: You may add all the spots we recorded for your demo. Why? Because you actually DID them. How we produced them for your demo IS how real spots are created. If anyone asks 'How many of the spots on your demo are real?' ALL of them. It doesn't matter whether they actually *aired or not*. No one ever asks a producer how many pieces on their reels are real. Why? *Because it doesn't matter*. What matters is whether you can deliver the same work represented on your demo.)

CORPORATE ANNOUNCE EXPERIENCE

(NOTE: List all the Industrial pieces we did for you demo and anything else you may have actually done.)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

WBBJ-FM, TOMMYVILLE, MARYLAND, MORNING DRIVE, SPRING 1905-PRESENT

WXYZ-AM, DETROIT, MICHIGAN, GRAVEYARD SHIFT, OCTOBER 1752-1785

(NOTE: Include about 3 or 4—not necessarily every job you ever had.)

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

COLLEGE DEGREES OR TRAINING THAT MAY RELATE (ACTING OR ANNOUNCING OR BROADCAST)

COMMERCIAL VOICEOVER TECHNIQUE AND PROMOTION, KATE McCLANAGHAN

COMMERCIAL AUDITION, IN-STUDIO VOICEOVER WORKSHOP, WINTER 2004 TO PRESENT, BIG HOUSE

CASTING & AUDIO

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL VOICEOVER DEMOS PRODUCED WITH SOUND ADVICE

IMPROVISATION, FALL 2002 TO PRESENT, JIMMY CARRANE

COMMERCIAL ON-CAMERA, TECHNIQUE, AUDITION AND VOICE-OVER, ONE-ON-ONE COACHING, GLENN

HAINES

PROFESSIONAL ASSETS

ABLE TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY MP3 AUDITIONS FROM HOME STUDIO; EXPERIENCED ANNOUNCE;

EXCEPTIONAL WORK ETHIC, STEADY PROMOTION ALWAYS IN MOTION; GREAT ATTITUDE, EASY TO WORK WITH IN AND OUT OF THE BOOTH; CONTINUALLY WORKING AND DEVELOPING VOCAL SKILLS; REMARKABLY AVAILABLE ON VERY SHORT NOTICE ON MOST OCCASIONS

-CURRENT COMMERCIAL AND CORPORATE VOICEOVER DEMOS AVAILABLE-

What Makes a Web Page Great?

If you surf the 'net with any frequency you will find some web sites are easier to navigate than others, some have greater eye-appeal and so on. Well, there's a right way and a wrong way to do everything, and your web site is no different. Ideally you're considering creating a web page of your very own, so allow me to be so bold as to pass on a few pearls of wisdom. Content is *everything*. Creating a web page for a professional talent requires you follow a few simple guidelines. First off, talent web sites are for VOICEOVER *only*. And as a voice talent, the cardinal rule is: NO ONE WANTS TO KNOW *WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE*, THEY WANT TO *IMAGINE* WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE. (The only exception is if you are over 65 or under 16.) Okay, so this means...what? NO Headshots! That's right, not even a *link* to them. Until you are a bona-fide celebrity (i.e. you've landed a principal role on a TV series or something comparable) this web site should feature your voiceover *alone*.

But 'pour quoi'? Well, because, Mon Cher, I've yet to meet a single soul who's gotten booked from having their headshot posted on their web site. Not a one. Search the Internet yourself you can access a number of high-profile talent agency web sites (via voicebank.net). You'll quickly discover few if *any* talent agencies include headshots on their sites. In fact, the very *top* talent agencies in the country such as ICM, CAA, William Morris and CED, only include *voiceover demos*, not headshots, no matter how great their talent roster might be. Granted a couple agencies in Chicago do, but I still don't condone it. I WISH Chicago was a Mecca for on-camera work—sadly, it's not. In general, your web page should simply be a single page. It should *never* have an 'Intro' or randomly play music or a SFX. (God-forbid.) Your vo demo(s) are the *ONLY* things that should play on your site and *only* when you specifically **click** on them.

Unfortunately, so much of this basic Internet protocol is violated with great abandon everywhere you turn. Nevertheless, let's avoid falling prey to bad advertising when ever possible. It doesn't bode well to Ad people (Creatives) and, ultimately, that's really your audience.

Best Voiceover Web Page Tips:

- One click. One contact (cell phone) number. One e-mail. One format: mp3 (not Real Player, not Windows Media). And one medium represented: voiceover *ONLY!* (No headshots.) There is power in simplicity. What you are promoting is clear and direct, and *THAT'S* effective promotion. Don't sell a dozen things it only confuses the issue.
- When you secure representation with talent agents who are listed on voicebank.net I suggest you establish a 'Premium Page' (through voicebank.net). This means, for a small fee, you will have a red star drawing attention to your name anywhere you are listed on voicebank.net. (Producers have no idea who puts the red star there. They think it must be because you're an especially strong and favored talent.) This way you have the choice of having your name link to a template [voicebank](http://voicebank.net) has created (it's a dog, I don't recommend it) or directly to your groovy-groovy web page where your demo(s) may be heard in one quick click! It's a fabulous added feature on [voicebank](http://voicebank.net) and well worth the cost. By all means *go for it!*
- Be sure there's a link to your e-mail and your cell phone is included as a way to contact you on your site—and be sure to be on top of your responses to any inquiries! If it takes you two to three days to respond, you *will* lose the job. And that's a no-no. (They won't call you twice if they can't track you down initially.)
- Make sure your web page is easily accessible. Your web page should **not** be out there all on it's own like a tiny note in a bottle floating on the open sea. If it is, you're likely to render your site completely useless. Therefore be sure you are *hosted by Sound Advice* (our site gets a great deal of traffic) and you have a Premium Page on voicebank.net. (No less than 30 individuals were cast off our site the day before Thanksgiving last year by a single vendor, so it pays to stay on top of this!)
- Be sure to acknowledge your producer, web designer and graphic artist on your site. Including a link to them would not be out of line either. Just be sure their info and contact information is at least *half* the size of the smallest item concerning you on your web page.
- Be sure to create postcards that include your web address (such as www.kourtneyvahle.com) to promote your voiceover and your site! This way your postcards won't simply create 'name-recognition' for you as a voiceover, they will be the equivalent to sending out an actual demo.

The Future of Trees

As we mentioned in our December 2004 Newsletter, in an attempt to reduce costs and save on paper (and therefore the environment), we will be begin sending our Newsletters via e-mail. If you received this Newsletter through the mail consider it your *LAST!!!* You need to use your e-mail! Make it your business to do so!

If you are still on dial-up, I suggest you upgrade to cable modem *as soon as you possibly can*. It will allow you far more stable Internet access and the ability to run your small business as a working talent with greater ease and proficiency. Exercising some simple communication skills can make or break you in *any* business. In most cases, a cable modem can be installed within a week and three months are *FREE*. So there's really no excuse.

Naturally, this means you *MUST* keep us informed if you change your e-mail address. You may as well. We are undoubtedly your greatest allies in this business. (Go, team—GO!)

If you absolutely insist on a hard copy of our Newsletter, please let Kourtney know or forever hold you peace.

Until Next Month...

Keep the faith while you're keeping warm! (Brrrrr)

Best, Kate, Kourtney & crew