

## Voice Over Recording Techniques

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About half the videos we make feature city personalities (my "Talent") in either an on-camera or voice-over role. Having someone who can speak clearly and convey their message effectively often dictates the success of the video. The reality of access TV may be that neither you nor I get to work with professional actors; however, there are a variety of techniques to make your talent sound their best, and get a better performance as well.

Let your talent meet and mingle with the crew; the more comfortable they are with whom they are working for, the less anxious they'll feel about "performing."

If your show involves on-air pieces and voice-over, shoot voice-over stuff first, while your talent is still fresh and has more energy. Additionally, choose between recording the voice-over in the same location as the on-air pieces (to get a similar ambient noise and feel), or recording it in a sound booth or quiet room, where you lose the natural sounds but get clearer voice audio.

Give them the script in advance, so they can mark it and practice. Highlight any key words or points you want emphasized.

Have your talent stand, with scripted pages at eye level, for ideal breathing and delivery technique.

For voice-over retakes, have your talent start from the previous sentence. This puts them into their breathing rhythm, so they'll be less likely to burst out your needed sentence (causing syllable popping and audio spikes).

Avoid drinking coffee or soda (causes popping vocal sounds) , juice (acidic) , milk, or cold water (which constricts the throat). Room temperature water is best. Also, be careful about takes after lunch, when the talent's blood-sugar drops. This can cause drowsiness and slurred words.

When you find the delivery "style" (pace, tone, inflection) that you like from the talent, tell them so they can maintain it

Don't EQ their voice while recording on tape, if you have the option to EQ it in the editing process.

Don't conclude a voice-over session until you are truly satisfied with what you recorded, because if a retake is needed days later the recording acoustics, talent's energy and other factors probably won't match.

Finally, reassure your talent that when you are done it's because you are satisfied with their performance and record quality, and you wouldn't let them leave if you didn't believe that.