



Deep Dive 3: The Business of the Booth: Demos and Money

Turning Talent into Income: Your Voiceover Career as a Business

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You've mastered the microphone and nailed the script. Now it's time to close the loop: **getting paid**. The biggest difference between a talented amateur and a working professional isn't the voice—it's the business savvy. You are not just a voice artist; you are the CEO of **You, Ltd.**

This guide will show you how to market your skills, build the ultimate calling card (your demo), and confidently price your work to ensure you're getting paid what you're worth.

Your Voice Resume: Building the Killer Demo Reel

The demo reel is your most vital marketing tool. It's the two-minute summary of why a client should hire *you* instead of the thousands of other voices out there.

The Purpose of a Demo

A demo is not a scrapbook of every style you can do. It's a highly edited montage designed to prove three things, quickly:

1. **Quality:** Your audio is flawless (no noise, no echo).
2. **Range:** You can handle the genre (e.g., commercial, corporate, character).
3. **Hire ability:** You sound like a working pro.

Demo Structure Rules

- **Keep it Short:** For commercial and corporate narration, **90 seconds to 2 minutes maximum**. Clients listen for 10-15 seconds before deciding if they're interested.
- **Variety Within Genre:** A commercial demo should feature different tones: upbeat retail, serious insurance, conversational tech, etc.
- **The 10-Second Rule:** Each clip should be a **10-15 second snapshot** of your best work—the most interesting line, the best delivery. *Do not use a full 30-second script.*
- **The Order Matters:** Start with your **most marketable voice** (your signature sound) and end with your second best. The middle is for demonstrating range.

Warning on Production: When starting, focus on getting your voice clean and nailing the performance. Once you land your first few paid jobs, then invest in a professionally produced demo that uses music and sound effects to truly sell your voice.



Finding the Work: Pay-to-Play vs. Direct Marketing

There are two primary ways voice actors find work today, and a smart strategy uses both.

1. The Pay-to-Play (P2P) Approach

These platforms (like Voice123, ACX, or dedicated niche sites) aggregate job postings from clients.

- **Pros:** Instant access to a high volume of jobs. Great for practice and learning to audition. You manage the entire process.
- **Cons:** High competition, often low rates, and you have to pay a subscription fee just to audition. It's a constant race to the bottom on price.
- **Strategy:** Treat these sites as a practice field. Audition strategically for jobs that match your signature sound perfectly.

2. The Direct Marketing Approach (The Professional Secret)

This is how established pros build a sustainable career (and how I landed my long-term contracts!). You bypass the middleman and market directly to the people who need voices every day.

- **Target:** Local and regional **marketing agencies, video production houses, e-learning companies, and corporate HR departments.**
- **Action:** Send a short, professional email introducing yourself, mentioning your niche (e.g., "authoritative narrator with a warm North East tone"), and including a link to your demo reel and website.
- **Strategy:** Be consistent. Follow up. Direct clients pay better, offer repeat work, and allow you to build genuine business relationships.



Pricing Your Performance: Charging for *Usage*, Not Time

This is the toughest lesson: you are not charging for the 10 minutes it takes to record; you are charging for **where and how long the client uses your voice**.

Understanding Usage

A commercial that runs on a local radio station costs less than a commercial that runs nationally on television for a year. This is called **usage**.

- **Market Size:** Local (small city) vs. Regional (multiple counties) vs. National (country-wide).
- **Media Type:** Internal use (e-learning/corporate) is cheaper than External use (broadcast/internet ads).
- **Duration/Term:** Is the client using the audio for three months or one year?

Action Item: Familiarize yourself with industry standards, such as the rates published by the [GVAA \(Global Voice Acting Academy\)](#). These guides ensure you quote a fair, professional rate and prevent clients from taking advantage of you.

Never quote an hourly rate for commercial or broadcast work. Always quote a **Project Rate** based on usage. Internal training, e-learning, and explainer videos are usually charged based on word count or a flat project fee.

The Professional Mindset: CEO of You, Ltd.

To succeed, you must adopt the habits of a business owner:

- **Manage Rejection:** Auditions are practice. Booking is the result. You will lose 9 out of 10 auditions. Rejection is standard, not personal.
- **Stay Organised:** Track every audition, every quote, and every payment. You need a system for invoicing and following up on late payments.
- **Deliver Beyond the Mic:** Be on time, be polite, and deliver files *exactly* to the client's specifications (file format, naming convention, and loudness). **Professionalism wins over talent every time.**



Conclusion: Your Next Step is Growth

Congratulations! You now have a solid foundation covering the gear, the performance, and the business strategy needed to launch a career. You know the importance of a professional setup, how to interpret client direction, and how to price your work.

However, the industry is always changing. Technology advances, P2P sites evolve, and you need continuous training to stay sharp. What's the best way to get direct clients? How do you master character voices for the gaming industry? What are the advanced editing techniques pros use?

I'm currently building a series of workshops and deeper guides that will turn these foundational skills into career longevity.

Don't let your training stop here! Keep visiting www.simonlewington.com, where I'll be releasing advanced tutorials, email templates for direct marketing, and exclusive insights to ensure your voiceover career doesn't just start—it thrives.

Your success story starts now. Stay tuned!