

Guide To Hiring Internet Voice Over Talent: 7 Essential Tips

Following these simple guidelines will improve Internet communications and keep costs down!

The trend toward hiring voice talent online means that many voice talents work from a home studio. Talents record and edit the work themselves, then deliver the recordings worldwide as mp3 files. When participating in this world of Internet voice over, media producers will benefit from some basic guidelines.

Seven Top Hiring Guidelines:

1) Determine the Voice Over Talent's Recording Capabilities

Does your voice over talent have their own recording studio? If details about the studio are not provided on the talent's website, ask about their recording space and equipment. If the talent does not have their own studio, additional studio fees will be added to talent fees. Just ask what is provided in the individual's voiceover services package.

2) Choose the Right Talent for Your Job: Request a Custom Demo

Voice over artists can easily send you a short custom demo with an excerpt from your script. This will help you determine not only how their voice may convey your message, but it will give you a preview of what to expect of the recording quality. Note: Most talents will never record the entire script as an audition, in order to guard against theft of their work.

3) You Are the Director, Provide Direction

Direction is extremely helpful to voice over talents, who are performers. Provide descriptive words such as: Warm, confident, light-hearted, concerned, dry, authoritative, comic, natural, professional, hip, excited. Or tell them you want them to sound like a role: a storyteller, mom, best friend, announcer, trusted teacher, etc. Refer to the talent's demos and point out sections you liked.

4) Provide a Clear Script

Most talents will charge extra if they are asked to re-record due to script changes. Changes include copy errors, so proofreading pays! Send an easy-to-print script in a 12-point font. When the script contains directions and multiple voices, make it very clear what part you want them to record. Spell out pronunciations, especially proper names, technical terms, and regional pronunciations.

5) Read Your Own Script Out Loud

Taking the time to read your script aloud before sending it to the talent will help in two ways. First, you can assess whether or not your timing expectations are reasonable. Second, it will help you make changes to the script when the words hit 'speed bumps' or there is no room to breathe in a run-on sentence. There are subtle differences between scripts intended for speech and scripts intended for silent reading.

6) Be Clear About Expectations

Recordings with no music or effects are called 'dry read'. If you want to hire full production from the voice talent, make sure they provide those services. In a dry read, do you need them to edit out all the breaths, or will you take care of that? Do you want three different takes on a line so you can choose

your favorite? Is timing critical? What is the fee if pick-ups (re-takes) are required? Clarity prevents mistakes. Outline your expectations before you and the talent agree upon the final pay rate.

7) Hire a Professional Voice Talent / Rates

In summary, it's a good idea to hire a professional voice talent who is already aware of these guidelines, and has the experience to make your project a smooth, successful process. Listen to demos and research the VO talent's online presence. The Internet is flooded with hobbyists who can waste your time. Voice talents are entrepreneurs and rates vary. If you Google 'AFTRA /SAG voiceover rates', you'll find Union scale as a measure of negotiation. Paying a reasonable, professional rate will bring you quality and ease of service.

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