Are You Demo-Ready

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As a voiceover demo producer, when I tell talent they need to be "demo-ready," it means they are professionally prepared to cut a track that represents their absolute best, sustainable work.

A demo is your calling card, it's what gets you signed by agents and hired by directors. If you record it before you're ready, you aren't just wasting money; you risk burning bridges by sending a subpar product to industry decision makers. Being demo-ready means your skills are sharp enough that you can duplicate the quality of your demo on a live session tomorrow morning.

Here is the checklist of what it actually takes to be demo-ready:

1. Solid, Ongoing Performance Training

You shouldn't use a demo to practice; you use a demo to showcase what you've mastered.

- The Baseline: Months (sometimes years) of coaching with reputable industry professionals.
- Mic Technique: You know how to work the proximity effect, control your plosives, and manage your breaths without thinking about it.
- Acting Chops: Voiceover is *acting*. You need to be able to connect authentically with a script, not just read it in a "radio voice."

2. Rapid Direction-Taking

In a professional session, a director will throw a curveball at you.

- You must be able to completely pivot your delivery on a dime. If a producer says, "Give it to me 20% more conversational and drop the announcer smile," you need to know exactly how to execute that instantly.

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3. Clear Brand and Genre Identity

A commercial demo sounds entirely different from a video game demo, an audiobook demo, or a corporate narration demo.

- You need to know your vocal archetype (e.g., the quirky best friend, the authoritative expert, the gritty anti-hero).
- You should have a specific target genre in mind. Trying to smash corporate narration and anime voices into one demo tells producers you don't know the market.

4. Cold Reading & Script Analysis Proficiency

When you get a script, you should be able to break it down in 30 seconds.

- You know exactly who you are talking to (the audience).
- You know why you are saying it (the objective).
- You can find the natural rhythm, the "hooks," and the transitions in the text without stumbling.

5. Vocal Stamina and Consistency

- Can you maintain the exact same character voice, energy, and pitch for an hour-long session?
- If you blow your voice out after three takes of an action-heavy video game script, you aren't ready to record a multi-track demo yet.

6. A Broadcast-Quality Home Studio

In today's industry, agents won't just ask for your demo; they may ask for a sample of your home studio space.

- Your room must be professionally treated (free of echo, boxiness, and computer fan noise).
- You need a competitive microphone and audio interface. If your home setup sounds like a bathroom, a killer demo won't save you because you won't be able to deliver the actual jobs you book.

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