

# WHAT THE OTHER GUYS AREN'T DOING

9 PERFORMANCE TIPS TO HELP YOU BOOK  
MORE E-LEARNING NARRATION WORK



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# E-LEARNING IS GROWING

Every day, there is more and more e-learning content being created. As a voice actor working to grow your business, you want to give yourself the best chance of booking it.

If you want to make e-learning narration a primary source of income, there are a few essentials you need to have in place: a solid marketing and follow-up plan, a seamless workflow, and 5-star performance skills.

The tips in this guide address the performance aspect of your service, and will give you the edge every e-learning client is looking for in a voice actor.

# 1. BE SOMEBODY

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

ASSUME THE PHYSICALITY

Whether you are explaining a benefit package to new hires or the construction of a hamburger to fast food employees, you are never just a disembodied voice reading from a script. You play a role when delivering e-learning, just as you do when delivering commercial copy. Take some time to develop your "character." Why are you saying the things you're saying? Or, what's in it for you? What does your character look like? Assume his or her physicality. Being somebody adds an extra layer of depth and believability to your read.

No, I don't mean this literally. But here's an exercise you can do. Rather than reading with your usual e-learning, explanatory tone, picture yourself on the front porch with a good friend having a casual conversation over a relaxing drink. This will ease that tendency to over-perform that we get when in front of a microphone. Your read will sound more natural and genuine.

Note that this is an exercise. The read you get from this tip may not be the final one you use, but it is a good way to help you loosen up and read more naturally.

## **2. DRINK A BEER**

PRACTICE READING CONVERSATIONALLY

# 3. USE PAUSES

PUNCTUATE IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Your goal is not to get through the text as quickly and efficiently as possible. Your goal is to successfully transfer information from the page to the students' brains. Use pauses--and not only when one is signaled by a comma--to help punctuate important information and drive points home. The students you are speaking to are being required to absorb a lot of information. Your voiceover can aid them in retaining more of it by giving them more time to take it in.

Much like in commercial voiceover work, your e-learning narration will have more life and believability when you perform—not only with your voice—but with your entire body. This has the added benefit of keeping *you* more engaged in the script as well. When you make a point of it to connect the words on the page with physical movement, you are investing more of yourself into the content, which comes through in your delivery.

## 4. TALK WITH YOUR HANDS

CONNECT PHYSICALLY WITH THE SCRIPT

# 5. CARE

YOUR PURPOSE IS TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

All e-learning is created to solve a problem. A driver safety course may be created in response to the high number of driving accidents the previous year. A benefit enrollment training portal aims to help someone who needs insurance get it. When you read these scripts, keep the purpose of the content in mind, and how it is helpful to the individual student. If the script itself does not highlight the purpose of the course, make one up (just for yourself, to benefit your delivery) so that you have a reason for what you are saying.

Is the training aimed at engineers? Journalism majors? Warehouse employees? Eighth grade students? Know the intended audience of the course, and then "talk to" a single representative of that audience. For example, if the audience is real estate professionals, think of someone you know--in real life or in pop culture--who is a real estate agent, and read the script as if you are talking to that person. You will build a much stronger connection with those taking the course when you do this.

## **6. KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO**

PICTURE A SINGLE REPRESENTATIVE  
FROM THE INTENDED AUDIENCE



# 7. SEE THE SCREEN (OR TACO)

VISUALIZE THE ENVIRONMENT

Many online training courses are software tutorials. In these cases, you will find yourself saying things like, "Click the second line in the grid to populate the field." Or "Click the export button in the upper right corner of your screen." To deliver the most effective read, actually picture these elements as you say them. You can even gesture to the up and to the right on your imaginary screen.

This tip also works for explaining how to construct things. If explaining the steps to make a taco, "see" and mime each step as you say it.

In e-learning scripts where you play one of multiple characters, it is important that you know what the other characters are saying so that you can react appropriately. You will also be better equipped to emphasize or "call back" to certain points that another character has touched on previously. Now, this does not mean that you record every character's lines, just that you understand how your lines fit into the bigger picture of the training.

## **8. READ ALL THE PARTS**

KNOW HOW YOUR PART FITS INTO THE  
BIG PICTURE

# 9. SUBSTITUTE

FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT

In a perfect world, you would fully understand everything about every course. But since you don't have a PhD in every field of study in existence, you will come across content you don't understand. To create proper tonality in a line you don't understand, substitute a word or phrase that you do know for the one(s) that you don't. For example, instead of, "Let's remove this **duplication** by using a **view partial**," think, "Let's remove this **stain** by using a **terry cloth**." Take note of the tonality you used, then sub back in the original words for your read.

# THE TOTAL PACKAGE



*Online Course*

I hope you will use these performance tips to wow clients and establish e-learning work as a bigger source of voiceover income.

If you found value in this guide, but you want to give the rest of your e-learning narration business a makeover as well, take advantage of the complete system for booking more e-learning work. **Check out the course and view a flyover of the content here.**