

# Lary Lewman on Voiceover Demos

To those interested in becoming a voiceover artist:

Although there have been tremendous improvements in technology—including mini DVDs, digital mp3 files, Blu-Ray, ISDN, etc.—we believe that the tenets from the following tip sheet from the local veteran voice talent Lary Lewman still hold, and we have tried to teach the philosophies of quality and style that he covers here. The tenets of a good recording still remain: Sometimes less is more; preparation is everything (PRACTICE YOUR COPY, FOLKS!); an entertaining audio presentation is good, and *why not have fun?*

*Laura Giannarelli, Clay Teunis  
Tunarelli Studios March 2008*

## EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT THE DEMO By Lary Lewman

### STYLE

Currently, most reels are assembled using a series of short segments from many different commercials to create a fast-moving, “listenable” tape. The “entertainment value” of your finished tape is probably fully as important as the range of skills it demonstrates.

### “COMMERCIAL” VS. “NARRATION”

Some performers have a “commercial” and a “narration” reel; some combine samples of both on one reel. I think combination reels are fine if you feel that you sight-read well enough to seek work as a narrator. The obvious advantage of separate narration and commercial reels is that, if a producer uses only narrators or if he or she produces only commercials. A reel of one or the other makes you look like more of a specialist.

### PREPARATION

Gather together 10 or 12 pieces of copy which you think you do well. Use material which shows your versatility. Rehearse your copy until you’re thoroughly familiar with all of it, then make an appointment with a studio. When you’re in the studio let the engineer help you select 6 or 8 samples which he or she feels you do best. Take the engineer’s advice on which copy to record and in what order to put the spots on the tape.

### WHERE DO I GET COPY?

From friends at radio stations or at advertising agencies. Also, feel free to transcribe copy from TV or radio spots which you think you could do well. Another good source is the body copy of expensive print ads in slick magazines. It has always seemed unnecessarily expensive to me to have someone write copy for a demo reel.

# Lary Lewman, cont'd.

## WHAT ABOUT MUSIC?

Talk with the studio about what they can provide and whether or not they can help you select background music for your spots (and at what cost). You needn't have music behind everything you do, but it helps to add interest to your reel. Maybe you can bring some music which you feel enhances certain pieces of copy. Any work you do before you get to the studio will save you time and money.

## LABELS

Put your name and phone number on the front and edge of the packaging. Your name and phone number should be prominent.

## NOW WHAT?

Get a list of advertising agencies and film producers (from AFTRA/SAG or the yellow pages [check the **Actors' Center**] and start making calls. Tell the producer that you're looking for radio or voice-over work and that you have a sample reel which you'd like him or her to hear. Try to get an appointment to deliver the [CD/DVD]—maybe you can get the producer to listen while you're there. In any case, they'll have a face to associate with the voice on the reel. If you can't arrange an appointment, call and tell them you're mailing [it], then follow up with a call in a week or so. Don't ask producers for a commitment to hire you.

## WHO HATES [YOUR DEMO]?

You will! Beginning shortly after you've finished putting it together! But you should use it anyway, at least until you have the time and money to do another, better one. Very few performers like their own sample reel. Also, a very influential, heavy user will probably tell you that you did it all wrong. Ignore them.

— Lary Lewman

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