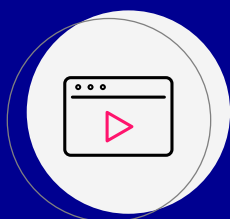


WHITEPAPER

Sound Production

What to be aware of



Sound production covers the process of adding music and sound effects as well as the final recording of off-screen narrators for a film or video. This may also involve translating original soundbites and adding these with a different voice.

Sound production always happens at the very end of film production. Since voice recordings in particular require a certain amount of time and money, various aspects must be taken into consideration and decided before you begin.

This whitepaper provides orientation to ensure sound production for your film is both high-quality and as efficient as possible.

Choosing voice actors

The choice of voice actor is vital to how your film will be perceived. Professional voice actors perform as much as anyone on screen, given that they shape their text through **emphasis, specialty, intonation and style**, bringing the story to life.

When choosing your voice actor, their **specialty** is a decisive factor as many primarily specialize in **commercials**. A text that is **professional or explanatory** requires different intonation. If your company's Corporate Brand Guidelines have certain specifications, make sure that **the voice also matches your CI**.

Fees and buyouts

The cost of voice-overs depends largely on the **film length** and its **intended use**.

Most voice actors charge significantly higher fees for anything **longer than three or five minutes. Internal or external use and the content of the planned work** (on a corporate site or social media, intranet or TV) all play a role in the amount and duration of the buyout.

The mmpro production team can advise you after having been briefed and will collaborate with you to find the best solution regarding quality and cost.

A male or female voice?

These days, the ratio of male and female voice actors is largely the same in every subject area. There is no longer the stigma that women are unable to speak as well about topics traditionally considered "male" such as tech, STEM, or automotive and mechanical engineering.

However, there are some exceptions to this rule, which are listed in the following.

Voice-overs and film soundbites

A voice-over is a narrator's voice laid over the film as voice actor is off-screen.

Soundbites are interview answers or short statements by a speaker on-screen.

Dubbing refers to the process where the original voice is replaced by a voice speaking the same text translated into a foreign language.

If both the voice-overs and the soundbites need to be dubbed, all effort should be made to **match the new voices to the character of the speaker in the original language.**

This is because issues arise if there is no difference in character between the dubbed voice-over and soundbite, as it is difficult to distinguish who is speaking (especially if an interview is also accompanied by cutaway shots, i.e. you only see the speaker briefly).

Ideally, **different people** should take on each new role and **gender should also be matched accordingly.**

Therefore, it is important to plan and budget for all the **different voice actors** who will be needed for dubbing.

If there is no difference in gender between the voice actor and all people on-screen, and **if the budget is tight**, then a single voice actor may be used for all of the dubbing, provided that they modulate their voice accordingly.

Regional dialects

When choosing the voice actors for foreign language dubbing, a **conscious decision** should be made on which **language variations** to use (such as British or American English, European or Latin American Spanish).

Approval & scheduling before sound production

Sound production may be expensive. **A studio, sound engineer, voice actor and professional voice direction must all be booked for a specific date.**

If the voice-over text and/or parts of the interview are changed **after** they have been recorded, this will result in additional costs as the **process will need to be repeated.**

This is why it is so important for the final pre-film version to be agreed upon by all stakeholders and decisions-makers in **good time prior to sound production.**

Voice actors are in high demand and often not available at short notice. Therefore, you should ensure at the beginning of the project that **a sufficient time buffer** has been planned in for voice production, especially in the case of fixed deadlines.

Language versions

If the film or video is to be produced in multiple languages, differing grammar and sentence structure may cause a **delay in timing** between the original and dubbed voices.

English, for example, is often slightly longer than German, while Spanish, on the other hand, is significantly longer than both English and German. In such a case, **the video may have to be adapted to the respective language** by lengthening or shortening certain footage, which increases the amount of editing involved.

Therefore, any text translated for dubbing should be as **concise** as possible.

The mmpro editorial team is able to accurately estimate the difference in length for existing translations of texts between English, German, Spanish, French and Italian.

Pronunciation of names and corporate wording

It is important to clarify the **correct pronunciation** of certain **corporate terms and proper nouns** before dubbing.

To be on the safe side, mmpro will always ensure in voice production that multiple different recordings are made. Even so, the editorial team are more able to **avoid ambiguities, the need for additional editing work** and in a worst-case scenario **cost-intensive redubbing** if they have been **thoroughly briefed** prior to starting the project.

Your pre-dubbing Checklist

Voice artist selection

- What is their specialty (commercials, documentary or explanatory/informative)?
- Does the voice fit your corporate identity?
- Should the voice actor be male or female?
- How many people do you need for the voice-overs, interviews or soundbites?
- Do the voices selected for dubbing match the people in the film?
- Should the voice actors use a certain dialect?
- How long is the film, where will it be shown and what does that mean for the budget?

Release & scheduling

- Is the film version final enough to be dubbed?
- How many voice actors are needed and in what time frame?

Language versions & pronunciation

- How do the translations differ in length from the original text and what does this mean for editing and, if necessary, shot length?
- Has any doubt surrounding the pronunciation of any technical terms and proper nouns been resolved?