

VOICEREEL PREPARATION

GUY MICHAELS, ROUND ISLAND VOICEREELS



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Preparing for your voicereel

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before you begin collating material have a scout around and listen to examples on agents' sites. Most voice agencies have their clients' voicereels readily available. Maybe have a listen to those people who are the same sex and roughly the same age bracket to begin with. This will give you some idea what is expected. Also, work your way through the categorised examples we have on our Samples page. Obviously you don't want to be copying material but this will help you understand what is meant by Hard Sell, Soft Sell, Corporate etc.

Our **Services 1, 2 and 3** are all based around 'The Standard Commercial Voicereel'.

When you record your voicereel with us we use a combination of 6 pieces selected from the table below. You may choose to have more tracks but before you do – have a listen to the Compilation tracks on our Samples page and see just how effective these are. The Compilation tracks are compiled from 6 tracks in most cases and aim to show the spectrum of your voice in around 90 seconds.

Let's be honest, no-one is going to sit and listen to more than a couple of minutes of one voice artist and if you cannot give the listener a flavour of what you can do in 2 minutes then you are unlikely to achieve this in 3 or 4! Therefore each piece should be around 20 to 40 seconds. Adverts are generally shorter but you can afford to go a little longer with the Documentary and Narrative pieces.

Pieces for the standard commercial reel.

		Approx length
The 6 most common pieces	1. Hard Sell Advert	20 seconds
	2. Soft Sell Advert	20 seconds
	3. Documentary	30 to 40 seconds
	4. Technical read	30 to 40 seconds
	5. Corporate read	30 to 40 seconds
	6. Narrative with dialogue	40 seconds to 1 minute
Other suggestions	Native accent	30 seconds
	Foreign language	30 seconds
	Links	10 to 15 seconds
	Appeal	30 seconds

ARE YOU FLUENT IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE?

One reason for choosing to record more than the standard 6 tracks is if you are fluent in more than one language – in this case it would be worth considering 8 tracks (4 English/4 second language).

DO YOU HAVE A NATIVE ACCENT?

If you have a regional or foreign accent it is well worth using this to your advantage. Instead of needlessly spending money on extra tracks you could use one or two pieces (the Soft Sell Advert and the Narrative perhaps) to highlight the broader side of your natural accent.

Sourcing and choosing your pieces.

Sourcing pieces is pretty easy; choosing which ones to record is a little more difficult. You need to 'know your voice'. How old do you sound? What is your perceived class? Is it a sweet innocent voice or a 40 fags a day husky one? All of these determine what kind of products you could be employed to advertise. Ask your agent/friends/family/other actors to describe your voice. This should help you and may even surprise you!

Once you start on the preparation process, you'll probably find that you will start seeing/hearing pieces everywhere that could be used. If you hear an ad on TV or radio try to record it and then transcribe or have a look for something similar on YouTube. You may want to adapt an ad from printed media such as magazines, newspapers or company websites. In the same way that it would be inadvisable to record "To be or not to be..." for a radio reel, try to steer clear of iconic adverts that are associated with a famous voice. Once you start to collate pieces, email them to Guy using voice@roundisland.net and then you can bounce ideas back and forth in the lead up to recording.

Hard Sell Advert

Or should we say 'Harder Sell'. This doesn't necessarily mean all shouty and 'in your face' but includes high energy adverts such as the Chessington World of Adventures sample on our Samples page.



Hard Sell – Adam Berry

This type of advertising may not suit every voice and you may never be cast as the voice for Car Insurance, Cash for Gold or the Bank Holiday sale for a Sofa company but you are an actor. Use this piece to demonstrate your range. Have a listen to the Medium Sell samples for something a little more relaxed.

Soft Sell Advert

Less 'in your face'. The kind of advert that isn't trying to make us buy something immediately – they are drawing us in a relaxed manner. Listen to the Yorkshire Tea (Soft Sell – Michael Bell) sample.



Soft Sell – Michael Bell

Documentary

It's a great idea to bring to life something that you are really interested in whether that is politics, the environment, sport, travel or your hometown. For a travel piece you could pick a short section from the Sunday newspaper supplements or similar travel guide. Listen to Dan Fearn's piece on Martial Arts.



Documentary – Dan Fearn

Technical read

This could be a set of instructions – how to programme an HTML website/how to set up your new computer up etc. It should be very clear and concise and may be the kind of thing that would accompany a video 'how-to' guide.



Technical – Abigail Longstaffe

Corporate read

This is the kind of piece that may accompany a PowerPoint presentation at a conference. It needs to be professional and of ultimate clarity.



Corporate – Cassandra Wilson

Narrative with dialogue

Children's literature works very well for this. Alex Childs recorded a lovely example with us.



Narrative – Alex Childs

Native accent

Rebecca Travers shows the range of her Welsh accent in a subtle way in this compilation. It's almost like you have an 'accent dial' which you should be able to turn up or down. Remember though, native accents only, not an actors' rendition of a general American or an approximate Irish. In the past ten years things have changed dramatically due to the internet and the immediate availability of 'genuine' voices.



Compilation – Rebecca Travers

Foreign language

If you are fluent in another language then it is a good idea to have at least one piece to show this off. David Mildon's piece is a clever way of mixing English with French and helps make his reel unique.



Foreign Language – David Mildon

Links

This is a short advert for a television show, a link between programmes. They aim to keep you from channel switching.



Link – Morag Sims

Appeal

A charity appeal or a public service announcement, perhaps from the NHS.



Appeal – Allie Croker

FAQs

Shall I include a speech or poetry?

We would not advise using a dramatic speech or poetry in a commercial voice reel. Instead you would use these on the BBC Specification Radio reel recorded with Service 3.

Who shall I send the finished product to?

There are many UK based agencies, details of which can be found at [Arts Oracle](#). Remember, contacts change all the time so give each agency a call first and ask them what format they would like the voice reel and who to address it to. We provide you with high quality MP3 compilation tracks with Services 2 and 3 – very useful when sending to agents by email.

You don't always need an agent to work in the voiceover world – have a look at:

www.voices.com and www.voice123.com

Also, a client of ours and very successful voice artist Karl Jenkinson runs this:

http://www.kjvox.com/voxshop_UK.php

It's a helpful resource for books, equipment, info and advice on working as a voiceover artist. Have a look through his site and see how Karl uses the internet to publicise his achievements.