



**IMPORTANT TIPS
BEFORE YOU
START
VOICEOVER**

INTRODUCTION

Setting up terms and conditions for your work as a voice actor is one of the most important things you can do, but it can also be one of the hardest things to stick to. Ironically, it's the love for this work that can get us into trouble. And by trouble I mean the potential of not getting paid – or not getting paid what we are worth.

Think of it like this: if someone offered you a piece of chocolate cake, would they have to pay you to eat it? I think not. That's how I look at voice acting. We love the work so much that we pay to do it!

Thousands of people pay to be members of voice-over pay to play sites. Voice actors pay just for the opportunity to audition!

SET YOUR TERMS & CONDITIONS

The love for the business, and many other factors, can put a voice actor – especially a newbie – in a very vulnerable position; so **having your terms and conditions set up beforehand is crucial to your career and financial longevity.**



Remember: The most valued traits of an actor are **vulnerability and empathy**. These qualities make us brilliant behind the mic – but may be lacking on the business end of things. We voice actors tend to immediately put the other guy's needs first – and our bank account can suffer.

The reality of the business is that voice-over jobs tend to come at you last minute. Ad agencies are almost always in a hurry. Often you can feel railroaded by the commercial producer, and are told something like: “We need this recorded by tomorrow. Can you do it?”

No mention of pay, length of script, extra compensation for changes etcetera. This is where it's up to YOU to gently apply the brakes, and talk turkey.

Don't get caught up in the pure exhilaration of getting the gig.

Thank the producer for selecting you, and ask all the necessary questions. You can adjust your terms and conditions to fit each scenario; just always make sure to paste or attach your terms to your correspondence.

Your terms and conditions can be as extreme or simple as you want them. Personally I prefer simple and concise. If your terms and conditions are too legalese it can be off-putting to the agency.

Generally speaking, the bigger the job, the more conditions you set. You can Google other voice actor's terms and conditions to get an idea of what's out there, or simply download a form from a place like Formswift, and put it in your own words.

9 BASIC TERMS & CONDITIONS

Here are the basic terms and conditions every voice actor should set for each voice-over gig:

- Decide how much you are going to charge per page, and what constitutes a page: 12 point type, double-spacing?
- If the project is larger, will you offer a discount after a certain number of pages? If so, be specific and state this in writing. If you offer a discount after a certain number of pages, you have a greater chance of booking future work with this agency.
- Decide whether you will do corrections and changes for free. If you make a mistake in your recording, do the corrections for free. If there are mistakes in the copy, decide how many mistakes or changes you are willing to do gratis. Again, be specific and put it in writing.
- Make sure the type of sound file the agency wants is specified in your terms and conditions. The last thing you want is to deliver an Mp3 file to the agency when they wanted a .wav file.
- Find out if the agency wants paragraphs within the page delivered as separate sound files. This can sometimes happen with corporate/industrial narrations. If they do, consider charging more, as this will take a lot more of your time.
- State when you would like payment delivered to you and in what form. Thirty-day turnaround? Immediate? If you choose thirty-day turnaround, ask who the head of accounting is and get their contact info, in case you need to follow up.

- Will you charge interest if you do not receive payment in 30 days? If so, state that in your terms and conditions.

- It's very important to know how your voice-over is going to be used. Is it a commercial? Narration? Where will it be heard? Locally? Regionally? Nationally? All of these factors will determine your fee.

- Find out the agency's preferred delivery service for your files, and be sure to get the name and email of the person to whom the files are to be delivered. As hard as it can be, while you are jumping up and down with joy at getting a gig, remember to always send your terms and conditions to the agency that hires you. Your bank account – and self- esteem – will thank you for it!

