



Resources, Links & So Much More for:

The Beginning Voiceover Actor

“Helping Voice Actors Find Their Way”

Contact:

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1. READ THIS IN FULL FIRST:

[I Want to be a Voice Actor! - by Dee Bradley Baker](#)

Once you've read through the above site, read this one:

2. [The Voiceover Collective](#)

Education, Equipment, you name it!! Everything you need to know about getting your feet off the ground in VO!

3. The Voiceover Resource Guide aka [The VORG!](#)

3. [Southwest Voices \(Instagram\)](#)

4. [The Booth of Us](#) (our VO friends Jay & Meg)

5. [Audible](#) (Browse existing audiobooks)

Wonderful Animation Coaches that Michelle loves:

[Sara Jane Sherman](#)

[Debi Derryberry](#)

Voice Over Career Questions and Considerations

Compiled by Sean Daeley circa 2020

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Questions You Should Ask: (applies to biz goals as well as coaching!)

- What's my budget?
- What are my Voiceover goals? (Be as specific as possible!)
- What genre(s) do I want to pursue?
- Does the coach specialize in those genres?
- Are they respected in the industry?
- Are they a successful (i.e. currently working) Voice Talent?
- Are their students successful?
- Do I want to work with an individual coach, a small team, or a voice acting school or program?
- Does the coach offer other services or added value? (Demo production, marketing plan creation, career support, etc.)

Other Considerations

- Not all coaches are actors. Some are agents / casting directors, etc.
- Reach out to previous students for testimonials. (Or ask the coach if they can refer you to past students)
- Check out past student websites / demos. Do they sound good? Is the acting competitive? Is it mixed well?

Try Before you buy!

- Audit a class, if possible
- Join a less expensive webinar or workshop to get a sense of a coach's style.
- Pay for a couple sessions to see if you gel with a coach's style and personality.

Startup Costs: How Much You Should Expect to Invest

Most coaches charge an average of \$150 / hour

\$1000-\$2000 Coaching (Depends on how many sessions you need to be competitive)

More advanced/specialized training may require a higher investment. Courses and intensive workshops regularly cost \$500-\$600 each.

\$1000-\$2700: Demo Production (Depends on genre, and number of demos)

\$500-\$1000 "Inexpensive" Home Studio Setup

\$150-\$1000: Microphone

\$99-\$1000: Interface

\$50-\$150: Studio Accessories (Cables, Mic Stand, Pop Filter, Copy Stand)

Free - \$\$\$ Audio Software (Also Known as a "Digital Audio Workstation / DAW")

Step Two: Home Studio (You need one!)

Your acoustic environment (i.e. Studio space) is the number one factor in determining your sound quality. Treat it first, THEN fill it with shiny gear!

Isolation: Find the quietest space in your home. Remove all unwanted noises and sounds. (A/C, refrigerator, children, pets, etc.)

Treatment: Cover all hard/reflective surfaces with soft/absorbent materials (these can be specifically designed acoustic panels or sheets, or anything you have available like blankets, clothing, sleeping bags, etc.)

For Treatment, I love Vocalboothtogo.com and Audimute.com

For Iso-Booths, Check out Double-Walled Options from Whisper Room, Vocalbooth.com, Gretchen.com, Scott's VO Booths, and StudioBricks (Prices Range from \$4000 - \$10000)

Mics for VO: (Prices Range from \$150-\$3200)

AT2035, AT875R, AT897, Neat King Bee, Rode NT1 (NOT NT-1A!) Lewitt LCT 440-Pure, Se 2200, Sennheiser MK4, Rode NTG-5, AT 4047, Mojave MA-201, Austrian Audio OC18 or OC818, Neumann TLM 102, Neumann TLM 103, Gefell m930 or UMT70s, Sennheiser 416, Neumann TLM 49, Neumann TLM 193, Neumann u87

Interfaces: (Prices Range from \$99-\$949)

Steinberg UR12 and UR22, Yamaha AG03, Focusrite Scarlett 3rd gen and Clarett Series, Rode ai-1, SSL 2/2+, Motu m2, Audient evo 4, id4, id14, and id22, Apollo Arrow, Apollo Twin Solo or Duo, RME Babyface Pro/ Pro FS

DAW's (Audio Editing Software like Reaper, Pro Tools, Adobe Audition, Audacity, etc; Prices range from free to perpetual monthly licenses)

Free DAW's:

Audacity <https://www.audacityteam.org/>

Ocen Audio <https://www.ocenaudio.com/en/whatis>

Inexpensive DAW's

REAPER (\$60 Personal, \$225 Commercial, Cross-Platform)

Presonus Studio One Artist (\$80, Cross-Platform)

Twisted Wave (\$99, Mac Only, my personal favorite for its simplicity/ease of use)

Monthly Subscriptions:

Pro Tools (\$29/month, Cross-Platform)

Adobe Audition (\$29/month, Cross-Platform)

Want a Home Studio NOW?

Want to learn how to process audio yourself?

Other Credited Voice Over Audio Experts

Dan Friedman

Dan Lenard

Jim Edgar

Jordan Reynolds

Tim Tippets

Uncle Roy Yokelson

\$700-\$1000 Professional Website

Voiceactorwebsites.com

\$2500-\$7000 Total Initial Investment

That's a lotta money! Here are some free and inexpensive resources to help you save up and invest in yourself!

Websites / Blogs

Dee Bradly Baker – Iwanttobeavoiceactor.com

Nethervoice – <https://bit.ly/33tQ4VW>

Courvo Blog – courvo.com/blog

Doug Turkel- <http://www.dougturkel.com/blog/>

Joe J Thomas - <http://www.joesdump.com/>

Voiceover Xtra - <https://www.voiceoverextra.com/#>

Voiceover Bulletin Board – VO-BB.com

Get Started in VO - <https://www.getstartedinvo.com/>

Narrators Road Map - <https://www.narratorsroadmap.com/>

How Do Narrators Pronounce Stuff? <https://hersmoothvoice.com/how-do-narrators-know-how-to-pronounce-stuff/>

Books

Voiceover Voice Actor, Tara Platt and Yuri Lowenthal

Sound Advice: Voiceover from an Audio Engineer's Perspective, by Dan Friedman

VO Studio Companion: The Home Voiceover Recording Instruction Manual,
by Emmett Andrews

Voiceover Recording at Home and On the Road, by Harlan Hogan

Making Money in Your PJ's, by Paul Strikwerda

There's Money Where Your Mouth Is, by Elaine Clarke

More than Just A Voice, by Dave Courvoisier

Voiceover Garden, by Jonathan Tilley

V-OH! By Marc Cashman

Rodney Saulsberry's Tongue Twisters and Vocal Warm-Ups: With Other Vocal-Care Tips

The Art of Voice Acting, by James Alsburger

To be or Wanna Be, by Sean Allen Pratt

Recorded Materials and Programs

[GVAA Recorded Classes and Webinars](#)

Pat Fraley Home Courses

Resources

Voiceover Entrance Exam - <http://www.audioconnell.com/workshop/the-voiceover-entrance-exam-free-voice-over-e-book/>

Podcasts

VO Meter Podcast <https://www.vometer.com/>

Talkin' Toons with Rob Paulsen <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/talkin-toons-with-rob-paulsen/id438294853?mt=2>

Voiceover School with Jamie Muffett <http://www.voschoolpodcast.com/>

Voice Acting Mastery with Crispin Freeman <http://www.voiceactingmastery.com/>

VO Boss Podcast with Anne Ganguzza <https://voboss.com/>

Everyday VOPreneur with Marc Scott -- how to market yourself as a Voice Actor

Web Series

Booth Junkie:

VO Buzz Weekly <https://www.vobuzzweekly.com/>

VOBS (Voice Over Body Shop) <https://www.vobs.tv/>

JAT's (James Arnold Taylor's) YouTube Channel:

Sean's YouTube Channel:

GVAA's YouTube Channel:

Movies

"I know that Voice!" (Documentary produced by John Dimaggio)

"Talking to Myself"(Voice Actor James Arnold Taylor's Incredible One-Man Show)

"Adventures in Voice Acting" (Documentary by BangZoom! Entertainment featuring Steve Blum, Kari Walhgren and a number of other Animation and Anime Talent)

Here are ten questions I suggest you ask yourself before you launch your bright, shiny new voice-over career:

Thanks to Jon Gardner !!!

How much money am I willing to spend?

Plan on \$2500 just to get started. With that you may be able to get a reasonable sounding microphone and interface, a smidge of sound treatment for your recording space and a modicum of training if you pinch your pennies until they bleed. As a measure to go by, the more pinching and bleeding the better. More training, which you will absolutely need, will add more cost, as will getting access to auditions. Your recording space may need more investment. Then there are business expenses. Based on my personal experience, \$5000 is more realistic. It is not uncommon to hear voice professionals say they spent more like \$10,000 in their first year.

Do I have a quiet place to record?

Is there someplace where you live that is relatively quiet to work? Is it available to use without severely compromising domestic bliss? There are many options available to help deal with noise problems, but they all cost money and none of them are perfect. It will become a constant struggle to work if you can't block out most of the traffic noise in front, the construction next door, or the mattress monkeys upstairs.

How much time do I have?

For a lot of people, continuing to work full time while you get started in voice-overs is a necessity, and can be a serious grind. My first year, I worked full time and did my VO work in the evenings and weekends, in total about 70 hours a week. How does a 70 hour work week sound to you? Working a full time 9-5 job is a serious handicap in other ways. Auditions frequently arrive in your email in the morning or in the middle of the day. If you are one of the first small group of people to submit an audition, you have a good chance of at least getting listened to. If you can't do auditions until the evening, most of those opportunities will be gone.

How good are my relationships at home?

Ask this question in light of my answer to the previous two questions. Especially if you are married or have a partner at home, ask yourself if they will support your dream. Of course they will, they love you, right? Next, thoughtfully ask

yourself if after six months they will continue to be supportive when you have spent a bunch of money, you are working 70 hours a week, your together time has dwindled to a fraction of its former glory, you aren't pulling your weight with the household chores, and there are next to no jobs coming in. It is a huge ask of your partner to get on board and stay on board as the VO Express is barreling downhill and no one knows whether it will crash in a fiery ball of dashed hopes and devastated finances or whether it will softly glide into a luxury villa in Luxembourg.

How much do I like roller coasters?

Oh those exhilarating climbs, dives, swoops, swings and curls! How could you not like a roller coaster? Well, I'll tell you how. Dizziness, vertigo, nausea and vomiting, that's how. When you start out, there will likely be a LOT of ups and downs. I mean from ecstatic, dancing-with-angels-on-rainbow-painted-clouds type of highs, to the wallowing-in-the-darkness-of-the-ocean-floor-covered-in-hundreds-of-years-of-crustacean-poop-while-getting-crawled-on-by-mollusks-who-leave-weird-red-marks-on-your-skin kind of lows. All in the same day. Here's something to look forward to: you've got 364 more of those on the way my friend!

By the way, I have heard experienced people in the industry say that the roller coaster ride never ends. In light of this, you might want to add a lifetime supply of Pepto Bismol and airline style puke bags to your list of expenses.

Can I be humble enough to learn?

It is extremely rare that a newcomer to voice-over is so good they can jump in and set the world on fire. What you need to know is, no matter how good you think you are now, you will probably need to learn more. Probably a lot more. I set off on my voice-over journey with an unrealistic impression of my ability and a naive lack of understanding about how complex the world of voice-over is. Oh, I had some skills. I used to be a radio personality. In that context I had recorded thousands of commercials, promos and even done some VO on the side.

Well, let me tell you, the first thing I had to learn was how much I had to learn. If you can be humble, be honest with yourself, and be open to receiving good teaching and critique, you will be okay. Unless you are God's Gift to Voice-over, if you enter this field with an overinflated ego or a closed mind, it will be a hard road.

Do I believe in myself?

This has been the hardest paragraph in this blog post for me to write because it hits so close to home. I have recordings that play in my head that have been there from childhood which tell me how futile it is for me to try to succeed. There are lies and misinformation which create negative narratives around pride, money, success and good old fashioned self-worth. If you can relate, those voices and ideas will impede your progress and you will need to find a way to grow past them. I had a great coach tell me that he wants me to be an "arrogant S.O.B." in front of the microphone. He was right. You need to have swagger when you step into the booth. You need to be unflappable in a live-directed session where other people are listening to you, analyzing your every word. You need to be confident in the value you offer when reaching out to a potential client and when pricing your work. You need to know you can hit this VO thing out of the park. Which leads me to my next question.

Am I self-motivated?

Can you pick yourself up after getting rejected dozens, even hundreds of times? Will you force yourself to push through the discouragements? Are you dependent on others to tell you what to do or hold your hand when you're hurting? We all need a helping hand and some compassion along the way, but it must be you that keeps things moving forward. Somewhere in your gut you need to be able to muster the determination to get up and take another punch when you feel like staying down. Recently someone in a Facebook group asked for people to share the achievement they were most proud of in the past year. There were a lot of exciting accomplishments including getting a national ad campaign and eclipsing previous earnings records. Do you want to know how I responded? I said, "I kept going". Although it would be my usual M.O., I wasn't trying to be funny. Risking being vulnerable right now, I admit that I am getting choked up as I write this. I kept going. I. Kept. Going. That is what I was most proud of. And here I am today, still going. Can you?

Am I willing to work on myself, inside and out?

I was surprised to discover how much I learned about myself in my first year. For instance, while planning my branding I found that a lot of my concepts of who I am and how others perceive me are flawed. I needed to get the old cat o' nine tails out of the drawer in the bedroom (don't ask) and metaphorically flail myself until I was left with bloody, stringy strips of mental flesh clinging to bare emotional bone to get deep enough where I could see myself more objectively. Nobody tells you about that kind of work before you start out! Until now of

course, because I just did, which negates the meaning of the sentence about nobody telling you. I confuse myself sometimes. Here is something you need to be ready for. (Cue the whirling, ethereal sound effects and a terrifying, disembodied voice). "The microphone reveals all!" Ever heard of mouth noise? Previously unbeknownst to me, I commonly sound like a burbling, splashing, smacking, splattering fountain of liquid oral funk. And that is just from opening my mouth before I actually speak. Hunting dogs have begun to come study at my feet to learn how they can slobber more. And my nose randomly clicks. Frequently. WTF is up with that?

It also turns out I don't sound to other people like I sound to myself, I've been using my voice incorrectly all my life, and I've needed to learn how to breathe. Are you kidding me? Breathing? I thought I could at least do that one thing properly, but noooo. Interpersonal skills are another issue. I am a natural introvert with the pre-programmed social skills of a banana slug. With poor social skills. This is an industry which requires social contact on a regular basis, both personally and professionally. "Hiding behind the mic" really isn't a viable option. You need to be willing to embrace all kinds of self discovery, knowing full well that it might get messy. Pass me that napkin, will you?

How much do I like doing paperwork?

Does this question surprise you? Reportedly, most voice talent spend 90% of their available time doing marketing and other business related tasks, not playing around in the booth and counting money. Who knew? Being a voice-over is being an entrepreneur. A business owner. A software learning, social media mastering, lead generating, email sending, phone calling, record keeping, contract creating, invoice sending, tax return preparing, tireless monster of organization.

Is this you? Can you become this? Will you be willing to do this six months from now? A year? Five years? In the interest of full disclosure, "business me" and "creative me" are still working out their relationship. It is not a rom-com kind of romance.

How is my sense of humor?

This isn't on the Approved List of Standard Advice to Give to Newcomers, but it should be. Nurturing a sense of humor will pay dividends every day of your voice-over career. Laughter relieves stress, and hopefully by now you are getting the idea that there will be a lot of stress. It will be easier if you are able to laugh at the absurdity of not being able to say "regularly grasped specific statistics" after twenty tries. Or ever. Laughing will help to keep your spirits up when jobs aren't coming in. It will especially help to be able to laugh at the insanity that you once thought spending a huge amount of money, time and relationship

capital on doing voice-overs was a good idea. There is a reason why I let my rather unconventional sense of humor come out to play when I write my blog. I mean, other than the fact that if I don't, he whispers threats inside my mind to choke me to death while I sleep. Sure, I want to survive through the night. However, I also hope to add a smile or a laugh to your day because I know how powerful it can be. Even if you are laughing at me instead of with me. Oh, and to those of you who are feigning shock at the revelation that my writing is intended to contain humor, I am choosing to ignore your looks of incredulous amazement and your derisive smirks. I forgive you.

And the answer is. . .

Now we get down to brass tacks, where the rubber meets the road and other trite idioms that I can't remember right now. The point of all this. If you have read all the way through to this point and have you taken an honest look at yourself through the lens of the questions I have posed, congratulations! Chalk that up to positive evidence of your keen level of interest. Or evidence of your masochistic tendencies. Whichever. I'm not judging. Has any of this discouraged you? I don't intend for you to be. If you know you will love working as a voice talent, that it fits who you are, where you are, and where you want to be, then welcome to the club! If you have that fire in the belly, go for it! It can be an incredibly rewarding endeavor that pays dividends in far more than just money. If you look honestly at yourself and your situation and decide this path isn't for you, that is a good thing too! Just think of all the money you'll save and the emotional and relational turbulence you will avoid. What I do intend is for you to be more informed about what this business entails before you take the plunge. If it were as easy as being able to read out loud, everyone would do it and nobody would be successful because there wouldn't be enough jobs to go around. I want you to have your eyes wide open so you can make an informed decision about dipping your toes into this pool, and to be forewarned and forearmed if you do. You will be hard pressed to find another professional community which is more supportive. I don't enjoy bursting anyone's bubble, but there is no easy, cheap, trouble free entrance path to being a successful, professional voice talent. A better question? Is it worth it? For me the answer is yes. That's why I keep going.

Whatever your journey, don't forget to laugh.

Very helpful links:

[Seven Signs You're Not Meant To Be A Voice Over Actor](#)

[Getting Started in Voice Over Part 1 - Beginning Your Journey](#)

[The Voiceover Entrance Exam \(free voice over e-book!\)](#)

[How to Start in Voice Over Without Losing Your Shirt \(Part 1\)](#)

[How to Start in Voice Over Without Losing Your Shirt \(Part 2\)](#)

[How to Start in Voice Over Without Losing Your Shirt \(Part 3\)](#)

For Audition Opportunities / Castings:

- [ACX](#) (set up a FREE profile and start learning how to audition for audiobooks)
- Join **VO FB groups** for potential castings and networking.
- **Actors Access** can provide some auditions.
- [Casting Call Club](#) (posts super low budget/student projects where you can audition for animation/video games - some are paid)
- Workshops and Networking Events at VO Conferences like VO Atlanta, One Voice, etc.

Pay to Play Sites (P2P):

- [VOICES.COM](#)
- [VOICE123](#)
- [Voice Jungle](#) (rates are the cheaper side and you must have a demo to submit but you can listen to their demos!)
- [Bodalgo](#)
- FIVERR - Please be careful with offering your VO services on FIVERR - though we work a lot for free when we're just starting out and building our body of work-- just be mindful and don't shortchange yourself!

- [Cast Voices](#)

Click [here](#) to read about more Pay to Play sites.

- **Industry Standard Rates to work towards:**

- [GVAA](#)

- **Where to Purchase My VO GEAR:**

- [Sweetwater](#) — They are the best! Great customer service and return policy [Tell them we sent you!:\)](#)
- [B&H](#) — Another great place for gear; they often have sales.
- [Amazon](#) — Often very good prices; search for "voice recording bundle", "microphone", etc.

Thank you and Break Lips out there!!



A Note from Steve and Michelle at Southwest Voices:

We are beyond grateful for the actors we've had the absolute privilege of working with and guiding over the last 4 years (2020-2024) and we THANK YOU for trusting us!

Due to both of our demanding & growing careers outside of Southwest Voices, we have made the tough decision to very amicably part ways as business partners and dissolve Southwest Voices.

Though we will longer be working under this umbrella together, are still both available individually for coaching and guidance. Please reach us here:

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