

VOICEOVER



GURUS

TOP TEN MISTAKES NEW ACTORS MAKE WHEN GETTING STARTED ON THEIR VOICEOVER CAREER PATH: THAT YOU WON'T MAKE NOW!

1. Cold-calling a casting director or agent. This will do nothing except make them angry. If you have a connection to someone in the industry through a friend or family member, make sure to ask right away if it is a good time or not. Be quick and to the point. Do you have a specific question for them? Do you have a demo ready and want them to hear it? Do you want them to recommend a class somewhere? Make sure you don't make idle chit-chat. A very busy CD or agent will greatly appreciate you cutting to the chase. Be quick and gracious.
2. Signing up for a class that includes making a demo at the end. The guarantee here is that the company taking your very large sum of money is going to be...making a very large sum of money. There is, however, no guarantee that after this specific class that you will be demo-ready, therefore no guarantee that your "included demo" will be any good. Do your research, take a reputable class and make sure to get an honest, unbiased opinion at the end from your teacher. I also strongly recommend studying at least once each (class, private coaching) with both a casting director and also a working voiceover actor. They both have very valuable, and very different, lessons to teach you.
3. Signing in for an audition (if this is a live audition process as opposed to internet based) before reading the script until you are comfortable. When the CD calls your name, you must be ready to walk into that booth with a killer audition. Being less than prepared or worse, asking for extra time to read over the copy, is clearly to your disadvantage. When you arrive, grab the script, prepare until comfortable, and then sign in. You will be much more relaxed.
4. Reading only the part you are auditioning for. Skipping the other parts of the script, whether they be another actor's dialogue, or sound effects, or general description at the top of the page means that you are missing critical background information that could help your read make more sense to you and to others. Know it all.

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5. If at a live audition, asking to read for other parts. If via internet submission, submitting for every single part. Don't be annoying. Be "easy." Go in, read what you were asked to read, and say thank-you and goodbye.
6. Rehearsing at full voice in the holding area, or speaking loudly to anyone in the space. The casting directors are recording behind that door, and if they have to come out and ask you to *shush*, that is costing them time and money. And it is costing you a shot at getting the job.
7. Dropping names or credentials when meeting a new decision maker. There's no need to share that you just booked the new voice of Pepsi, especially if it's a Coke audition. In fact, here's an interesting factoid about the voiceover industry: there are non-compete rules that require disclosure. If your voice is running in a spot for Volkswagen, for example, you may be ineligible for that Mercedes audition.
8. Taking up too much of the casting director's time chatting before or after the read. Being friendly is fine (a smile goes a long way) but sharing your whole life story is not. Remember that studio time is very expensive and the casting director will have to worry: "Will this actor do this in the recording studio if s/he gets the job?" Don't make them worry about you.
9. No blowing the CDs ears off when the copy is supposed to be loud or excited. Those mics are *hot*. (Meaning, they pick up sound extremely well.) Deafening your decision maker is a big no-no.
10. Thinking of the read as a "performance." Remember, aside from character spots, your job is to be believable. This means sounding authentic.
11. Thinking voiceover is as easy as reading words off paper. If this is what you do, this is exactly what you will sound like – someone reading words off paper. Remember, voiceover is often dubbed "voice-acting" for a reason. To get a perspective on this part of yourself, you need a trained ear. So, don't just ask your mother – of course she'll say "you're wonderful!" We all think we sound great (in the shower), but put your money where your mouth is and get a professional opinion. Yes, we gave you a bonus tip, we like you that much!