

# AUDITIONING

## GET TRACTION COURSE

Carrie Olsen: So, here are our three methods of getting traction. You've got auditioning, networking, email list. Tonight, we're talking about auditioning. What auditioning looks like? Recording samples from scripts and sending to clients who will evaluate all submissions and choose one for their project. Have any of you started auditioning yet?

Suzanne: Not me.

Jim: No.

Carrie Olsen: Okay. Alright, so no one here is quite there. So, what we are going to do is this auditioning module is I'm going to give you some homework which is an auditioning. Now, it's a fake audition, so don't get too excited, but you'll get the opportunity to put into practice some of the things we're going to talk about tonight. Analyze the script, read the directions, record it, edit it, and send it in, and make sure it's named properly and all of those things. We're going to talk about all of those things.

Do it on your own time if you're not quite there yet. You don't have a recording set-up. You're not quite sure how to use your audio editing software yet, that's fine. But if you do have those things ready, you can go ahead and do that homework and get it in. Because one of the things I want to make sure that we do with this course is not just learn a bunch of things but actually have our hands in it and do them. So that when you're out there in the real world, you don't just have the head knowledge, but you can actually put it into practice.

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Okay, so what are the benefits of auditioning? What does it do for your voiceover business? It gives you opportunities to book work, to build relationships, and to 'practice with real scripts.' Now, the reason 'practice' is in quotation marks, is because you are getting practice, but you also have the chance to book some of it.

So, I know when I first started auditioning, I did it with the mindset of, "I'm just going to do this to learn what's out there and learn how to do this." But about 40 auditions it, I booked a job. So it was like, "Okay. I'm okay with booking a job while I'm just practicing." Okay, so what do you need to get traction with auditioning? So, here are the different lessons that we're going to go over in the auditioning module, so the things that are in bold are our main topics, and then the things that are not in bold are subtopics of those things. And I see something came in here through the chat, so just a minute here.

"Carrie, I did not see the videos you're referring to. Where do I go to see?" Oh, sorry, you sent that privately. I read it out loud. I won't do that again. If you didn't get it, I'll send you an email to log in and you should be able to log in and see the videos.

Alright, so performance skills and ability to self-direct. These are two of the lessons that are going to be in the site and self-contained videos so you can watch those. Tonight, we're going to talk about getting access to auditions, high-quality recording capability, and auditioning skills. So, that's what we're going to cover tonight. So, let's just go through this briefly because we're going to get into some of it here in the PowerPoint. So, performance skills, you get this by working with a coach, and then just practicing it on your own as well. You can kind of get a foundation from your coach and then it's what you put into it afterwards.

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So, how long does that take? I want to put everything here on a timeline so that we have the proper expectations about when you can expect to start getting this traction. So, you can start getting performance skills as soon as possible through coaching, but you're going to spend probably at least six months to when you start getting really competitive. Usually, that's about what most good coaches will say. They're going to wait for six months before you actually make a demo. Now, you can book work before that, but that's kind of the average, or at least the minimum time frame that most coaches are going to say you just learn so much from those first six months. It's a process that you can't rush. And so, you kind of just have to let that happen.

The ability to self-direct. You get this through practicing and working with a coach. Now, there's a difference between performance skills, like actually being able to do it when there's a coach with you, saying, "Hey, read this word definitely. Your pacing is a little off." And then being able to do that on your own. And that's where you have to be able to do that in auditioning because 99% of the time, you've got script in front of you, and you have to make all of the calls, all of the decisions. You decide how fast you have to read it. You decide which words to emphasize. And so, you have to learn how to self-direct by yourself without a coach there kind of giving you those hints.

Access to auditions, you can get these through online casting sites and/or agencies, and we'll go through that. You can get that right away. If you've got \$400 to give to Voice123.com, boom, you've got access to auditions. But you can also get them through agencies. To get access to auditions through an agent, you have to have a demo. And how long does that take? Six months. So, at least six months before you're ready to start making that demo, when you start getting coaching.

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To kind of delve into that a little bit more, some online casting sites requiring you to have some work samples. Some of them don't care. They're like as long as you've got \$400, you can join my site. Others say that, "Well, we want you to at least have a demo." And then there are some that require you to have the professional demo, not just work samples. And then to get an agent, you have to have a demo. High-quality recording capability. This is huge, and it's a big stumbling block for a lot of voice actors.

They don't know, "Does my audio sound good enough? What equipment do I need? How do I do my setup?" So, we're going to talk about that tonight, and I'm going to show you hands on, I'm going to turn on my camera here when we get to that part, a few different microphone options you can use, exactly how to plug them in, and how that whole process works. Some other equipment you might need or want, and just kind of how to set up your home studio.

Time is obvious. We've talked about that a little bit. And then your auditioning skills. Now, that's different from performance skills and it's different from self-directing skills. So, this is specific to when you get an audition. So, there are some words you'll have to learn, like 'slate', how to slate and when not to. A slate simply means you say your name at the beginning of the audition. Sometimes, they'll want you to slate your name and your agency. So, you would say Carrie Olsen, Atlas Talent, and then you would go into your audition.

Sometimes, they want you to slate your name and the number of takes. "Carrie Olsen, two takes." Or your name and the character that you're doing. "Carrie Olsen, Mother." And then you'd go into the read.

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But you have to really pay attention to what they're asking, because sometimes they're very specific. Sometimes they'll say, "Don't slate at all." And in that case, obviously, you don't slate.

How to record, edit, export, and deliver audio, we'll talk about that tonight. How to submit a proposal or note to the client, and then auditioning etiquette. How much of the script do you need? If they send you four pages, do you have to read all four pages of the script for an audition? And then how to choose the right auditions for you? So, that's kind of an overview. Alright, so now, let's go into the presentation. Alright, can everyone see that okay?

Female: Yup.

Carrie Olsen: Alright. So, let's jump into auditioning. So, to get traction with auditioning. The big picture, what we're going to talk about in this first part of the lesson: What is auditioning? What is your job as an auditioner? Where do you go to get auditions? What do you need to audition well? What to expect when you're auditioning? And then what to do when you're not booking?

That's a big question, and it's one that you would hope that you never have to deal with, right? Because ideally, you start auditioning and you start booking work. But we all hit a wall at some times. It happens at different times for different reasons. One of the odd things about auditioning, is it's a mystery sometimes, what you book and what you don't. And when you go into a slump, sometimes you don't know why. Sometimes, it does have to do with your performance and maybe you need to brush up on something. But other times, it's just weird stuff going on.

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Maybe you are learning something new, or maybe you're all in your head and you kind of have to get over that wall. But we'll talk about what to do when you do hit that wall. Okay, so let's just, as a broad thing, just kind of zooming out for the whole industry of voiceover, why auditioning even exists.

So, clients need voiceover. As a high-level thing, the clients have a commercial they need to do. They need a voiceover for it. They need to hear different voice actors so they know who is best for their project. They have specific goals and intentions for the voiceover, and it's a big deal. Now, for most voiceover clients, they're very particular, they're very specific. That's why they don't just go find someone random and say, "Do this voiceover." That's why they go through this whole process of auditioning and hearing different voices, because it's really important to them.

And it's important for us as voice actors to remember that, that it's not just a thing that they're throwing out there; that it has -- there are stakes involved and that we need to treat it with the same importance that they're giving it by even going through this auditioning process. So, what's at stake? Clients need effective advertising because their brand, their jobs, their ROI, their business all depends on it. As the voice of their advertising, you are a big part of that. So, just to further emphasize.

Alright, so we talked about this already: What is auditioning? Recording a sample of a script or an entire script depending on the length and the audition instructions so that a potential client can hear your take on their project and get an idea of how your voice would sound delivering their message. Now, that is really important, that they can hear your take on it.

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So, I didn't just say so they can hear your voice. A lot of voice actors assume that it's mostly about their voice, but it's really about your interpretation of the script.

Because if you think about it, if there's a line that says, "Come to Payless! There's a 2 for 1 sale." They're probably going to hear, out of 10 auditions, 9 of them that sound identical. But if you can take that script that's seemingly kind of bland and give it a perspective, give it a unique take on it, that's what's going to make your audition stand out.

I don't know if any of you are in the Voiceover Startup Facebook group, but that's actually what I'm going to be talking about tomorrow in the Facebook Live, is some of those little things you can do to make your audition stand out when you're auditioning. Okay, so the goal with auditioning is to help your clients by delivering an on-brand sample read for them, thereby booking the job.

Now, this is another important thing. I think most voice actors would say, "Well, the goal is to book the work." But your job is to help your clients, you're serving your clients. Everything that you do is about serving them. And if you can approach it in that way, you're more likely to be in the right mindset. If you approach an audition with, "I have to win this. I have to win this." You can hear that in a read and you won't give your best performance if you're thinking about yourself versus thinking about the client.

Your secondary goal is to collect contacts to add to your email list. So, with our three methods of getting traction: auditioning, networking, email list. If you watch that video or if you saw on our opening infographic, everything kind of culminates with the email list because when you get a quality list of people that you can regularly reach out to, it gives you leverage.



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And so, as you're auditioning and booking work, you'll add those people to your email list so that you can continue to follow up with them and hopefully turn a one-time job into recurring work. And you only want to add clients that you actually book with. So, if you're auditioning and you don't book the job, probably not a good idea to reach out to a bunch of people who did not hire you.

Okay, side note: Why your email list is so important, coming away from auditioning for just a minute here, it puts you in a position of power. You get to choose when, how, and how often you are coming across your clients' and potential clients' minds. So, your clients might say, "We hired someone because they were just top of mind, they came across my mind." Well, you get to choose how often that happens if you're building your email list properly.

Okay, what is your job as an auditioner? Your job isn't just to read the script, isn't just to do a good interpretation or to act well. It's a lot more involved than that, and it seems really kind of complicated. But the more you do it, it becomes second nature, it becomes easier and you don't have to think individual about all of these things. But your job is to use all of the tools and clues available to you to create a well-formed interpretation of the script that is on-brand, that is intentional, that's high-quality, so that goes back to your recording equipment and your set-up, that's smart, that's consistent -- meaning all the way through the script, if you've ever been to a coaching session or kind of heard a one-on-one coaching session or have been part of a group coaching session, consistency is hard. It's something you have to work to do.



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And especially if you're not sure about the perspective that you're coming from, as an actor, you can do the first part of the script, and it sounds kind of like you're winking, and the second part, it sounds like you're angry, and it's kind of hard to keep that consistency. So, you want it to be intentional and consistent. It's self-aware, it's attention-grabbing and it's unique. It's all of those things, but it's not too in-your-face. Because I could probably do something that's these things or most of these things and just be really loud and obnoxious. And it's like, "Well, it was attention grabbing. It was unique."

But it also needs to be on-brand, it needs to be smart. And so, having a balance of something that is attention grabbing but that's also kind of not necessarily subtle, because some scripts don't want subtle, but that isn't in-your-face. So, that's what we're going for. That's your job as an auditioner. And then you send it off and you let it go.

Now, as hard as this first part might be, the second part is equally hard and probably sometimes harder because, especially for the type of person who obsesses over things, and you work so hard on the audition, and then you spend the rest of the day just thinking about it, "Did I get it? Did I get it? When am I going to hear back?"

You absolutely have to be able to send it off, as soon as you hit send, or upload, or however you're sending it off, walk away from it and do something else. And call it a job well done. Your job is to do the audition. And if you book the work, then it's the icing on the cake, which we'll get to hear in a little bit.

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Okay, so it's not always about the best read. And this is where some of that mystery comes in as to why you book some jobs and why you don't. So, there are countless reasons why your audition may or may not be selected as the pick. Your read may be awesome but it remind them of someone they used to know and didn't like.

So the client hears your voice and go, you know, maybe everyone else is thinking that's a great read, but the decision-maker goes, "Oh, this sounds like my ex-wife. Can't do it." And you never know, right? It could've been an awesome read and you never know the reason.

The job could've gone to the producer's niece. There's all kinds of things that could happen. So, you can't get into a situation where you're always going, nitpicking your read and going, "Well, what did I do wrong?" Because a lot of times, it isn't about what you did wrong. Now, sometimes, it is. There could be a situation where -- There's someone I know once who was auditioning and wasn't getting any traction, and he sent me one of his files and he hadn't been raising the volume up enough. It was really, really quiet. Like, it was coming in really quiet.

And I said, "They probably just couldn't hear it " Sometimes, it is something about you or your process. But sometimes, you'll never know the reason why you book or don't book a job. And with booking, sometimes, it's the same way. I booked a job recently that I had auditioned for over a month ago. So I thought, "Well, that one didn't pan out." And then later on, they reached out and said, "Hey, you booked it. It just took us a long time to get back to you." So, you have to be able to send it and let it go. Alright, so this is the mindset part.

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You do all that you can do, which is you prepare, you practice, you put in the work, you get training, but the fact is, no matter how good of a voice actor you are, you will absolutely get more nos than yeses. So, you have to be prepared for that. Don't take it personally and don't seek affirmation from your clients when you're not chosen. You do your work then you let it go.

And that's especially true if you're ever in an in-person situation. Maybe you booked a job and you're in a studio, and the client says, "Do a read." And so, maybe the script, what's here in front of me is the read and you say, "Do all that you can do. Prepare. Practice." And then you go, "Was that okay?" It is not your client's job to affirm you.

You are the professional. You're the voice actor. You're there to do your work. You've done the training. You've prepared. You've practiced, and then you have to be confident once you get in that situation. And I find that it's helpful to have that same mindset when you're auditioning; just to be confident. You can look at it like your job is auditioning, and when you book a job it's just the icing on the cake.

// END.