

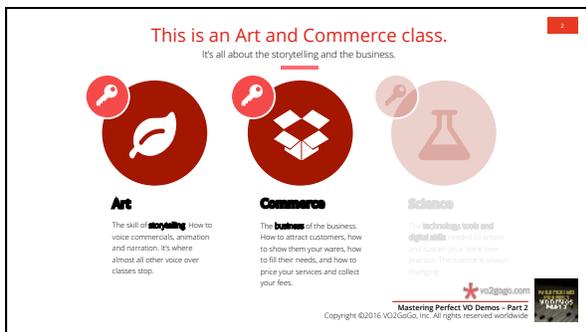
Mastering Perfect VO Demos – Part 2

Class Notes



vo2gogo.com
presents
Mastering Perfect VO Demos - Part 2
Created by David H. Lawrence XVII

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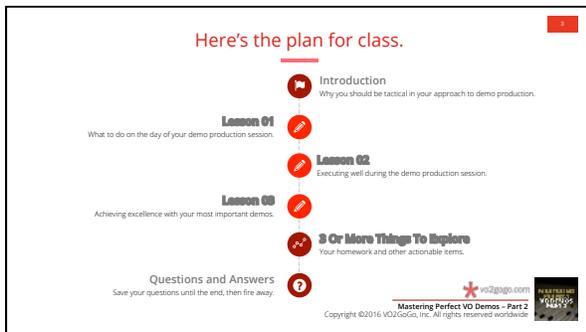
This is an Art and Commerce class.
It's all about the storytelling and the business.

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 execute above-the-water practices. The science is about **changing**.

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Here's the plan for class.

Introduction
Why you should be tactical in your approach to demo production.

Lesson 01
What to do on the day of your demo production session.

Lesson 02
Executing well during the demo production session.

Lesson 03
Achieving excellence with your most important demos.

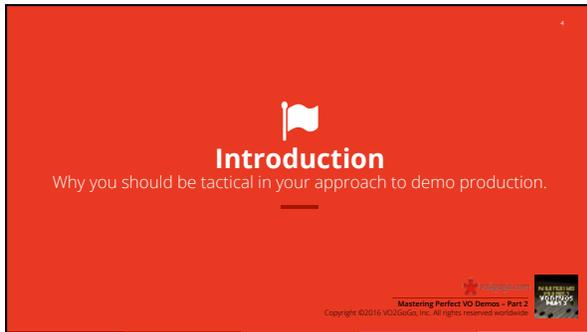
3 Or More Things To Explore
Your homework and other actionable items.

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

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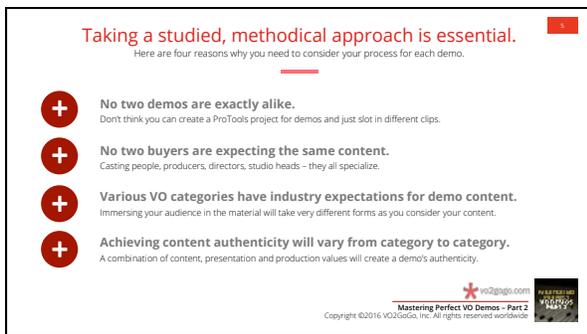
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Introduction
Why you should be tactical in your approach to demo production.

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Taking a studied, methodical approach is essential.
Here are four reasons why you need to consider your process for each demo.

- +** **No two demos are exactly alike.**
Don't think you can create a ProTools project for demos and just slot in different clips.
- +** **No two buyers are expecting the same content.**
Casting people, producers, directors, studio heads – they all specialize.
- +** **Various VO categories have industry expectations for demo content.**
Immersing your audience in the material will take very different forms as you consider your content.
- +** **Achieving content authenticity will vary from category to category.**
A combination of content, presentation and production values will create a demo's authenticity.

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Lesson 01
What to do on the day of your demo production session.

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On the day.
Five practices you should engage in to take care of yourself on your VO "spa day."



Hydrate.
Start early in the morning, and sip on water regularly.

Relax.
Take it easy. Do some yoga. Meditate. This is your day.

No caffeine.
Some people can't get their day started without their joe, but it can dry you out.

No dairy.
This can create junk in your throat – stay clear of creamy products.

Stay light.
Love, love love Hint Water. It's available in umpteen flavors.

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Your first moments with your copy.
Use what you've learned in the Mastering Cold Reading class – and take your time. There's no rush.



01 Like a child.
Read your copy out loud, slowly and deliberately, like a sixth grader reading a book report.

02 Note the structure.
Look for the construction of the copy; clever wordplay; rhymes, lists, contrasts, jokes, set ups and payoffs, and rhythm.

03 Don't mumble.
There's no need to play at reading your script. Do it out loud as soon as you can – and don't be shy.

04 No stress.
You'll work on it until you get it right. Take your time and don't worry.

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Lesson 02
Executing well during the demo production session.

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“ Be open to adjustments, and allow yourself to be directed. Trust the demo producer’s plan. ”



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“ Be sure to take notes on the adjustments you’re given, but don’t over-markup your script copy. ”

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“ Watch for patterns as you move through the copy. Your takeaways are the work you need to do to improve. ”



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Aim for a minute of content, or so.

Each demo you produce will be in the 1-3 minute range, but each will be timed for industry norms and expectations.

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“ The slate and the first 5 seconds of content are crucial. Judgments are made about you within 100 milliseconds. ”

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Six production standards to meet.
This set of rules, if followed, will assure that your demo hits all the right notes.



- 01** Sweeten dry tracks.
- 02** Add music appropriately.
- 03** Add sound effects appropriately.
- 04** Don't overproduce.
- 05** Arrange clips for variety, energy and density.
- 06** Pay close attention to the first break.

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Lesson 03

Achieving excellence with your most important demos.

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Let's drill down on the big four.

Just as a reminder, these are the demos that you should absolutely have in your portfolio.



01 Commercial
The most important demo in your portfolio, as it is traditionally the most expected.

02 Audiobook
With the advent of ACK, audiobook demos allow you to grab the low-hanging fruit. You should have a series of category-specific audiobook demos.

03 IVR
By far, the easiest and fastest VO skill to learn, and the jobs are plentiful.

04 Documentary Narration
An image demo not only to get work in the category, but also to show a more dramatic side to your voice.

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Commercial Demo Production Rule 1:
Artfully damage each clip. No two clips should sound like they were produced in the same session.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 2:

Remember that 50% of the spots you hear and see are dry, with little or no effects or music, just voice.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 3:

Make sure your voice is mixed so that any music or effects don't compete with you. You're the star, the producer isn't.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 4:

Your final mix should be high bit-rate (256) stereo (2 channels) MP3. No other format will be acceptable.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 5:
Despite what anyone tells you, have the producer add a simple, direct slate.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 6:
Listen to the final product on both fantastic and crappy speaker systems.



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Commercial Demo
Production Rule 7:
Email each MP3 to yourself. Filter them into a **_Demos** folder in Gmail, so you can easily forward them.



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**Audiobook Demo
Production Rule 1:**
Remember, you have
the skills to produce
these demos yourself.
You don't need a
producer. //

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**Audiobook Demo
Production Rule 2:**
Produce demos for
any and all categories
that you are open to
being booked in. //

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**Audiobook Demo
Production Rule 3:**
All audiobook demos
should be produced
to meet ACX's
technical standards. //

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**“ Audiobook Demo
Production Rule 4:**
Any stellar auditions
should pull double
duty as members of
your demo portfolio. ”

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**“ Audiobook Demo
Production Rule 5:**
Remember to include,
if possible, both
dialogue and
exposition. ”

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**“ IVR Demo
Production Rule 1:**
Produce your IVR
demo as though the
listener was traveling
through a phone tree,
with all appropriate
realism. ”

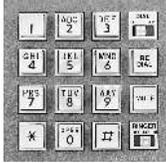


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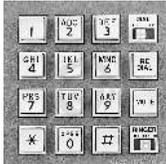
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IVR Demo
Production Rule 2:
You'll record your tracks on the phone, at phone quality. Use a land line or VOIP, not a mobile phone.



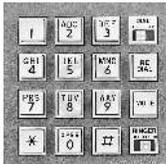
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IVR Demo
Production Rule 3:
DO NOT record your IVR demo in-studio, at studio quality. IVR buyers need to hear what you sound like on the phone.



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IVR Demo
Production Rule 4:
Your producer should include appropriate listener-POV effects. The listener should think this is a real phone tree.

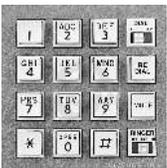


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IVR Demo
Production Rule 5:
Numeric sequences, assembled sentences, and choppy result construction are both desirable and appropriate.



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IVR Demo
Production Rule 6:
Your producer must create a behavior-based demo, including typical choices and rhythms.



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IVR Demo
Production Rule 7:
Your demo should show how clearly you can be understood, and should display typical IVR flow and mechanics.



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Documentary Narration Demo
Production Rule 1:
Your documentary content should closely match your brand.

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Documentary Narration Demo
Production Rule 2:
Your producer should create a world that sounds like it was taken directly from television.

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Documentary Narration Demo
Production Rule 3:
YouTube is a great source for actualities and natural sound that match your content.

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Documentary Narration Demo
Production Rule 4:
Music should be used exactly the way music is used in real documentaries: to add emotion.

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Documentary Narration Demo
Production Rule 5:
This particular demo can run longer than a minute or so. Sweet spot: 2-3 minutes.

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When to (and when not to) update your demos.
Remember, your demos will change and evolve, just like your headshots and resume.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
If your demo portfolio is working for you, and you're on a roll, leave well enough alone. If not, consider an update.

If your voice changes, update.
This isn't just for kids becoming adolescents and then becoming adults. Done smoking? Your voice will change.

Paid work isn't necessarily demo-worthy.
Just because you booked a job, it doesn't mean you somehow shoehorn that work into your demo. Unless it's appropriate.



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What to do with your demos once produced.

Once you're finished, where do you put these pieces of art?

- Your signature.**
Using WiseStamp, add links to the demos in your portfolio to every email you send out.
- Your website.**
Make it easy for your visitors to hear your work, above the fold.
- Your site profiles.**
Place demos as appropriate on ACK, Actors Access, IMDb, Voice123, and other sites.
- Create download links.**
Not every situation is going to be conducive to playback from a screen. Create download links as well.

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Let's have a listening party.

Here are examples of demos that produce auditions and work.

- Commercial
- IVR/Phone Prompts
- Animation
- Promos/Trailers
- Narration

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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.
Next steps: take what you've learned, explore and learn more, then put that all to work.

- + **Create your first demo (your commercial demo) using a producer.**
- + **Create audiobook demos for every category in which you want to work.**
- + **Expand your portfolio with IVR, documentary narration and other demos.**
- + **Place your demos where your customers are: everywhere appropriate.**

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Questions
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☕
Pick a clip to record.

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