



## How Selecting the Right Voice Talent Impacts Your Brand

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When people think about brand campaigns, they tend to think about messaging, design and music, but the choice of voice talent can be a significant reason why viewers connect with your show or channel, with those voices often filling in as the missing piece to the on-air branding puzzle. The most valued voiceover talent should work as an adjunct to your TV station, taking each piece of work seriously and delivering it in a timely fashion.

Below are five things to look for when hiring voice talent:

### 1. Service

The local television news business is based on immediacy, so timely service from everyone involved is crucial. News directors and creative services directors juggle daily promo schedules, and they need their audio back on the same day at the absolute minimum. Often, they need it within the hour. Voiceover talent should be equally focused on quick turnaround to provide the highest value to the client. Here's an example of when time was of the essence -- thanks to Marketing Director Spencer Ernest at Grey Television's KYTV Springfield, Mo.

## 2. Versatility

Viewers want to be talked to, not at. Whether you're producing a serious news promo, a lifestyle story or a fun social media post - valued voiceover talent can provide your reads with the nuance and options you require.

Here are two examples. The first is CBS Miami for its coverage of the federal indictment of former President Donald Trump. This was an historic event and all eyes were on that federal courthouse in Miami. The team at CBS-owned WFOR Miami -- which includes Director Of Creative Services Monica Kirkland, News Promotions Producer Ted Goldenberg, Senior Producer Hikmat Kilzi and Multi-Platform Marketing Manager J.R. VanWassenhove -- wanted to show that the station was with this story right from the start.Â

The second example comes from Hearst-owned WLWT Cincinnati's morning news show. Creative Services Director Pete Salkowski and Assistant CSD Kerri Hoï→€man wanted something that would be fun, upbeat and wink at how crazy mornings can be for their audience.

Finally, a great voiceover talent can stretch themselves a little. Hearst's WISN Milwaukee, Wisc. - with marketing led by Creative Services Director Scott Hutchcroft and producers Steve Schwinn and Dan Coad - wanted the voiceover for this spot to sound like a newsreel from the 1940s. Well, you don't have to threaten me with a good time!

## 3. Storytelling

At local TV stations, we are sharing moments of people's lives. Happy or sad, the emotional context has to connect. Here's an example that was recorded during the early parts of the Covid shutdown for Hearst's WCVB TV Boston.

The below spot really showed off what Creative Services Director Russ Nelligan, Assistant CSD Richard Feindel and the team wanted to accomplish, with the team relating to the anxious and unknown feelings of "what now?" Nelligan and his team always do a masterful job of connecting to WCVB's audience.

## 4. Communication and Collaboration

Whether it's a schedule change or updates on your requested audio needs, a valued voiceover talent should always be communicating with you. They should also be open to brainstorming and working in conjunction with you and your creative staff on how to best deliver the vision for your projects. Sometimes you may ask for your talent to play a little or to go for something completely out of the ordinary. Their ability to give you options is important.

## 5. Flexibility

The world is always changing and local TV stations need to capitalize on that. News breaks after hours and on the weekends and a valued voiceover talent will do everything they can to accommodate clients when needs arise. The pandemic and 2020 election cycle created plenty of late nights and weekend catch-ups for everyone in the business, and today's world remains just as action-packed. The most valued voiceover artists remain in the trenches with those hard-working news crews.

Steve Stone is an Emmy-winning voiceover talent whose work is heard across the country on many top local television affiliates. He prides himself on an "all hustle no hassle" work ethic. He is repped by Atlas Talent Agency.