

# Voicing IVR And Phone Prompts Class Notes

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presents  
**Voicing IVR And Phone Prompts**  
Created by David H. Lawrence XVII

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VOICING IVR AND PHONE PROMPTS

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This is an Art class.  
It's all about the storytelling.

**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.

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Here's the plan for class.

**Introduction**  
Why IVR might be the most lucrative VO you'll ever perform.

**Lesson 01**  
Union vs. non union, and IVR buyers to whom you'll be marketing.

**Lesson 02**  
Agency performance standards, and creating your IVR demo.

**Lesson 03**  
Managing your IVR clients, the technology, and getting paid.

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

**Questions and Answers**  
Save your questions until the end, then fire away.

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## Introduction

Why IVR might be the most lucrative VO you'll ever perform.

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### IVR and Phone Prompts: easy, efficient and lucrative.

Three things you need to know about this work and why it should be part of your portfolio.

- +** **There are over 10 billion phones in the world, and the number's growing.**  
Although personal land lines are declining, business systems and personal/work mobile is exploding.
- +** **66% of those phones are business, and 3 million are replaced every day.**  
The marketplace is huge, vibrant, and constantly changing and improving.
- +** **Business phones are the main target, but you'll sell to individuals, too.**  
You can make quick work of single voice mail announcements, and clean up on full phone tree voicing.

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## Lesson 01

Union vs. non-union, and the IVR buyers to whom you'll be marketing.

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aftra **H&R**  
AFTRA Health & Retirement Funds

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The contribution rate for AFTRA H&R members is 15.5%. And you don't have to be SAG-AFTRA to be an AFTRA H&R member. //

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**The buyers:**

- Customer service departments
- IT departments
- Small businesses
- Individuals
- Voice123 clients



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**Lesson 02**

A glossary, performance standards, and creating your IVR demo.

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1 2 3  
4 5  
7 8 9  
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**Glossary: IVR**

Interactive **Voice Response**, a system that allows callers to get stuff done by interacting with their phone.

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Thank you for calling America Online, the world's most popular online service. For tech support, press one. For sales, press two.

or

Your balance is | four | hundred | twenty-two | dollars and | forty-eight | cents. | No payment is due at this time.

**Glossary: Prompt**

A pre-recorded passage, phrase or fragment, played to a caller when needed. Also called a **file**, a **recording**, or a **message**.

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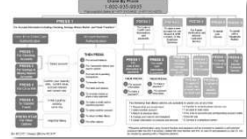
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**Glossary: Tree**

The general organization of an IVR system, with the main menu as the trunk, and the options as limbs and branches.

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**Glossary: Options**

The choices offered by the IVR system to callers, accessed by taking actions using the keypad or the caller's voice: sales, service, balances, locations, etc.

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**Glossary: Actions**

Something physical you want the caller to do to achieve the desired option. Usually pressing a particular key or keys, or using voice commands.

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**Glossary: Robodialer/Autodialer**

A system that calls a series of phone numbers in a list, often at random and with a common message. Not legal in most situations.

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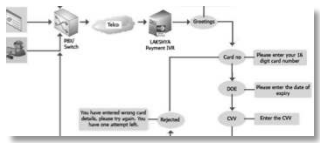
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# Voicing IVR And Phone Prompts

## Class Notes



**Glossary: Messaging**

A term for the recorded content of an IVR system, describing both the meaning and the flow of the system.

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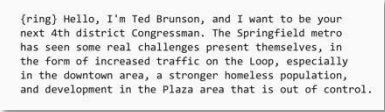
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**Glossary: Outbound**

Messaging that is delivered to a caller, usually in the form of pre-recorded announcements.

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**Glossary: Speech-to-text**

Also called **voice recognition**, this process recognizes spoken language, and converts that content to text, which the system uses to respond to the caller.

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**Performance with IVR: simply be heard.**

There are four basic standards of IVR performance excellence.



**01 High energy**  
You must own this work and be forceful, without any subtle shadings of meaning.

**02 Clear enunciation**  
You never know what you're going to be competing against for the listener's attention.

**03 Care for the listener**  
Your whole job is to help the listener use your client's phone services.

**04 Clarity rules**  
Even if the client is looking for an attitude, remember that you must be heard clearly.

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**Your IVR demo: for this one, use a producer.**


Ensure your demo displays these four common IVR patterns and standards.

**Hire a producer for this demo.**  
You need a producer who understands IVR systems.

**Like all demos, immerse the listener.**  
Your demo should be phone quality, not studio quality.

**Length: 1-2 minutes, and a single tree.**  
Your demo needs to show you can "carry a tune."

**There should be some rough edges.**  
Just like in the real world, responses should sound "constructed."



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**Lesson 03**

Managing your IVR clients, the technology, and getting paid.

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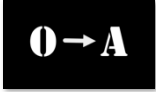
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**Three must-haves in IVR prompt writing and voicing.**  
These three things are essential when writing and performing the prompts themselves.



**Option, then action.**  
Instead of "Press 1 for sales, press 2 for service," it's "For sales, press 1. For service, press 2."



**Emphasize the action.**  
When you voice a prompt's action, raise your pitch on the action. Don't make the listener squint their ears.



**Follow conventions.**  
Pressing the star key usually means to back up. The pound key usually means skip or move on.

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**If you're asked to produce an inflection set, rejoice.**  
These are the numbers, locations and connective words and phrases that IVR systems use to build complete sentences. Each member is a separate prompt.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 . . . 94 95 96 97 98 99  
"Your balance is" thousand hundred "dollars and" cents  
or  
01001 01002 01003 01004 . . . 99096 99097 99098 99099  
or  
Abilene Akron Anaheim . . . Maco Wichita Zanesville

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**Standard file formats.**  
Almost every prompt is exported as an mp3, but there are some exceptions.



MP3  
Doesn't have to be any more high quality than 128kHz mono MP3. Phone systems aren't that good. Yet.



16 bit 44.1kHz PCM WAV  
Just like any other WAV file - the standard Microsoft WAV file.



8 bit 8kHz CCITT WAV  
If you're asked to work on an older system, you may need to make one of these.

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**//**  
When working with older systems, have the owner set the code to "1111". Do your work live via landline, then have them reset the code.  
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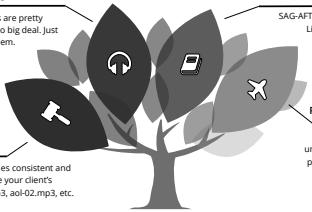
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**Delivery and payment.**  
Delivery is easy-peasy, but knowing how to charge for your work is a bit more involved.



**Sending files**  
The files are pretty small. No big deal. Just email them.

**Union payment: not so great**  
SAG-AFTRA wants to pay by the hour. Like with audiobooks. Nuh uh. Ask for more than that.

**Pay per prompt: fantastic**  
Charge \$50 per prompt for unlimited use. Do the math for payment on a 30 prompt tree.

**Naming files**  
Keep the filenames consistent and readable. Include your clients name: a01-01.mp3, a01-02.mp3, etc.

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**Always charge a minimum session fee of \$250.**

You're setting up to do the work – if it's one prompt or hundreds.  
The session fee is included when voicing 5 prompts or more.

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**//**  
**How do you find new customers?**  
**Listen** for them every time you're on the phone.  
**//**



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

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

- +** **The next time you call a company that has an IVR tree, listen carefully.**
- +** **Practice your inflections and pitch when voicing prompts.**
- +** **Visit vo2gogo.com and search for "CCITT" to learn how to make that WAY.**
- +** **Start a list of potential clients – companies you call that DON'T have IVR.**

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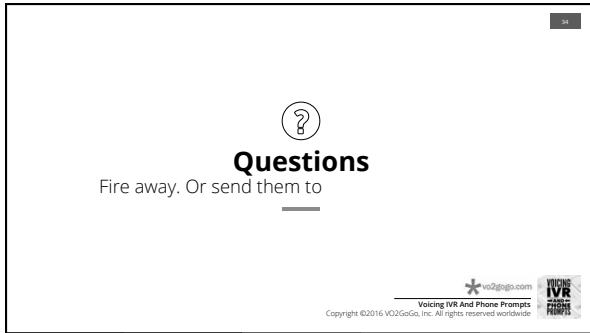
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