



12 Trends for 2012

Written by David Ciccarelli, CEO of Voices.com



1. More Voice Over Work Moving Online

The tide continues to turn with traditional talent agencies using Voices.com as a major part of their marketing strategy online.

Casting calls that can't be found anywhere else are attracting agents who thirst for alternative sources to promote their roster, submit auditions and maintain public profiles where their house reels can be presented on the world stage. With \$72,000,000 in voice over work procured through Voices.com over the past several years, Voices.com's global marketplace is hard to ignore, especially as more audio production and voice over work moves online. This being the case, many agents encourage their talent to sign-up and audition for work at Voices.com or opt to manage talent accounts and submit custom auditions on behalf of matching talent on their roster.

A growing number of clients, casting directors and recording studios are directing voice talent to sign up at Voices.com instead of accepting demos from talent by email. The reason many people give for this shift in their talent management style is that they don't have the time, energy or resources to manage talent internally and find it much easier to work with talent who are listed at Voices.com. The solution is helpful for talent who are already on the site and significantly better for clients who wish to consolidate their talent base and voice samples.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472

International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com

Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012

Interactive Voices Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

2. Casting Directors Engage in Pre-Casting

As you might have noticed, it is becoming increasingly popular for companies to hold high profile, open casting calls for voice talent when filling specific roles or branding their company with voice.

These corporations often make use of social media to promote the casting call, aggregate qualified talent and gather responses through online sources, including sites like YouTube, Facebook and Voices.com. Industry players in need of game changing solutions, such as casting directors, choose Voices.com to meet their practical needs for finding talent by location and are able to cast a wider net with a much greater reach, hearing from talent outside of their own networks. Casting directors who use Voices.com save time, money and can reserve precious studio time for recording, not auditioning and casting.

Some use the site for casting purposes exclusively whereas others use Voices.com from start to finish, including the recording and delivery of finished audio. Creative uses of technology simulate the auditioning and casting experience for directors and help to achieve important tasks online resulting in a more efficient casting with better documented results.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472

International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com

Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

3. VoiceMatch Acts Like a Virtual Agent

VoiceMatch is one of the most significant changes to the online marketplace for voice overs in the past several years. As an intelligent recommendation engine, VoiceMatch saves you time.

VoiceMatch, a recommendation engine on Voices.com, suggests which voice over jobs talent should audition for based upon how closely a given project matches a talent profile. The higher a VoiceMatch score, the greater the correlation between a talent's qualifications in relation to a client's needs. Many talent are using this feature as a means to prioritize their Voices.com auditions and submit for the jobs that they are most closely matched to first before auditioning for jobs where they have a relatively lower VoiceMatch score. Higher scores fall within the range of 90 and 100. Anywhere between 70 and 89 is mid range and anything less than 70 may be considered a lower match.

While the higher a VoiceMatch score the better, some talent find that their sweet spot is at 85% depending on the project and its requirements. Bookings have been across the board VoiceMatch wise but those who are scoring 90 and above on a given audition opportunity tend to close the deal.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472

International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com

Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012

Interactive Voices Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

4. Speed Is *The* Competitive Advantage

Clients are more crunched for time than ever and speed has become the decisive factor when hiring a voice talent.

Key things clients want to know are “How fast will I receive an audition?” and “How quickly can you complete the work?” The competitive advantage goes to those voice talent with home-based recording studios who can turn around small projects in 24 hours or less. There are a number of factors as to why shorter deadlines have become the norm, three of them being: Technological Efficiency, Global Marketplace and Money. The faster talent audition, the sooner clients are able to review auditions and cast their projects. Deadlines for casting are presently a matter of days (if not hours) when it used to take weeks in the past. The global nature of the marketplace also factors in.

Jobs posted by clients who live in time zones other than your own also dictate when a job is being closed. For instance, if you are an American on Eastern Standard Time and a client in Asia or Australia is casting, they may do so in your sleep! Lastly, time means money. People who need voice overs recorded often have an immediate need. The talent who audition and best meet the posted requirements in a timely fashion will more often than not get the job.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

5. More Business By Mobile

Since the original BlackBerry and more recently the original iPhone in 2007, voice talent have been receiving email alerts for new job opportunities on their smartphones.

2012 will prove to be the year where voice talent will conduct more of their business on smartphones including the iPhone 4S, Google Android and modern BlackBerry devices. From viewing jobs to sending auditions on smartphones, voice talent have never been so empowered to work from anywhere and at their own convenience. Apps like iAudition have filled a unique corner of the market for talent sending audition files directly to their agents or to their own contacts via email.

For a couple years now, Voices.com has been testing the waters through the development of a mobile site. A mobile app for Voices.com is now in the works. The Voices.com mobile app will help make posting jobs and auditioning talent even easier while extending our existing brand and user experience to smartphone users.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

6. Less Is More For The Home Studio

Home studios are a given when it comes to working as a professional freelance voice over talent in 2012.

The question is not “Should I have a home recording studio?” but “Where in my home should I build a recording studio?” or “How much money should I spend?” Costs have gone down equipment wise as have expectations that talent invest in expensive technologies such as ISDN. The current outlook on home studios appears to be less is more. The most basic setup need not consist of more than a laptop, a mounted USB microphone, its mic cable, a pop filter, recording and editing software and a means of soundproofing the recording environment. More elaborate studios may include a standalone microphone, mixer and perhaps an isolation booth.

Although there are many different recording software packages out there, many find that less functionality is also more in terms of value, especially if you are only offering voice over services. Those offering production services and music composition may find that the rock solid ProTools recording software by Avid best meets their needs. Acoustic treatment, differing from basic soundproofing, can also be a DIY (do it yourself) endeavor.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

7. Voice Acting Workshops Occur Online

YouTube is the #1 e-learning platform. More hours are spent learning by watching educational material on YouTube than any other medium, so it's the perfect place to learn about voice acting.

According to some YouTube statistics we found, 24 hours worth of content is uploaded every minute, YouTube has more than 490 million unique users worldwide per month, there are over 92 billion page views each month, users spend roughly 2.9 billion hours on YouTube in a month and the average user spends 15 minutes each day viewing videos.

All of this being said, voice talent instructors are able to leverage the platform YouTube provides to reach more students and teach more people in groups in a virtual setting than they can in a physical studio location. Video helps their efforts go even further. Discussing concepts that don't require mic time are popular topics for webinars and

the like. Web-based shows such as the East West Audio Body Shop (EWABS), a program dedicated to the technical side of all things audio recording, have attracted an audience comprised of people around the world. Webinars hosted by teachers, industry professionals and service providers are also well received as are short tutorial style video clips and interviews.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472

International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com

Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012

Interactive Voices Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

8. Conversations Move From Forums to Facebook

There is a clear shift from old school forums to the modern format of discussions that happen on Facebook and LinkedIn.

As of January 1, 2012 there were 33,359 fans of the Voices.com Facebook page with a total viral reach of 52,617 people. Despite articles being written on blogs, the majority of comments and discussions surrounding the content have moved to Facebook and LinkedIn. Popular topics over the past year that will likely remain hot topics in 2012 include using the iPad for audio recording, celebrity voice overs, business planning, microphones and accents and dialects.

Keeping track of conversations and so on is also easier given social interactions are contained in one place with notifications generated via the social network alerting the user of new interactions according to a user's individual preferences and subscriptions.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

9. Referrals Matter More Than Ever

People do business with other people and relationships matter.

You might have noticed how social channels provide you with the opportunity to rate, recommend and endorse people, places or things. Two examples of this are Google Maps recommendations and LinkedIn recommendations. Google Maps recommendations refer to a place of business and LinkedIn recommendations refer to experiences had with an individual or a company as a whole. You can even recommend particular products using LinkedIn. Recommendations, whether in the form of peer reviews or business to business recommendations, are a powerful currency that will only continue to grow in significance as more people purchase products and or services online.

Each Voices.com profile has an area where you can add references from people who have worked with you before as well as a partial client list. If you get hired at Voices.com, Feedback in the form of a star rating and written review can be submitted after the work has been done. These transaction-based ratings and reviews will appear on your profile from clients who did business with you and completed their project via Voices.com.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

10. Apple Devices Lead Most Popular Categories of Voice Over Work

Between iPhone, iPods and iPads, Apple has revolutionized how digital content is accessed and downloaded.

As of October 4, 2011, Apple, Inc.'s App Store contained more than 500,000 iOS applications with many of them including some form of audio content or voice-over recording. Games that were once played online or on consoles such as the XBOX or PlayStation are now downloaded from the App Store. Apps, while not only fun and easily accessible, also contain a number of opportunities for voice talent.

Take audiobook apps for instance, particularly where shorter pieces of children's literature are concerned. This is an area that is ripe with opportunity for narrators. Apps also afford talent with opportunities for character voice work. Angry Birds is a fine example of animated squawking in the booth.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

11. Audiobook Market Continues To Explode

Audiobooks that traditionally were available on CDs and cassette tapes are nearly exclusively available as downloadable files from Audible and the iTunes Music Store.

For the first time in 2010, the APA released the measure of publishers' revenues, a metric that other publishing industry trade associations use. Statistics from a few years ago indicate revenues reported by 30 member companies at \$331 million, down only 6.7% from the previous year. The APA estimated at that time that the total size of the audiobook industry, based on the dollars spent by consumers and libraries, is close to \$1 billion. This estimation has likely been surpassed by now given the popularity of audiobooks.

The demand for and feasibility of audiobook production is validated even more so as many publishers now simultaneously release digital audio versions of a book alongside its print publication. Companies offering audiobook narration and production services such as Audible's ACX and Voices.com are helping to get the job done with even greater efficiency and savings.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472
International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com
Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012
Interactive Voices Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

12. Rates Hold Firm

Over the years, it has been difficult for freelance non-union voice over professionals to both set and preserve what they are able to charge for their fees.

Voices.com has been operating for 8 years. We serve both union and non-union voice over professionals and both union and non-union producers. During this time we have observed the struggle non-union talent face when trying to hold the line on their rates and have helped raise the bar where we can. Something encouraging we've noticed is that clients are not always going with the talent who quotes the least...in fact, most clients opt to hire in the middle of a range or closer to the top! Some even pay more than the budget they started with.

Victories are also being celebrated when inadequate budgets are increased to better reflect the work being done. You might have seen people comment on their social channels about how they were able to get a client to increase their budget or how they stood their ground and didn't accept less in terms of payment than they were comfortable with.

Questions? Call Us

North America 1-888-359-3472

International +1-519-858-5660

Visit Us On The Web

Email support@voices.com

Web <http://www.voices.com>

Copyright © 2012

Interactive Voices Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

About **Voices.com**

Voices.com was established in 2004 and is now the technology and industry leading website that connects businesses with professional voice talents. Radio and television stations, advertising agencies and Fortune 500 companies rely upon the Voices.com marketplace to search for, audition and hire voice talents with the assistance of the innovative SurePay™ escrow service and easy-to-use Web application.

The winner of several awards, including the 1to1 Impact Award for Full-Suite CRM, CRM Elite Award, and the DigiFest New Voices Award, Voices.com has raised its profile significantly this year ranking on the Hot 50 recognizing 534% growth over the past two years and just this summer was featured on Backbone Magazine's and KPMG's annual Pick 20 Listing as an "innovative company."

Clients include NBC, ESPN, PBS, The History Channel, Reader's Digest, Comcast, Nortel Networks, Bell Canada, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, ING, Western Union, Ford, GM, Jaguar, Firestone Tires, American Airlines, the US Army, the US Government and thousands more.