




Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

1


presents

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts



Created by David H. Lawrence XVII

 
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



2

This is an Art and Commerce class.



It's all about the storytelling and the business.





Art
The skill of **storytelling** - how to voice commercials, animation and narration. It's where almost all other voice over classes stop.



Commerce
The **business** of the business. How to attract customers, how to show them your wares, how to fill their needs, and how to price your services and collect your fees.











Science
The **technology, tools and digital skills** needed to create and sustain your voice over practice. The science is always changing.

 
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

3


Here's the plan for class.


-  **Introduction**
Cold reading - A Commerce skill disguised as an Art skill.
-  **Lesson 01**
Script types and construction.
-  **Lesson 02**
The cold read itself, in four simple steps.
-  **Lesson 03**
How to achieve excellence in cold reading.
-  **3 Or More Things To Explore**
Your homework and other actionable items.
-  **Questions and Answers**
Save your questions until the end, then fire away.


 
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

4






Introduction
Cold reading. A Commerce skill disguised as an Art skill.



Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.




5

Cold reading is not an Art skill. It's a Commerce skill.
Here are four reasons why you need to become an expert at self-direction.

-  **Executing cold reads well builds confidence in you as a hire.**
Your clients will be impressed, and will consider you exceptional and a go-to talent.
-  **Cold reading is an absolutely essential skill.**
With the velocity at which the VO world moves, having the agility to take on another role quickly is paramount.
-  **The more you cold read, the more agile and flexible you become.**
You'll get better by doing, repeating and doing some more – and that will make you a better actor.
-  **Cold reading is a litmus test of your work style and attitude.**
When you execute a cold read as if you'd had the copy for days, you show reliability, preparedness and talent.


Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



6

“ Cold reading
the ability to perform copy you've just been given, with little or no preparation or analysis. **”**


ag·ile
/ 'ajəl/ (4)
adjective
1. able to move quickly and easily.
"Ruth was as agile as a monkey"
synonyms: nimble, lithe, supple, limber, acrobatic, fleet-footed on one's feet; More


Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.




Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

7


Lesson 01
Script models and construction.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



8

Commercial radio scripts.
What a radio spot script looks like.

One page, usually
Since radio spots tend to be 30 or 60 seconds long, the script is usually just one page in length.

For broadcast or net
Radio tends to be called radio whether it's transmitted via AM/FM or via the internet.


One column, usually
There are no pictures, so no need for a second column for images to sync with.

-30- or ## to end
It's a tradition to see either of those below a script to let you know it's over.

Script Example:

```
30SEC Radio Spot 8/16/16  
Notes:  
8/16/16: Make 30-60 sec with a punchy opening  
voice. Hook should be strong (same beats, not  
necessarily words).  
Script is:  
8/16/16: Open (hook) and read (2x via Monday through  
8/16/16: (optional) do this early in the script.  
8/16/16: Do what makes you giggle? (or the best?)  
8/16/16: Done.
```

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



9

Script Example:

```
30SEC Radio Spot 8/16/16  
Notes:  
8/16/16: Make 30-60 sec with a punchy opening  
voice. Hook should be strong (same beats, not  
necessarily words).  
Script is:  
8/16/16: Open (hook) and read (2x via Monday through  
8/16/16: (optional) do this early in the script.  
8/16/16: Do what makes you giggle? (or the best?)  
8/16/16: Done.
```

Script Example:

```
30SEC Radio Spot 8/16/16  
Notes:  
8/16/16: Make 30-60 sec with a punchy opening  
voice. Hook should be strong (same beats, not  
necessarily words).  
Script is:  
8/16/16: Open (hook) and read (2x via Monday through  
8/16/16: (optional) do this early in the script.  
8/16/16: Do what makes you giggle? (or the best?)  
8/16/16: Done.
```


Script Example:

```
30SEC Radio Spot 8/16/16  
Notes:  
8/16/16: Make 30-60 sec with a punchy opening  
voice. Hook should be strong (same beats, not  
necessarily words).  
Script is:  
8/16/16: Open (hook) and read (2x via Monday through  
8/16/16: (optional) do this early in the script.  
8/16/16: Do what makes you giggle? (or the best?)  
8/16/16: Done.
```

Script Example:

```
30SEC Radio Spot 8/16/16  
Notes:  
8/16/16: Make 30-60 sec with a punchy opening  
voice. Hook should be strong (same beats, not  
necessarily words).  
Script is:  
8/16/16: Open (hook) and read (2x via Monday through  
8/16/16: (optional) do this early in the script.  
8/16/16: Do what makes you giggle? (or the best?)  
8/16/16: Done.
```

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



“
Sometimes they look
more complicated
than they actually
are. That's usually
just ad agency
branding efforts.”
”

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts

Class Notes

10

TV and video commercial scripts.


What a TV spot script looks like.

Can be more than one page
Even though TV spots tend to be 30 or 60 seconds long, the script can be longer than just one page.

For broadcast or net
With YouTube and every net presence of news channels pre-rolling ads, the lines are blurred as to what TV is.


Two columns
One column for pictures (on the left), one column for the VO content (on the right).

Your picture is locked
Almost always, you'll be voicing to an already finalized and edited visual product.



vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

11



“
Sometimes TV spot scripts can look very artsy and more like storyboards than scripts.
”

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

12

Documentary narration scripts.


What a full length narration script looks like.

Are more than one page
You can count on narration scripts to be longer than just one page, sometimes up to 50 or more.

Network, cable or VOD
Your final product may end up on network television, cable channels, even direct to video or on-demand.

Two columns
One column for pictures (on the left), one column for the VO content (on the right).

Your picture is locked
With narration, you'll be voicing to an already finalized and edited visual product.




vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

Animation and videogame audition scripts.
What an animated series or videogame audition script looks like.

One page per character

You may be asked to audition for more than one character. You'll have separate scripts for each.



Screenplay format



Typical one-column, wide margin, dialogue formatting.

Include character pics

You'll often see a visual representation of your character, depending upon how far along the project is.


Tight security



You'll see watermarks on your script, and will probably be asked to sign an NDA or two.

 Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

“ If you get booked on a videogame, your script will most likely be a spreadsheet. ”








 Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

[mx up and under] Introducing Colgate Optic White.

Script Construction: Stage directions

Gives you a clear idea of the actions the characters might take, and the environment in which they are speaking.

 Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

16

[crickets, softly in BG] Lexus. Drive one.
or
[SFX: Traffic. Loud.] (shouting) It's rush hour,
and you're already late.






Script Construction: Production density

Look for clues as to how light or heavy the production will be.
Will you be competing with other elements, or will they be softly
in the background?

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.


17

Some of the lingo you'll see.
Know what these abbreviations mean when you find them in your script.

 mx ...means "music."	 sfx ...means "sound effects."	 fx ...means "effects," and, most likely, "visual effects."	 up and under ...means "establish bed at full volume, then drop the volume for the announcer."	 bed ...means "music or other audio used under the VO."
--	---	--	--	--

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

18


Lesson 02
The cold read itself, in four simple steps.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts

Class Notes

19

The four cold reading steps, in brief.
These are the four steps you'll take, every time you execute a cold read.


- 1. Read for construction**
Out loud, like a first grader, with no performance patina.
- 2. Define your audience of one**
Be as specific as you can get while describing this person.
- 3. Create your performance persona**
Announcer? Character? Narrator? Salesman #2?
- 4. Read for performance**
Now that you know construction, audience and persona, read.

Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

20


Let the script speak to you and your brand.
As with all VO, the words are more than capable of doing the heavy lifting.



Salesman #2: And...did you know that JD Power has ranked Honda number one in customer satisfaction for three years in a row?

Know your brand and persona.
Salesman? Clueless? Cheerleader? Slacker? You know.


Deliver the words as your persona would.
Let your brand flag fly, and let your persona do the talking.


Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

21


Check with production on pronunciation.
You're allowed to ask questions. In addition to the product and company name, be sure to ask about these.





Numbers
How are they localized? Zed instead of zero? Nil instead of zero? Do you say "nine" or "nine hundred" in '984'?



Currencies
"Pounds" or "pounds sterling"? "Dollars," or no word at all? How would you say this? "\$399"




Symbols
Example: "pound sign," "number," "hash," or "hashtag" for "#?"



Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

“ Start by taking in the entire page of the script. What type is it? How long is it? What's your content? What's your role? ”




22






Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

“ For commercials and other dialogue, as you read one line, scan ahead to the next segment of content: line, paragraph, etc. Don't just read the words you're saying. ”

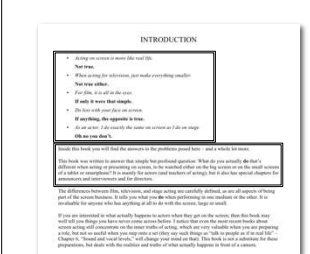


23






Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

“ For narration, audiobooks and other long form content, as you read one paragraph, scan ahead to the next paragraph. Again, don't just read the words you're saying. ”



24





Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
 Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes


25

“ As you scan ahead, look for lists, clauses, comparisons and setups & payoffs. Don't be surprised by these devices. ”



vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

26



Lesson 03
How to achieve excellence in cold reading.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

27

Salesman #2: And...did you know that JD Power has ranked Honda number one in customer satisfaction for three years in a row?

Remember, you're a storyteller.

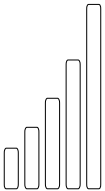
You can do this. No script can defeat you; no story will go untold.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

28

Become better and better and better.
How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice.



01 Work faster
Don't stand on ceremony when it comes to your reads.

02 Be well-read
Consume everything you can lay your hands, eyes and ears on.


03 Read for quality
Make your goal high-quality story telling, not reading the words well on the page.

04 Trust your instincts
You'll see if something is working or not. Use it, improve it, or discard it.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

29

Where to find VO cold reading practice content.
There are sources for every category of VO work.



Commercials
Flip through magazines, and ignore the articles. Instead, speak the ads about - they are now written for the ear.

Narration
Use the Random Article link on Wikipedia.org, and narrate whatever you land on. Make it femasic.

Medical narration
Monographs, research journal articles, nonradiation material on pharmaceutical websites and advertisements.

Tech narration
Trade journal articles, Popular Mechanics and Science Channel's website.

Audiobooks
Audition like crazy on ACX. Thousands of books waiting.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

30


“
More practice: grab every clip sheet from your VO2GoGo classes and voice everything you can.
”




vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes

31



3 Or More Things To Explore
Your homework and other actionable items.

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



32


3 or more things to explore.
Take what you've learned, explore and learn more, then put that all to work.

-  **Examine every example of a VO script you can find. Get familiar.**
-  **Master the art of the look-ahead. Be ready for twists and turns.**
-  **Find material to practice your cold reading. Voice everything aloud.**


vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



33


Questions
Fire away. Or send them to

vo2gogo.com
Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts
Copyright ©2016 VO2GoGo, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.



Mastering Cold Reading Of VO Scripts Class Notes