

# THE NO BS Voice Over Guide:-

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[My comprehensive equipment list](#)

[Another website with excellent info](#)

My website: [thevoiceoverbaron.com](http://thevoiceoverbaron.com)

If this has given you value, message me on FB or IG @bbassny and let me know -  
or you can even throw me a tip ;-)

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***This doc is a work in progress**, but I needed to make it, considering lots of folks ask me questions about VO. This doc isn't fancy on purpose, because if you wanted fancy, you could have bought a book lol. You should DM me if you think there is something I am missing or if you have addtl' questions. I'm going to keep adding to it as I see fit.*

**Info is just that: info. Nothing more, nothing less: that's why I'm giving it away.**  
**Lots of folks have blogs and podcasts (I talk about some of them later) - but here's my take on the blah blah and hoopty doo.**

*Apologies if there are typos, I made it with the fire of 1000s suns and treated my keyboard like a flaming hot potato in the Sudanese sun. Now that I have your attention...*

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# Intro!

A lot of people ask me about getting started in voice over. There's a lot of books and info and all the classes you could ever spend your money on. I wrote this to save you time - but if you're looking for shortcuts, consider this a shortcut. And then stop looking for more shortcuts!!!!!!!

Voice over is competitive. It can be highly rewarding, but it can also be harrowing. You audition for a lot - and win a little, especially when you're starting. You have to find what works and refine it as you go.

If you are looking to make a quick buck after reading this, good luck to you. People can smell your desperation for money in a millisecond. It just doesn't work.

More than anything, you have to have a **PASSION** for voice over. For example, you can't expect your love of \$\$\$ to carry you through reading a book for 4 hours at a time! If you think that's crap, do whatever you want, but trust me, it's the realest advice you'll hear.

**It's the same "thing" that allows a songwriter to work on a song for years, just to get it right (I've done that too).**

**Let me also say this:** you can make as little \$ as you want, or as much as you want in voice over. If you are looking to do this part time, you can. If you are looking to do VO full-time, despite what people told me for years, guess what? You can. *There is no secret hack* - you have to build the career you want. When I started putting in a full-time effort, I started working full-time.

You might *think* you know what a full-time effort looks like, but let me tell you, its borderline obsessive. This goes for turning any creative passion into a profession.... It can be a lonely, relentless endeavor. **But things like this guide, and the wealth of other information out there, is concrete proof that you are not alone. Remember that.**

Now, If you are LUCKY to make money from A CREATIVE PROFESSION, don't play yourself. There are lots of people who don't. Cut the entitlement!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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# The Steps

## I love voice over.

I've been a lifelong learner about the voice, read lots of autobiographies about people who understand the voice, and I am always working on my craft. It is not lost to me that there are crazy talented people out here, who can create a character on a dime, and deserve all the accolades, and as result, should be paid more. But the beauty is, with some hard work, your time to shine will come. I've seen it happen, even for myself.

**If I was to simplify the steps I'm going to list below, it would be like this:**

1. **Training (includes training self)/Coaching**
2. **Demos**
3. **Home Studio Quality**
4. **Marketing**
5. **Branding**
6. **Customer Service**

**If you read nothing else, take these things and etch them in your brain, because they are the KEY. Now, we can get more specific:**

- **If you have that real passion, or happen to find it, now, you need to work on technique.** This separates the amateurs from the pros. Amateurs rely on inspiration, pros build a PROCESS. Let me be clear: you can forge a process by DOING, watching hours of content, soaking up everything, and learning in every way you can, **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE A DEGREE OR PAY PEOPLE exorbitant amounts of MONEY.** Especially in the information age, YouTube and Google U are here for you! *But at some point, you should ask someone who is doing it/who did it.*

*This doesn't mean don't pay for coaches. Coaches are a worthy investment once you have an idea of what you're doing - this is key. People who use coaches book more. We'll talk more about that later.*

- **Now find your niche(s).** Or at least think about it - you will constantly be refining what this means to you. Voice over is EVERYWHERE and is probably in places you never thought about, so do some research. Where do you want to spend the most time? For me, I only watched cartoons for a long time and was a musical theater kid, so my niches made immediate sense to me. I naturally fell into cartoons, big characters, sports, etc. What do *you* want and like? Meaning, animation, telephony, commercial, medical, etc. A

better example: I've learned that I LOVE to read audiobooks, BUT the time it takes to record one, and (in the case of many audiobooks) edit it makes me not want to do audiobooks, ever. So I learned this about myself (the hard way)!

- **Practice, practice, practice.** I've auditioned 5,000-7,000 times in 8+ years. You can pick up a book and cold read it; your cold read skills will take you far. I'll be the first to say I SUCK at cold reading and need preparation in advance, still, to this day. So I'll be taking my own advice, but at least I know myself.
- **If you're not an actor, put this at step one: take an acting class or an improv class.** There's a reason why improv actors dominate the commercial and voice over spaces, they know how to create the illusion of spontaneous speech. That's because they've worked on this muscle over and over again, and do it often. Chances are you are not a savant when it comes to reading text like it's spontaneous or conversational. You'll more than likely have a mic placed in front of you and sound like a frozen sack of bologna (don't be mad, it happens to all of us).

Think about people like Kevin Hart, Will Smith, Jim Carrey, or anyone from SNL. Even Morgan Freeman or James Earl Jones. They are masters of reading copy and bringing it to life, because they do it every day. That's why they get the big bucks - you forget that they are often memorizing or reading something from a teleprompter.

- **Now, coaching!** Can you believe it took me 7 years to get a coach? Not that I didn't try before - but I tried, got discouraged, and finally did it some time ago based on someone's recommendation. Don't just coach with one person, because everyone has good tidbits, you'll hear a lot of the same stuff, but will pick up EXCELLENT golden nuggets from each person. ALL THE BEST PEOPLE IN ANY BUSINESS GET OUTSIDE FEEDBACK - don't think you are an exception. Even LeBron James has a coach. Especially in the times of COVID, coaching is cheaper than it's ever been. All the casting directors are accepting submissions, and are running contests.

Google these people and tell them I referred you:

[Marla Kirban \(coach for 20+ years\)](#)

[Adam Murphy \(working actor and comedian for 20+ years\)](#)

[Lori Alan \(working, top VO actor, amazing coach\)](#)

[Dave Fennoy \(top VO actor, and coach\)](#)

[Diakim Lyles \(working commercial/voice over casting director & friend\)](#)

**Different coaches specialize in different niches, so make sure you do your research. Some of these people have storied careers, don't be a dimbus: ask targeted questions. It's good for you, and it saves both of you time.**

***Singing lessons, vocal lessons, movement training, martial arts, stage combat, public speaking, and anything related to the body, mind, breath, muscle memory, and spontaneous creation will help. You may think this is weird, but think about watching a person like Robin Williams perform: he was ALWAYS using his body, even in voice performances.***

***The voice is directly related to the body, there's no question about it. Take it to the gym!***

- **Now, you need DEMOS** - they can run anywhere from \$500 - \$3000. The work that goes into a demo takes great care... I would say Google some demo producers, but also you can message me about this. Your demo is your calling card in VO - it will either make or break you. Make sure your first impression to people is on point and showcases your ability. Starting with a commercial demo, and then expanding to your other niches is a good way to go.

Demos should not be longer than 2 minutes - if you have the audio editing skills, go listen to some demos you love and model yours after theirs.

- **This goes without saying: listen to commercials (really, any and all voice over) critically.** Voiceover is everywhere, you have to immerse yourself in order to key in to techniques/style. Figure out what works, what you like, don't like, explain why, or why not, all of that.
- **HOME STUDIO SETUP: Think about the quality of your sound.** I'm also a music producer, so I think about this obsessively. Your quality is directly tied to people's perception of your professionalism... don't put yourself in the amateur bucket because of equipment that could be easily purchased and learned.

This is not complicated - ask around one what people are using to improve sound quality and find videos on YouTube. If your noise floor is low (no background noise), and you are heard clearly, then you are probably good to go.

Aaaaaand then-

- **There's marketing!!!!** Lord Jesus: We just opened up a whole new can of worms. But let's make this simple:

***Marketing for an actor = being good at your craft. Shout this from the rooftops. Also, Denzel said it, so hear it in his voice.***

***I hear a lot of actors saying they HATE marketing: we have to change this mindset. If you are in a show, are you going to tell NOBODY that you are in it? People literally get cast because of the crowd they will draw. To me, it makes sense that a YouTuber might get a chance to be in a***

*film because THEY UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF BUILDING AN AUDIENCE. **Don't play yourself:** build your audience, and tell them what you're up to. Social media marketing, email marketing, and text msg marketing are hella valuable. Find a free podcast or YouTube... now back to the stuff -*

So, let's say, when you think of yourself, you say " I'm working on being great, but I'm not there yet". Sheesh, I'm not even great yet - BUT: ***I practice in public!!! I don't expect you to be as carefree and open as me; this is a part of my personality. BE YOU.*** Don't be a person that has social media and NEVER tells anyone that you are doing something. Social media is one of the greatest tools for exposure, but it is not the only one - YouTube, podcasts, IG get ppl to see your personality and drive. Heck, less and less people are doing snail mail now. Might be time to invest in some old fashioned flyers and business cards, sis.

^ this is a simple way to look at marketing - for more ideas, DM me. Or just follow @garyvee (because nothing I said is original lol)

*I'm going to add marketing books to the resource list at some point. I worked at a social media marketing agency for about a year and a half, and it really opened up my perspective...*

*Active marketing is exactly what it sounds like: an ACTIVE, all the time job. How are you going to get creative to stand out????*

Think like a casting director or a brand. What are you suited to sell? What does the ideal take sound like? Learn how to format an mp3 audition - ***up to 50% of mp3s get trashed because of poor quality or lack of following instructions. Don't be this person..... \*smacks forehead\****

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# On Equipment

I've been investing in my equipment gradually over the years; it's multipurpose for me. I've since made my money back, but like I said, I REALLY LOVE THIS. I have good years and bad years. To give you an idea, here's a rough estimate off the top of my head on what I've invested in my biz:

**\$400 Senheiser MKH416 Mic**

**\$650 (Neumann) TLM 103 Mic**

**\$1000 random equipment (mixers, mics, cables, external HDs)**

**\$500 in tutorials, books, etc.**

**\$1000 Discrete 4 Preamp**

**\$250 MOTU Track 16 Preamp**

**\$250 Apogee mic plus (portable)**

**\$280 Apogee One (portable)**

**\$50 Blue Mic (portable)**

**\$900 Desktop**

**\$500 Upgrades to desktop**

**\$900 Laptop**

**\$60 Webcam**

**\$2000 in plugins (lots of free, thanks to friends)**

**\$400 in soundproofing**

**\$2000 in coaching**

**\$800 in monitor speakers**

**\$650 for Source Connect**

**About \$100 a month in subscriptions (envato, adobe, splice, etc.)**

- **I should count the tens of thousands spent on college - it is directly related to my training & entrance into the industry. I reiterate, this isn't necessary for everyone, but it's given ME some advantages. Know thyself!**
- *At this point, I should say that I sell my equipment when I am no longer using it, in order to upgrade.* I've also given stuff away. I also count my video production equipment in my VO business, because it allows me to create content where I can use my voice over skills. I'm not going to list the cost of that right now, because I don't feel like crying.
- I actively worked on my credit so I could borrow \$ for my business. I do not recommend this for everyone: it hasn't always worked out in my favor, so consider the risk and make a plan if this is your route (especially now, considering the credit industry is in shambles, due to COVID)

- At some point in time, just to give you an idea of the potential, VO replaced my income one year (early in my career) in a windfall of happy accidents. I think back on that time and know I had no idea what I was doing. The smartest thing to do is re-invest in your business, and maybe, get a financial advisor. (can't help you there, find a guy, please) BIG MAJOR KEY: pay your taxes or find someone to help!

That financial advisor will really help you put things in perspective and figure out how to run a viable business. If I could go back, this would be my first step!!!

**Man, I've definitely spent more money than I needed to over the years. Most of it paid off, I think, but here's my advice: get what you need, and nothing more. We always think we need more, or something else, or something better - this is human. This is bad for business... so let me tell you what you need.**

- **A GOOD mic**
  - **Some soundproofing**
  - **An interface (I don't recommend USB. Its not up to par yet, even though its come far)**
  - **Computer, laptop is good if you don't know where your space will be**
  - **A portable solution - mics like the Apogee Mic Plus are pretty good**
  - **Learn a DAW, like AUDACITY, GARAGEBAND, PRO TOOLS, etc**
  - **Skype/Cellphone/Source Connect/Zoom/ipDTL**
- **All the pros use Source Connect or ipDTL (Google them).** There are jobs you won't know about if you do not use it.... I had to get an ethernet connection hooked up and pay for more bandwidth to use this. Don't pay for this until you have to, but eventually, you will need to get it. Especially in the age of COVID, 100% of my work has been remote - and Zoom doesn't cut it.
  - **Also, a lot of the top people ONLY use Pro Tools.** While I am not a Pro Tools expert (I currently use Audacity the most), I've spent 10+ years learning ANY audio software program so I would not have this problem, ever.

Up to you how you want to tackle this piece, good luck.

**\*\*\*\*\* IF YOU SKIPPED COACHING - NONE OF THIS OTHER STUFF MATTERS. A trained/experienced ear can help you learn how to book jobs; everyone is trying to book jobs. Also, if you get to a job and you can't perform, you CAN and WILL get replaced, it happens. This is why we need coaches. Don't be stubborn, and don't skip steps. That's like a gymnast showing up to the Olympics with no training. Well, there is a place for that, we'll talk about it... \*\*\*\*\***

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# Resources

\* <https://www.getstartedinvo.com/> - a ton of useful info. Start here, created by In Both Ears agency, an awesome agency where my friend, Sam Roberts, is a head agent and an innovator

[Theproaudiosuite.com has a great podcast](#)

\* There are tons of OK Facebook groups. I have a few I can recommend: a BIG part of being involved in the VO community is to FIND YOUR COMMUNITY and BE ACTIVE. I can't stress this enough... the more you network, the more you will know. I learn the best stuff by asking fellow VO artists. They are helpful and great.

\* I was going to start going to conventions this year, but ya know, virus life. But I think they could be a great networking tool: any online version of this, check it out. With any business, learn who the players are.

\* **VOBUZZWEEKLY** has a website, yt channel, and app - they are great to follow and learn from. Chuck Duran (host) also is one of the best demo producers. If you're really about the smoke, go mess with the best.

\* (this is on PAUSE due to COIVD) If you're going to pay for workshops, CHEAP WORKSHOPS are the way to go - free, even better. If you are SAG, look at the SAG foundation's website. If you are NOT SAG, congrats! Because an increasing amount of the VO work that exists is Non-Union, so its all good.

Don't pay for random stuff, ask me first! Ripley Grier has a few workshops (ON PAUSE right now). **I mentioned the IG lives casting directors are doing - follow them, get engaged (not in a fake way), don't ask dumb ass questions you can Google, become a part of the community....**

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You may have seen this: Here's an Amazon List I started for a beginner's home studio setup - home records are the new normal, so start thinking about this!

<http://a.co/j98Shyp>

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# Questions

## - **How do you feel about Fiverr??**

**I'm not sure yet. My feelings on Fiverr are forever shifting.**

Here's the short answer: you can do well on Fiverr, like anywhere else. It is preferred that you learn how to price yourself accordingly. If you and everyone else decides to do VO for \$5, it hurts everyone else's bottom line too. But you can set your own minimum, so it's up to you.

Many agencies won't work with you or will kick you off their roster if you use sites that actively harm fair rates in our industry (like Fiverr - yes, it's true, they do). You COULD wait, get an agent, and get some nice paying gigs - in the words of Lady Gaga, do what you want with your bodaaay!

Now for the long answer:

For the longest, it was felt that Fiverr talent was cheapening the market. What do I mean by this? Think about it this way: when you are the voice for something, you are representing the brand. Let's say you are representing Kraft Foods, which has a history, and has advertising dollars to spend. They were doing ads before they ever knew you existed.

You've been chosen to be the voice for Kraft, which arguably, is as valuable as your physical likeness (on camera), because people know distinct voices when they hear them. So if the company is spending a good amount of \$\$\$ to put together a quality commercial, and the cost of things have gone up because the technology and everything has gotten better, etc., well then you're probably going to be compensated well.

If you are lucky to be SAG-AFTRA aka union (or you are made to join, which costs \$3300), this is where the Union comes in, because if your commercial is broadcast everywhere, everytime this commercial plays, you're supposed to get paid. All these plays add up, and a brand wants the commercial to be played as many times as possible because that's how you get real impressions.

This has changed with social media, because the way we consume content on our phones is not quite the same as TV and Radio - there are tons of channels, and frankly, there is way less centralization when it comes to quantifying how much an ad is worth. I also personally believe an impression on social media is nowhere near as significant as a TV impression. Simply put, social media has not been around long enough to hold the same weight of importance in people's minds (yet).

You can have a great social media campaign, but if you are on TV, people consider THAT to be successful. This is opinion based on working in social and observing a lot of folks... This doesn't apply to everything, and I didn't even factor in the significance of virality. *But I digress*

You, as the voice of Kraft, if it's a Union job, you would get RESIDUALS, and for a lot of career voiceover ppl, these residuals allow you to make a decent living. When there were less people competing in voice over, there were less people competing for these spots. Now, there is a bigger pool, there are more distribution avenues, and the idea of how much a voice over is worth to a brand is shifting in a big way.

If a company could get a cheaper voiceover, for, let's say \$5, and it's "good enough", they would try to do that. They just cut their costs but like 1000000%!!!! In turn, a lot of people have heard "there is good money in voice over", so they've decided to come on in and charge lower than their competition to win jobs. They don't know that doing a TV ad for \$100 is preposterous, but now imagine 1,000 people doing this. The quality of the work and the pay and various other things suffer.

My point is, the internet is impossible to guard for quality control. Anyone can "become a voice actor", many are trying, many are charging less, companies have more options, but many are skipping the basics, like technique, and learning how to work with producers, and light editing, etc.

***If everyone did Fiverr, the worth of voice over in commercials would plummet. I've heard some great folks on Fiverr, I've also heard some pretty terrible work, from people who wanted to make a dollar and not respect the craft. Now, if no one respected the craft, the commercial industry as a whole would suffer - but there will always be SOMEONE who respects the craft. These folks will rise to the top and continue to command top dollar.***

In my experience, the people who respect the craft always demand top dollar for their efforts. They have taken the time to study what it takes to create a compelling VO for any image or sound, and they will probably beat out the person who is doing it just for money, and \$5 at that. I could say, "You get what you pay for", but because it is a creative business, this doesn't necessarily always align.

This problem is not unique to our industry: photographers, actors, designers, and most freelancers deal with this. I want to be someone who gets paid for being one of the best at what I do, and not "well, he's good enough" ;-)

It is not your client's (brand) job to understand your craft or technique; they just understand who's better by the feeling they get from your read, plain and simple. If you're conveying the message in the way the writer intended or BETTER, you're winning.

Now, if you are someone who is starting out and you need to practice and develop a reel, Fiverr *might* be an awesome tool for you. I'd say this for you to keep in mind: if you get a client on Fiverr and then ask them for more money in the future, the chances are, they probably won't give you much more dough. I heard you can also be penalized for negotiating with clients off the platform.

I hope that didn't tire you out - it's a complicated question.

**- Alright, then. So how do you feel about pay to play sites?**

Oh man, here we go. Did you bring the rum, Jean Paul?

You may or may not know that many folks in the voice over industry hate the very existence of pay-to-play sites. They hate them because 1. Like Fiverr, they have no basis for how much gigs pay 2. There's thousands of talent on there 3. The sites often take a cut 4. The sites have been known for shady practices (at times).

I find hating on P2P to be a waste of time and energy, considering how efficient those sites are for buyers. We as talent do not dictate the market, it is what it is. You either do it, or you don't, end of story. I've chosen not to do P2P (for now).

**In a nutshell, you pay a fee to be a part of their database and have priority access to auditions. Yes, you can have a free profile in the database, but this is how they reel you in: people who pay the most amount of \$ end up getting auditions sent to them sooner, and therefore, usually have more chances of booking.**

Lots of people feel these sites' practices do not favor our industry, the rates that we're used to, and transparency. Some of the sites are said to take up to 20-50% of the fee.

If the goal was to cut out the middleman, 20-50% is preposterous. Why would I pay 20-50% of my fee JUST to be on your database? I better be getting a temple massage, for the headache.

Look: unfortunately and fortunately, the advent of technology comes along and makes major shifts to creative industries. As a result, the talent involved feel it - this is exactly what has happened in voice over.

Software and web engineers knew the advertising industry relied on actors, but the industry needed databases to work faster. Lots of domains were bought up something like 15-20 years ago, and websites like Voices.com and Voice123.com were born.

*(Let me add, many of the top talent use Voices.com and Voice123.com - this is good to know, and is proof that no site is 100% good or bad. You have to choose your own strategy.)*

Sometimes the people who create these sites care about the talent. Sometimes they don't, and they're in it for a dollar.

You have to use your judgement. I believe in 2020, people's ideas around P2P are shifting because the sites have matured a bit, and are possibly listening to both their talent and buyers needs.

If you do a Google search for voice over, many of these sites come up at the top of the list. The membership fees that talent pay often go directly to marketing and making sure they are ranked high in search engines. If you are on the site, this could be a win for SEO. I guess, what I'm trying to really say is, technology, ease, thoughts about the future, and the desire for a one stop shop marketplace is on P2Ps side.

If you think you can make back your investment within a year, I'd say definitely go for it. There are some sites, like Backstage.com, that have a monthly pay option. I personally would come up with a game plan for a month to see if your 20/mo would be worth it. If you make at least \$21 that month, you've already made a profit!

**- Bet. So you're saying agents are the key, huh?**

In the event any of my agents read this, I want y'all to know you are the bomb.

But seriously - a good agent becomes a friend, an ally, and a teammate. You can run ideas by them and feel like you are not in a vacuum. They obviously want you to win auditions and will help you with your gameplan when you aren't clear on stuff. Obviously, you need to do your part, not email them incessantly, and just get good at auditioning, since it is your career. They are not there to baby you.

A manager is a *little* better for a personal touch, and helping to shape your career, but the same rules apply. People want to know you have the work ethic before they decide to invest in you.

**Do you need an agent? No. Are good agents awesome? Yes.**

(Almost) the only way to get Union work with residuals is to have an agent. The gigs are better, bigger, more exclusive, etc. I say almost because if you have built your business with, lets say, a prominent online presence, people will find you regardless. There's more than one way to scale the mountain.

I have to add, your need for an agent could be geo specific, even though this is mattering less and less because of the Internet. 10 years ago, if you were in NYC trying to do voice over without an agent, you were playing yourself. In that same 10 years to now, I know a handful of folks in the South and Midwest US who built their voice over careers independently (because

they had to). I look to them to learn some of their scrappiness in the ever changing VO landscape.

Back to agents...

**Here's the other thing people fail to realize: agents and agencies make your life easier.**

Legally, they can only take 10-20% (depending on what your agreement is) but usually a good agent has the paymaster figured out. A good agent can also help you negotiate - this is major. I've had gigs where they tried to give me less than I was owed and the agent came back with an offer that was exponentially larger. Of course a good agent would do this for you: the more you get paid, the more they do too.

Now, sometimes people sign with an agency and don't hear from them for weeks or months at a time. This isn't always a sign of a bad partnership - instead, a check in can help or saying hello and asking targeted questions can put you back on their radar.

Having an agent isn't necessarily the end all be all, but yes, big careers are usually accompanied by top notch representation. Either work towards it or put it in the back of your mind!

### **- Are home studios necessary now?**

A big fat **YES**.

Honestly, you should've thought about it 2 years ago. But don't worry - its not too late. Just plan to make it happen ASAP.

2020 has been my busiest year in VO and I've done it entirely from home.

COVID made everyone in every industry consider audio and video solutions. So not only did your actor friends think about or actually make the shift to voice over, we're talking business pros, podcasters, content creators, dancers, motivational speakers, musicians, and the list goes on. The competition has increased exponentially this year.

Add to that, if you finally got a basic home studio, but you're still learning how to use it, that can be a headache for engineers etc. Professionals in the industry don't want to waste time setting up tech when they give you a paid gig; they expect you to know what you're doing.

I also highly doubt voice over artists will be booked in studios regularly as they have been before this year. It's a waste of time, money, energy, and resources for all involved. I think some of these studios might even close down since engineers can work from home & there's no need to pay rent...

COVID is still raging anyway, so most people when given a choice will choose to work from home, probably until summer 2021 (heh, we'll see).

To add, just get **Source Connect**. A lot of studios won't work with you if you don't have it. And I said this before, but please consider getting something competitive, and not just USB. I have had engineers tell me how USB can be a headache to eq properly etc. Obviously, there are exceptions AND the tech is getting better every millisecond - but take my advice and give yourself an advantage over thousands of others.

Don't make excuses - there are a handful of self taught folks on YouTube who have been building their careers for 10+ years. This is a thing that didn't exist before YouTube - if these people can do it, you can too. I'm not saying "become a YouTuber", but rather "get you some DIY energy" - it is the wave of the future.....

And **don't skimp on your investment if you are serious!** Let me be specific: a \$300 budget setup won't sound as good as a \$3,000 setup. Am I telling you to go blow 3K so you can eek out a career? No way - *that's called a prayer, not business*...consult with people you know, and some you don't, so you can make an informed decision about the best tools for you, with a easy or normal enough learning curve. I would upgrade as you go.

#### **- You mentioned Source Connect: What is that?**

Before there was Source Connect, there was ISDN. ISDN, simply put, was a dedicated line that most professional studios had - and there was a box, and you'd get a number to dial other people's boxes. This whole ordeal was/is expensive to use and set up, and is still used by many studios, and some top tier VO talent. It has been said that there might be big jobs you won't even hear of if you don't have ISDN.

Enter Source Connect. Source Connect is a high pollutant VOIP service that has been around for like a decade or so. It's a plugin that simplified the whole real-time connection issue between VO Talent, Producer, and whoever else in a session - you can be in several different places and work on a record, without having to wait for an audio file to be sent. The same way Zoom popped up out of "nowhere", Source Connect was originally the best kept secret between studios and high tier talent... the pandemic made it so EVERYONE finally caught on. It was already an "industry standard" tool, but 2020 came and turned up the standardness.

Technically speaking, **Source Connect makes it so your real-time high fidelity audio is transferred to the audio engineer, into their Pro Tools session.** If your home studio (booth, mic, preamp) is broadcast quality, they can cut a commercial in real time.

You can't do this with Skype or Zoom, because the audio signal is converted to a lower quality signal (in order to focus on video AND deliver \*good enough\* audio).

There are other services studios might ask you for, like **ipDTL** (a similar Chrome browser based VOIP service), but chances are if you have Source Connect, that'll do just fine. ipDTL does have some cool features, though, like being able to mask itself as an ISDN line and connect to other ISDN lines. For this reason, some top tier talent prefer it. Another upside to ipDTL is their "Day Pass" option - it is normally a subscription based service, but you can use it for a day or \$20. If the studio is connecting with you, they send you a link, and it is FREE.

Source Connect is great and usually hassle free - it is either subscription based (at \$35/mo) or you can buy it outright (about \$650). For me, since I use it all the time, I paid for it outright.... I have too many subscriptions I pay for, and didn't want to think about another lifetime expense. The only downside to paying upfront is the support becomes limited - after a year, you have to pay \$25 when you need SC support. Personally, I haven't needed SC support too much, but when I have, they are pretty helpful. Currently, they have an influx of talent at a faster rate than ever before, so I would suggest to try and follow their setup guide, ask friends to help, and figure out setting up your connection on your own.

I'd also highly recommend setting up your connection via ethernet. Wifi connections are often not stable and can lead to dropouts, adding more time to your session and a chance that the perfect take could get ruined. Even one blip can add another 5 minutes to getting the job done. And, there are exceptions to this, but I believe it's easier to get setup on a Mac. For example, if you setup via Wifi but eventually get your ethernet going, Mac & Source Connect usually recognizes this connection right away. With PC, you probably want to wait until you get your ethernet: Source Connect recognizes Wifi and Ethernet (wired connection) as two different things, and will require two different setups.

Aye, aye, aye. It's a lot less complicated than it sounds - I just aim to be thorough and give you a clear lay of the land. *I found all these things out the hard way, and it didn't have to be hard.*

**All in all, it's up to the client in the end. Source Connect, ipDTL, Zoom, plain ol' phone, whatever - if your client has a process they prefer, they will tell you what they want to use. If they are new-ish to voice over, you can help steer them in a direction.**

**- Oh, wait... I have to self record now?**

Well duh. I'll take that rum neat, sir/madam - and no, I don't have a problem!

Self record auditions are a good thing. You don't have to run to all the studios and be nice to everyone and get in your car or subway and fight traffic and lalalalala - you can audition for 20 studios in one day!

### - **When is my sound “good enough” (recording wise)?**

Pre 2020, I would have said “Ah don’t obsess over this too much” because I had heard of people booking from an MP3 audition they recorded in a hallway at their job (echo, background noise, bad headphone mic and all). When they book you in a studio, it’s not a problem.

Now, you **MUST** have a good sound.

I’m sorry, it’s not fair, and it happened pretty much overnight, but a recording setup with too much street noise, too much echo, a quality mic, or anything related isn’t going to cut it.

Just think: when folks produce ads, they need the *best audio* they can get to work with. Radio and tv ads get amplified - if there is noise or anything else, it gets amplified too. Sure, you can doctor bad audio, but you can’t turn bad audio into good audio. You just can’t, and frankly, no one has the time.

They cut ads in real time during your session, so the engineer is already under a lot of pressure to perform. You don’t wanna make this person’s job harder than it already is.

To add: you don’t have to know the science of good sound and sound dampening and the whole nine. There’s a handful of people on YouTube who have figured it out for you. Setting up space can be challenging, especially if you never thought about having a home studio. But it’s ok - be resourceful, make it as comfy as you can, and work it out!

### - **When is my sound “competitive enough” (performance wise)?**

**Confidence is key here.**

**If you know in your heart of hearts you can deliver, and replicate what’s on your demo, and you’ve been coaching, and listening, and you’ve auditioned a bunch, then you’re probably ready.**

I started booking more when I believed I could. I’m not kidding - and it feels like this just happened.

I would say this: listen to demos on Google and YouTube and SoundCloud. Because we don’t exist in a vacuum, it’s really cool to see what people are doing, what styles are popular, who’s winning jobs, figuring out the how and why, and analyzing what makes their performance effective. You can usually put a POV (good, bad, etc) together within the first 5 seconds of any demo.

The coach is your winning tool here. They will tell you if your performance is on point, they will give you the keys to cracking the code, & they will help you understand “character” within VO. This idea of acting with the mic being your lens/audience will start to make sense.

Just turn up that CONFIDENCE, yo.

### **- How do I get an agent?**

**Google, IMDbPRO, and LinkedIn are your friends! There are so many ways to tackle this, let's talk about a few.**

Once you get your coaching and make your demo, It's time to start shopping around. Email is cool, cold calling is better, face to face time is best. Yes, it's harder to score, but we all know all good things ain't easy.

Email and prospecting, as you would in any other business, is essential. But don't forget that agents get thousands of emails a day. Sending an unsolicited email can't hurt, but it could be a waste of time. Referrals are better, in this regard, since they'd be expecting your correspondence.

One On One NYC/LA has the best seminars, workshops, & intensives IMO, with Actors Connection, and Paul Michael's The Network following in 2nd and 3rd. The Actors Green Room may still do this, but with their new online model, I doubt they offer the same services. My agent recently told me about Acting and Voice Studios.

When you do these intensives and seminars, you get a chance to ask questions, perform, AND watch other people perform. Soak it all in. Going to One On One is better than going to school - you're there to learn without the pressure of grades or academic accolades. You've literally invested to be in the ring and show off your stuff. It's assumed that everyone else in the room with you is taking their career seriously, too.

**Let's face it, most people won't pay for this service - by doing this, you've separated yourself from the amateurs. You've proven you're willing to go the extra mile - and agents/casting directors (who are there on their time outside of their 9-5) know this.**

At the end of these sessions, you get contact info, whether it's a mailing address or an email.

VO casting people and agents tend to do less of these things (as opposed to on-camera and theatre people), so you have to stay updated and try not to miss your opportunity.

With Zoom being the new rahrah in town, I believe there are more opportunities than ever to get an agent. It may not be the same as physical face-to-face, but it's pretty close. Some of the above mentioned services have expanded their offerings to people anywhere in the world and

even lowered their costs. Outside of these services, I've even heard of people getting agents via social media!

So many possibilities.

### - **What's working with an agent like?**

Agents are regular people who talk and think fast, lol.

In my experience, agents are hardly ever like what you see in movies, but I've never lived in Hollywood, nor do I plan to, so I could be wrong!

I think working with an agent could be good or *meh*, depending on your personality. I like good people, and want to work with good people, and make money with and for good people, who make sense, and talk about good things, who are considerate. Those are the principles I operate from, but I think most folks in *any* business feel the same.

In the WFH era, you get a deluge of emails some days, and less others. You follow the directions (major key, *you must follow verbatim*) and submit on time (another major key). You'd be surprised how many people disqualify themselves because your agents don't have time to rename your file, or ask you to re-record something.

I'm not supposed to tell you this, but I will anyway: a good agent is patient w/ you and may help you out when you're not on your game 100%. I've mislabeled things, and I've definitely submitted late (i'm working on it, actively). Don't be a floof like me, give yourself the best chance to win.

Oh, I hate that I have to say this, but since it's 2020 and there's something in the water: your agents are people, and they can become friends, but they are business partners first. They do 10% of the work to help build a career, which means you need to fill in that other 90 bro. Your agent is not your therapist and is most certainly not your life coach or planner. If you're not getting work w/ your agent, *I believe* you need to ask yourself why before you ask them.

### - **Well jeez. How the heck do I get work (with agent and otherwise)?!?!**

To be upfront, most of my work is referral and word of mouth based, meaning the same people hire me over and over, and I've worked long enough to have my name float about. It's a long game, and I'm still working on it.

The rest of this stuff I'm going to talk about works too, but I haven't had to do much of it in 2020.

Ah yes, everyone will tell you this and that is possible, but will often give vague answers about where to find the work. So here's brass tacks:

- 1. Get your performance down (auditioning, delivering in session)**
- 2. Market yourself and advertise**
- 3. Follow Up and Keep track**

I don't think I have to explain #1 considering I've talked about it a bunch. Your skills are king.

Marketing and advertising is essential for any business. You are a service based media business. Who are your buyers? What are they looking for? How do you find them? Between having a website, having a social media presence, writing a blog, having a YouTube, or having a podcast- there are a million ways to show people what you do and get work as a result.

Marketing and advertising work best when you execute a long term strategy. For me, I assess what I'm doing and if it's working every 6 months. In example, if I'm emailing 20 new prospective clients a week for 6 months and I only got one paying gig (even after following up), it's safe to say I need to rethink my moves.

And we already got into it, the good ol' follow up... the follow up is essential because people have split focus. It holds someone accountable to respond to you if they haven't, and separates the people with resolve from the pack. Most folks get discouraged after an initial dismissal. But sometimes people are too busy and miss your email!

**Following up and keeping some data about your contacts (new and old) will help to organize you, ground you, and figure out how to run a viable business.** You can't lie to yourself when the names and numbers are on a record that you created. You're also holding yourself accountable.

Here's small list of places you can find legit buyers:

- **LinkedIn**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Instagram**
- **Video Agencies**
- **A website with good SEO ( they'd find you )**
- **P2P (like Voice123, Voices.com - i prefer these two because their name ranks them high in search engines, and they seem to be legit)**

### **- What makes a good demo?**

A good demo can vary, but technically speaking demos have a format. The first demo is usually a commercial demo. From there, you can test your demo in the market. If it gets you work, you obviously did something right - and if it doesn't, you have to reassess!

**After your commercial demo does some work for you, you should start thinking about additional niche based demos. This is important because producers often work in one sector or niche - a TV guy may or may not do radio, a film production company probably doesn't do corporate work, and so on and so forth. If you're looking to do video games or animation, you need a Video Game/Animation/Character demo (these demos can be different or the same, depending on your range). Targeted demos take the guesswork out for your buyers.**

Beyond that, your demo should be professionally done - you can Google demo producers and compare some of the top guys in the industry. Why? Because they have an objective ear and listen to voice over day after day. They are fully immersed in what works and what doesn't in regards to your potential buyers. Because VO is highly competitive, you have to give yourself the best chance of winning!

To sum it up, your demo should probably have 5-7 varied spots of things you do extremely well and be no longer than a minute and a half. I've even heard that a minute is better - don't be precious, the VO world moves fast and no one has time... but your professional demo producer will get you in good shape!!!!!!

### **- Is it possible to make a full-time income in voice over?**

**Absolutely.**

**Well I did say so in the beginning, but so many people are too worried about this. You should keep your job while you build your career (gasp), so you can focus on building your craft - you don't want to be in a place where you are worry about your next check AND getting better. It hinders your progress IMO.**

Going full-time was not easy, and honestly, I'm still figuring it out (meaning, it's an ongoing process).

I apologize in advance for the long roundabout answer on this one: I take people's lives and livelihood seriously. I often say to myself, "My life and well-being are not up for gambling". That's a crazy way to live, and it's directly tied to money whether we like it or not.

If I knew you couldn't make a full time income in VO, I would have told you on the first page. There'd probably be one page. Maybe a bad review on Google Maps.

**I told you I'm no expert on running a business, as I've made a lot of mistakes, or rather, I've learned things by trial and error, since I didn't have folks to ask. I think the main thing to remember about trial and error is, "don't error yourself out of the game".**

What do I mean? Well, being in any creative profession is a calculated risk, considering your job is to audition. In that regard, the only things you have control over is your audition performance and the amount of things you can audition for, which can increase your booking ratio.

While you are working on all the things, money is spent, maybe a loan is taken out, you spend a certain amount on your demo and marketing and classes, and before you know it, you're X thousand dollars in the hole.

It happens. I feel bad for creative folks because I've been there time and time again, feeling as if I missed something along the way, or mad because I didn't sign up to be a small business. I've always just wanted to be an actor and make a living doing it. Yes, I used to get down and even mad at myself. How productive....

I even had a casting director tell me that VO is so saturated that it's only good enough to make a supplemental income. Right before an audition. Bless their heart lol.

Let's change these mindsets: you ARE a small biz if you decide to become a VO talent.

**Taking it further, today, I know this to be true: if you believe you can make a full-time income with your voice, you will.** I've asked a ton of freelancers what their secret is over the years and the answer boils down to this: **confidence**. The confidence will have you go forth and execute on your plan like the champ you never knew you were. Big facts.

Here's the main thing that will give you confidence: **knowledge**. You're already increasing your knowledge by reading this. If you got this far, it's likely you're serious about getting started in VO. So in order to increase your knowledge, KEEP reading, KEEP listening, KEEP growing, and NEVER stop asking questions.

Here's a quick, direct example of how this works: Remember I said I didn't sign up to be a small biz? 1. I've purchased and read more books I can count on business now. 2. I've spent upwards of 10k on courses to help me figure this out. 3. I was lucky to work at a startup that taught me a boatload of organizational skills/productivity tools, and I eventually started applying my work skills to my own business.

**My lack of knowledge in regards to business was my greatest weakness in regards to my career. So I attacked it head on. My new knowledge has increased my confidence in what I offer and I've gone on to do bigger and better things as a result.**

If that doesn't give you hope, think about this: the Internet is huge right now. It's booming beyond our wildest dreams. Just when we thought it couldn't get bigger and faster and more

accessible, it has become even more necessary for business, connections, and more. E-Commerce has skyrocketed in the past 8 months alone, since people are stuck at home, etc. Because business is booming at folks' fingertips, advertising is booming just the same, and advertisers are our direct buyers - so we're in business, mang.

**We, voice over artists, serve as the bridge between ideas, products, concepts, companies, philosophies and the people. It's the reason it is a learned skill, or art, or craft - a good voice over will sell itself, and the thing in question. You don't quite know why (as a listener), but you know when you know.**

Personally, I think that's worthy of a full-time income. Sounds important to me!

The folks that understand this, understand that we simply need to find our buyers. Yes, the industry has changed - 10 years ago the buyers went to agents/managers and that was the only way to get to them. Now, the world is your oyster.

**However you do it - you can build a steady income for yourself. I can't teach you hustle, but now you've got some game!**

### **- Casting directors... whatsup with that?**

**Have you ever seen a unicorn? Well, if you've seen a casting director the answer is yes. Pun absolutely intended.**

In 2020 and beyond, specifically in voice over, if you have seen a casting director in person, it means you aren't quarantining and you're the reason I'm still at home. And you still haven't given me rum, sir/madam. Lol

All jokes aside, these folks are either hard to catch like the one that got away, or your best rich friend.

Everyone is pandering to a casting director - rightfully so, since they are the gatekeepers to your next job. They also handle the tedious organization of auditions so a client can receive a coherent package. They translate whatever hoopla the buyer is asking for, so you can get a spec that informs your best audition. If you do your job well, and they like you, they use unicorn tactics to sway the buyer in your direction.

And then they do this process again and again and again... and still manage to give folks their good unicorn time and energy.

I spent however long auditioning for people at studios, in person, and you get maybe 10 minutes max to make an impression. You are in the booth, doing voice over for the shortest amount of that time. So, it's kinda tough to form relationships with casting directors. They also see/listen to hundreds of people a day.

**The key is to always be nice to CDs: you never know when it will pay off.**

From 2018 to now, most of my work has been by word of mouth, and most of those people who referred me, you guessed it... were casting directors.

Take classes with them when you can, send them a gift (wine, because they need it), keep them updated on your work whenever you have a chance.

**- Well, these odds seem insurmountable. Um, is this even worth it bro....?**

**Any good thing worth having takes work my friend. And time, and patience.**

**You can't focus on the money first. Obviously, we would all like to get paid - but what makes you better than the next guy? Have you put in your time? Do you deserve it?**

**If you want to build a sustainable CAREER, and not just learn how to get paid a cool \$200 here or there, but possibly never work again, then you have to focus on your PRODUCT. In this case, your product is YOU... invest in yourself, soak up knowledge, practice the craft, and the rest will come.**

Year three, or five, or eight, or ten, is not the time to quit... you can, but just think about what could have happened if you got on the other side of the wall...



GEICO

\$36,518,868  
Est. TV Spend ⓘ

9,709  
National Airings ⓘ

[Tag Team Helps With Dessert](#)  
Top Campaign ⓘ



TurboTax

\$31,571,732  
Est. TV Spend ⓘ

6,558  
National Airings ⓘ

[Freeloader](#)  
Top Campaign ⓘ



Verizon

\$30,777,134  
Est. TV Spend ⓘ

1,366  
National Airings ⓘ

[5G, Discovery+ and Disney Bundle: \\$1,000 Off](#)  
Top Campaign ⓘ



Progressive

\$30,567,833  
Est. TV Spend ⓘ

4,232  
National Airings ⓘ

[Dr. Rick: Methods](#)  
Top Campaign ⓘ



State Farm

\$28,324,899  
Est. TV Spend ⓘ

2,384  
National Airings ⓘ

[Barbershop](#)  
Top Campaign ⓘ

I took this picture just to show you how much money is spent in advertising. This is in **one week**. Obviously, these are the top advertisers in the USA, and maybe the world, so a voice talent working with these companies is at the top of their game.

***Let's do some rough math, in a very rough example:***

**Geico spent \$36.5M in a week. Let's say they're running 10 big commercials at the time, so  $\$36.5M / 10 = 3.65M$ . Let's add, the budget for 1 commercial was \$10M, because it's a superbowl ad. Your fee is maybe .5-1% of the budget, so you get 50-100K upfront.**

**And remember our ad spend is 3.65M for the one commercial in a week - now, I don't know the math SAG does to figure out residuals, but let's just say you receive .25% of that ad spend per week, because they're using your voice.**

**(Your "percentage" will hardly be this congruent, as airings and reach is measured differently across campaigns, but if you have an ad that is running on TV, digital, radio, with 3-5 different versions, it's going to add up.)**

**.25% of 3.65M is ~\$9.18K.  $9.18K * 26 \text{ weeks} = 238.68K$**

**If this ad ran for half a year, you've made 288.68 - 338.68K (in our rough example).**

**This is an anomaly, somewhat unrealistic, and quite frankly, you shouldn't hedge your bets on an example like this. But you CAN make a year or two's salary with ONE commercial campaign.**

**It can take FOREVER to book something as lucrative as a Super Bowl Ad - but we MUST dream, and we must know the potential of our careers, if we hustle.**

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*The example above doesn't even include the vast opportunities the internet has created - there are hundreds of thousands small businesses creating ads on their own accord, using Facebook and YouTube and LinkedIn to run their ads. Many of them spend THOUSANDS on their own, because it brings in business... which means, many of them need a voice.*

Many of them are creating content without voice over - that being said, many of them need a voice, *and they don't even know it.* They are literally underestimating the power of the voice and undermining their own value.

We are familiar with the value of the voice from young. It teaches you an immeasurable amount, and when paired with visual, that value goes up immensely. Humans appreciate voice over, even if they don't actively know it.

This is the power of being a voice over actor.

That being said, I believe this path is worth it. Call it a craft, call it a career, call it whatever you want - people care about the voice, and when it is paired perfectly with images, it's completely worth figuring out the puzzle. Do the math - the opportunity is vast, and is *yours* to seize, whenever you are ready.

### **- Best pieces of life saving advice?**

I had to think about a year for this one, because, really: who am I to have the audacity to tell people what they should and shouldn't be doing? I am a working professional, who works daily at building his career. I'm not famous or anything. Well, the more people asked, the more I figured some things out.

1. **Aim to be a working pro.** This means, if you can do it sometimes, part-time, and eventually full-time, do it. Fame or notoriety, especially today, does not always = income. For example, your favorite dubbing actors may be amazing, and well-known for a show or two, but they hardly are "rich". Sure, voice acting can be lucrative - but you want your skills to be on par when they call you. If you got one lucky big break, and then you had to fight for a second, would you be ready??

2. **Show up, even when you don't feel like it.** I get hired time and time again because I show up. When I show up, I give it my 150%, every time, as long as the respect & good energy is there. You can't always dictate what your producers, directors, or fellow castmates are giving you, but you have control over how you show up. To add to this - I've recently gained gigs simply because someone else *did not show up*, if you can believe it. This behavior is crazy to me - your producers are often time-crunched with multiple projects and do not have time to deal with no shows. If you don't show up, most of the time, you won't get called back.

Oh, and I've gotten my best gigs when someone was sick. Meaning, the guy who was the voice for 10 years had the flu. Or (insert famous name) was off shooting something (that actually happened).

So, it's that simple. Lots want to do this. Show up and show out.

3. **Be nice to everyone.** Look: before COVID, when I was going to studios to audition for 8 years (and after COVID when studios will slowly start back up), I'd literally travel to the studio, usually for 30 mins to an hour, just to audition for 5-8 minutes at a time. The mp3 audition has taken a lot of the pressure and discomfort out of this process, and allows you to be in the comfort of your home. BUT the reality is - this is a fast paced business. Ideally, you should be able to hit the main intention of your script and interpret in 3 consecutive takes without overthinking.

I said all that to say, the 8 years I was running around getting used to this process in NYC, I honestly felt like I wasn't getting to know anyone. Well, I was wrong. To my surprise, I had been laying down the roots and reputation for what I have going on today. It's nice to know that being nice to people and all the random conversations I've struck up, have led to somewhere. Heck, I am still great friends with some of the people I met in food service years ago (some people in high places). Frankly, it doesn't matter who it is. The intern will one day be an exec. Your former agent will one day move into publishing. Everybody is looking to move up and appreciates working with someone who is nice. I honestly think this is why I get hired 90% of the time... because let's be honest: there are a LOT of talented people out here; there's no rule set in stone that says you are "the guy". So be nice!

4. **Social media....** I could write a dissertation on this. *But mainly, I want to warn you:* it is a wonderful tool when used well. People have built careers with it (I am not one of these people, sorry). However, because we are so used to it, people get lax and forget that "free speech is not completely free"...

What do I mean? Cursing, talking about sensitive politics where people may or may not agree with you, loosely talking about sexuality, addressing so called "haters", playing music that may not be "on brand", NSFW images, drugs, etc.

“Hey man, this is America, I have the right to say what I want, and telling me I can’t is wrong, and maybe even oppressive!”

Yea, ok. Tell that to the company who wants to pay you 20k in a year to do a voice over for one commercial. Sure, you’re a person, you are entitled to an opinion, and you can live your life as you see fit. But when you sign a contract, quite literally: word is bond.

One of the worst things to do is share details about the job/jobs. If you sign a contract or a non-disclosure agreement, you can get fired. I know, it’s nice to share with everyone and revel over success. There WILL be a time for that... but in the meantime, why don’t you get a journal or something? People generally overshare, and if you’re going to be a professional, this is a habit you will have to get under control...

**The other side of social media is making sure your branding is in line with the message you want people to know about you. You can hire experts for this, and pine over it forever (I def have), but this is plain and simple: **how do you see yourself? More importantly, how do you see the you you want to be? MOST importantly, how do others see you?**** You will only figure this out by interacting with the market (trial and error). If you aren’t getting a response, or if the response isn’t what is desired, then you should pivot, pivot, pivot. It’s ok to do it! Take ideas from other people. Don’t get stuck in a pattern or persona that isn’t working, use social media to amplify the IRL you ;-)

- 5. There is no shortcut to doing this.** Sorry! Very sorry to burst your bubble, but I know a LOTS of people get frustrated about the amount of money one could possibly spend with no return. Don’t blame it on the market - the market is here and thriving... if you are losing money, *maybe you aren’t ready to spend it.* Or, if you aren’t making any money, look to yourself first. Maybe you shouldn’t focus on the money first (I’m telling you you shouldn’t).

People reaaaaaally don’t like hearing that, but you’re better off staying at your day job or using other skills to make \$ while figuring out your artistic career. Focusing on \$ will create anxiety, and will come through in your reads, and will definitely be counterproductive. I said it earlier, but I have to reiterate.

***Here’s the tough talk: What makes you think you can just come along and be considered for a job that currently belongs to someone who has been doing it for 25 years??? If you look at it that way, I’m telling you that THEY definitely want to keep being better than you, and will do so, and continue to train, and crush you, and never recommend you, and still be excellent, just so you will never get the chance at their spot. They will keep their 300 gigs, and maybe throw you one. I’ve seen this energy firsthand, and have JUST started to make it to the other side. These people are serious about their livelihood - it’s not a game!***

*I'm not like this and will never be because 1. There's too much work to be had and 2. My culture never promoted this way of thinking, it's tiresome. This doc is the proof ;-)*

Look, it doesn't always have to take 10 years to build a viable career, but you have to learn/network/grow/figure out/take the time to find the right places to shorten your timeline and give your career a jumpstart. Unfortunately, to date, there is no ONE place to go to get all the voice over jobs and be happy. It just doesn't work that way. There never will be.

I've also mentioned earlier that you DON'T have to be an actor to do this, but I'm telling you without a doubt that my acting skills that I've developed since 14 yrs old give me a leg up over lots of people. I've been reading scripts, copy, screenplays, etc. all my life. This stuff is not rocket science - you can do it, but not if you're lazy. *I could even fall off and get lazy and fall out of favor with my employers! It could happen!*

But it won't. My job beats anything I used to do, and most of what other people do, and I truly have a passion for it (I started this whole doc saying this, btw).

I will spell it out for you - any person who has a career as an artist has probably been **obsessive** about it. I've gained a lot, but I've also sacrificed a lot. There is a way to have a "healthy" obsession, which I've only learned through experience... Are you ready to audition 5,000 times and get no response? Most people would say no, and I don't blame them. Actually, I'd applaud them, because it sounds crazy. You'll either get used to rejection or you won't, and it doesn't make you a lesser person. I'm just curbing your expectations.

**- Wow. That was a lot, and now my head is spinning. What's the short version?**

If you made it this far, then you really care. Here's what you need to do, in an order that makes sense (obviously, there are lots of variables, and these steps take time):

1. **Soak up free / low cost info** from books, seminars, YT, FB groups, and more. Listen to lots of demos
2. Get a coach. A reputable coach from word of mouth. This means don't jump at the first person with a deal - the more you hear a name, the better. Ask people who have done it - lots of people skip this step or skimp on it (don't do that)
3. **Make your demo** - same rules apply to finding a reputable demo producer - this is not a bunch of random MP3s strung together. Think like a pro athlete. Demos in this order - COMMERCIAL, PROMO, NARRATION, CHARACTER - if you are not interested in promo or narration, or are more interested in character, skip to character demo after commercial
4. **Keep going to classes**, get tapped into community, get your name around. Keep coaching. When people see you kill it in action, your name will travel.

5. **Get your home setup together** - a proper mic, a proper interface, all the proper tools - ideally treat the room you want to use with sound dampening materials as much as you can. Make your space ready for WORK, make it comfortable. L

5b. **Learn how to USE your equipment**, this is key. Learn how to structure an MP3 audition. Learn how to follow labeling instructions to a T. 50% of auditions do not make it bc of poor labeling - this is a stupid reason to be disqualified. Home studios can take forever to perfect, do not underestimate this...

6a. **Submit to agencies, managers, casting directors** - if you've been tapped into community, etc., you should have gotten info about how agencies etc work and how to make a good impression. Agency/management is just ONE strategy - do NOT rely on it.

6b. **Develop your personal marketing plan** - and stick to it. Is it email? Social? Is it pay to play? If you are starting in 2021, you PROBABLY should start with a "pay to play" like voice123.com. Ask people about their experiences. Furthermore, you need a voice over optimized website. You can look at my site to get an idea what I mean ([TheVoiceOverBaron.com](http://TheVoiceOverBaron.com))

6c. **Learn how to structure your business** - you will learn as you go and pick up stuff here and there. How do you invoice? What are fair rates? How do I stay in favor with casting directors and reps? Running a VO business is like any other, but there is a lot more negotiating bc not everyone agrees on its value - learn how to protect yourself.

7. **Repeat steps 2-5**. Keep getting better. Make your own content. Keep practicing. Keep taking improv or acting or classes related to the voice. You never know when new skills will come in handy. Keep it fresh, keep loving the process. Remember that repeat business will always pay you the best, so be nice to everyone