

Making the most out of your voiceover session



The logo for Voice Fairy.com features a stylized grey figure with arms raised, surrounded by four purple stars of varying sizes. The text "Voice Fairy.com" is written in a purple serif font, with "Voice" and "Fairy" on the same line and ".com" on the line below. Below the logo, the tagline "The voiceover search engine." is written in a smaller, grey sans-serif font.

Voice Fairy.com
The voiceover search engine.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Getting your script right	2 - 3
Record a guide	4 - 5
Voiceover timing	6 - 7
The session	8 - 9
Directing the session	10 - 11
Changes	12 - 13
Feedback	14
Relax	15 - 16

Introduction

If you've not done it before, supervising or directing a voiceover recording can be a daunting prospect. However, in reality it's actually not that difficult once you know what to expect.

We record hundreds of voiceovers a day and what follows are a few of our top tips along with what some of our top artists say about how to get the most out of your Voice Fairy session.



Getting your script right

One rookie mistake is to assume that the tone of a voiceover should be the same as how you might write a report or even an article. Normally a voiceover should sound like speech. The priority here is for it to be easy to understand. That means no long words, no tech-speak and no in-depth descriptions. It should be concise, friendly and clear.



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Always read what you've written out loud. Often scripts come through and they are written and read very nicely as text, but don't make sense when spoken aloud.

Nicola R

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GETTING YOUR SCRIPT RIGHT

A good test is to see if you can easily read it out aloud. You would be surprised how many people fail to do this simple step. You will identify awkward wording, typos and unnecessary words by simply hearing it aloud. This will not only help you in the writing process but undoubtedly save you time in the session.



Record a guide

Recording your script with your own voice, or a helpful colleague's voice, and then putting it into your edit will further highlight any issues or tweaks that are required before you get the professionals in.



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For scriptwriters, reading a script, which flows nicely and has pauses in the right places, makes recording a joy.

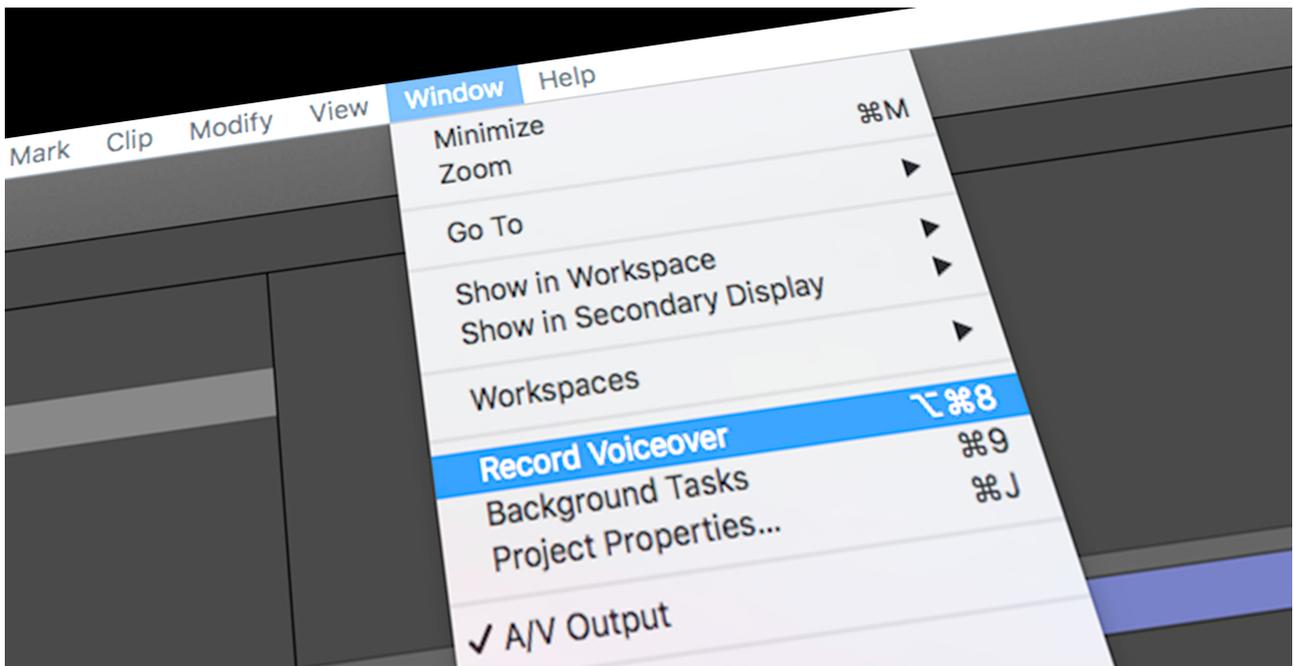
Kieran P

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We also recommend you get your client to sign off this guide voice before you record the real thing. This means any changes or tweaks can be done cheaply with you or your colleague rather than having to pay for an expensive re-record with the artist.

Record a guide

This guide voice edit can also be used to send to the artist in advance of the session to give them an idea of the feel and pace of the film their voice will be used on.



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I love to hear how the audio is going to be used, who you're targeting it at, and how it sounds in your head. I'm very aware that you may have been working on this project for months, so I'm just here to make it happen as easily as possible.

Natalie C

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Voiceover timing

You will find out pretty quickly if your voiceover runs to the time you're expecting by recording your guide voice. However, a good rule of thumb when writing a script is to base the recorded duration of a script on 3 words a second. It's not totally accurate but gives you a pretty good idea how long a read will be.



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Make sure you write to time accurately (for TV & radio ads, which are strictly bound by 10" 20" or 30" parameters) by reading your scripts out loud before bunging them at the production team. And use punctuation, don't just throw sentences on a page and expect us to make sense of it all! Mozart never did that with his music!

Robbie S

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Voiceover timing



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The voiceover read adds a lot more to the time. You need to bring the script alive with the voice and not just rush through it.

Sara M

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Artists are able to slow down or speed up a read when required but this should only be done in exceptional circumstances such as overdubbing a foreign language.

In terms of script, less is always more. So if you're finding it hard to fit a script into a production, rather than asking the artist to read it faster, look at whether you can lose some words without losing the meaning. They may also be able to offer suggestions to make your script more concise.

The session

With Voice Fairy's unique conferencing system you can dial into the session as your artist records your script. We would always recommend this but we would go one stage further and suggest you get your client to dial in too. With our system there is no limit to the number of people who can dial in to the session.

If you and your client dial in then you both can check the performance, make sure technical terms and brand names are pronounced correctly and your client will 'buy in' to the session.

We know from experience if the final client dials in, the chances of there being re-records is dramatically reduced. Although you may have to take an hour out to do it, you'll almost certainly save time and potentially money afterwards going backwards and forwards asking for changes.



The session



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Let the talent play for a couple of reads in the booth. We may be completely off-base with our thought process, but by the same token – we may nail the read in a way that you hadn't considered.

Mike M

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Keep your sessions short. Although you can book up to 6 hour sessions on the site, neither you or the artist are going to be on your game for that length of time. We recommend you attempt no more than 2000 words of recorded script in a 1 hour session and that you record no more than 2 hours at a time.

Whilst an artist can record for longer than 2 hours, the reality is they won't do their best work after that time. It's much better to book 2 or more sessions to split the work up.

Directing the session

It's important to understand the artist wants to achieve exactly the same thing you do in a recording session: the best possible performance of your words for your production. If you are new to this it is much better to admit to the artist that you haven't done this before and they are much more likely to take control and ensure things go smoothly. Also remember that all they are doing is reading aloud in the language you have spoken since you were a child. If something doesn't sound right to you, it probably isn't, so politely let them know at the end of a sentence or paragraph.



Directing the session



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Think about what you want in terms of the project and voice style. Use clear direction and simple descriptive words so the VO can understand what you want.

Posy B

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The best artists take comments very seriously and will do everything they can to accommodate your requests because they want to get it right as much as you do.

It's also important to feedback on something you spot quickly before you forget it. There is no point in waiting politely for the end of a page. The sooner you address an issue the sooner you can move on.

Changes

If you've finished your session, downloaded your voiceover files and then you notice something's not quite right, how you deal with this can have an impact on how quickly and how expensive it is to fix.

The general rule of thumb is if it's a mistake by the artist such as misreading a word or deviating from the script, then that is something they should fix for free. If you or the client have decided to change the script after the recording session and want a new line or paragraph recorded, that would normally attract an additional fee.



In Voice Fairy there is a project type called 'changes' which is designed for just this eventuality. Contact the artist through Voxmail and explain the change or changes you need and ask politely if that would cost extra.

If they say no, they will re-record and you'll then be able to download the new clip at no extra charge.

Changes

If they say there is an additional charge and you believe there shouldn't be, rather than arguing with the artist, drop our customer services team an email and we will investigate on your behalf. If we believe you are correct we will ask the artist to do the changes for you for free.

Alternatively, if there is an additional charge and you feel it is justified, you will then need to book another session setting your project type to 'changes'.



Feedback

The feedback functionality on Voice Fairy is extremely important to the way the site works and is helpful to artists. Artists with good feedback will be more visible on the site than ones without. Because of this they will always do their utmost to ensure you're happy. This means a mention of you leaving positive feedback in a Voxmail could mean the difference between getting some changes done for free or them being chargeable.



Feeding back on a session helps our service as it allows the artist know how they did and also lets other users benefit from your thoughts on the session.

It's also a great way of saying thank you to an artist who did a good job or who went above and beyond to make sure you had what you needed.

Relax

Remember Voice Fairy is a controlled environment. We only allow professionals on our books and those professionals will do everything they can to get the best from your words. Nobody expects you to be a seasoned professional director, however as a potential viewer of the end product you will have a good idea how it should sound and any feedback you give will be taken seriously. Artists care about the feedback you give at the end of the recording, and this ensures they will work with you to produce the result you are after.



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In my experience, voiceover artists perform their best when they're relaxed. If you're tense, your voice is one of the first things to give you away so a positive working environment is no bad thing.

Natalie C
Elisa C

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Relax

Time and time again our clients say using the service is a very positive experience and comment on how friendly and professional our artists are. Our slogan is “Professional voiceovers without all the nonsense” and that’s what we’re about, making the path to the best voiceover for your project as easy and stress free as possible.

