

Dramatic Voice Recording Sessions

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Beyond the script or screenplay, the dramatic voice recording session becomes the foundation for animation, audio vignettes or radio plays. This document is intended to act as a general guideline for preparing and participating in a dramatic voice session. This outline is based on a utopian world; and though your script may be far more simple or complex, it remains true that a well-planned process similar to this one will yield the creative fertility to produce an ideal performance. You will experience variations determined by the particulars of your project. For example, with large cast performances, you may want to break up the session by recording large group scenes early and systematically releasing talent as recording progresses. This outline can be scaled up or down. It applies to 10-minute vignettes or 90-minute features. The Key is: *Adapt to the needs of the screen play.*

Pre-Read

To gain the best performance from any given cast, deliver the scripts along with photos, diagrams, audio clips or any pertinent character descriptions. Get this to the cast well in advance of the session to assure the time needed for questions and for the players to become familiar with the story.

Cast Reading

The next step is to have the Writers, Directors and Cast together at one time for a “*Reading*”. This is where everyone involved begins to get his or her arms around the collective whole. The Writers and Directors can then adjust material based on what develops to improve characters and dialog. This also should happen with a comfortable amount of time before the recording session(s) to make the desired alterations.

The Recording session(s):

NOTE: In advance of the session, the producer should have the screenplay clearly divided into scenes or groups of actors that need to be “on mic” at the same time. This is critical for a managed flow at the session. Without it, your session may be perceived as disorganized. You run the risk of losing both credibility and the upper hand.

Recording Pass #1

The session will proceed in a linear fashion from the beginning of the story to the end with notes being taken by the Writer, Director and Recordist for modifications, additional wild-lines, or reactions that may be needed. Some of these changes will take place immediately while others are “picked up” at the end of the session. The key is to keep this pass moving! Don’t bog down with minutia. If it’s critical to the diegesis, then fix it immediately. Otherwise, this pass is intended for the cast to immerse themselves in character and is essentially a recorded final rehearsal.

Recording Pass #2

***“Lather, Rinse and Repeat!** The first sudsing just makes the water wetter, the second actually makes it glimmer and squeak”*

This pass is to be considered “**the performance**”. Characters are familiar with each other and “*In The Zone*”. It’s time to **play!**

Again, stop along the way to get things as good as they can be. This is it. Make notes for any pickups you may have left behind. **Important Note:** *Multiple takes of the same scene during a full cast recording are not always the solution and may quickly kill any life that’s there. Balance the momentum of the current cast performance with the urgency of the desired change in direction. It often means you’ll “pick it up” at the end of the session with fresher and better results.*

Reactions, Additions, Pickups etc.

Go through everyone’s notes. Do large group elements first and release talent as you go.

We Can Help!

Aaron/Stokes has extensive experience recording and producing projects involving dramatic reading. We will gladly assist you in any of the areas mentioned above at your request. Just ask!