Harmonizing Voices: A Guide to Collaborating on Voiceover Projects
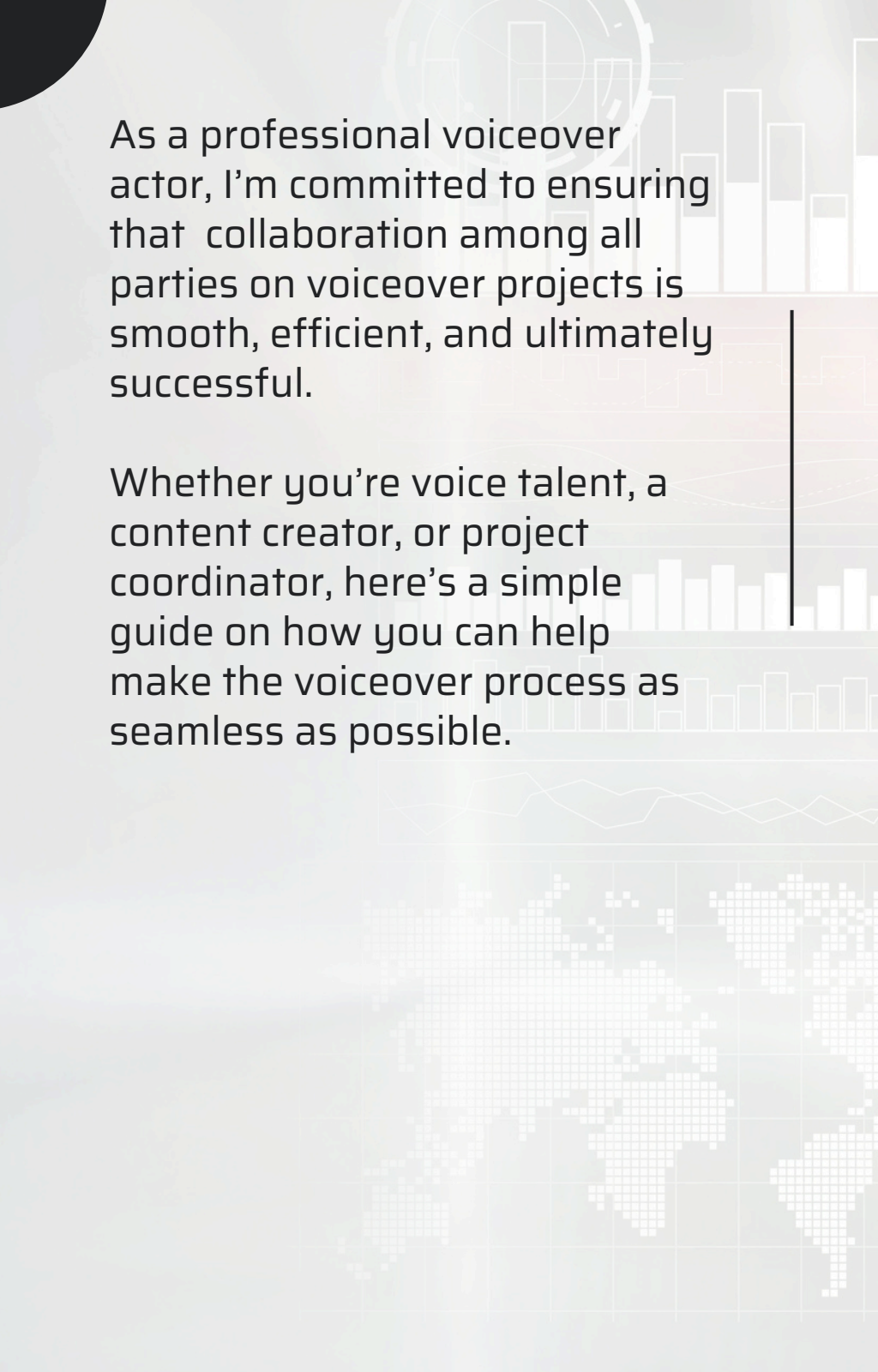
For voice talent, content creators, and project managers.

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VOICE OVER TALENT

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As a professional voiceover actor, I'm committed to ensuring that collaboration among all parties on voiceover projects is smooth, efficient, and ultimately successful.

Whether you're voice talent, a content creator, or project coordinator, here's a simple guide on how you can help make the voiceover process as seamless as possible.

1. CONTRACT & TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

It's important to formalize the contract terms. Done right, email could suffice, but executing a contract is the best practice and in the interests of all. It outlines all the key elements so that both parties have clear expectations and responsibilities.

For voice talent, I recommend that you have your own contract template available because clients may not be so prepared. Be sure to incorporate AI-related provisions, one source of which is the AI rider available from the website of the National Association of Voice Actors (NAVA).

2. SCRIPT FORMAT

Make sure you agree on the format in which the script will be provided. This is especially applicable if you intend to work with any proofing software like Pozotron.

3. SCRIPT INSTRUCTIONS

Ensure that script instructions are clear. If for example, the script comes in a Google Doc or other format that includes other narrative information, it's important to be clear on what should be excluded from recording.

4. PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

If the script contains specialized terminology, unusual place names, or character names, a pronunciation guide is most helpful. Yes, online resources abound, but there are often multiple online pronunciations for the same word so it's important that the right guidance is provided from the outset.

5. FINAL SCRIPT

This is key. **Before** recording begins, the script should be **finalized**. Additional charges will likely follow for rerecordings made necessary for script changes made after recording. (More on this next).
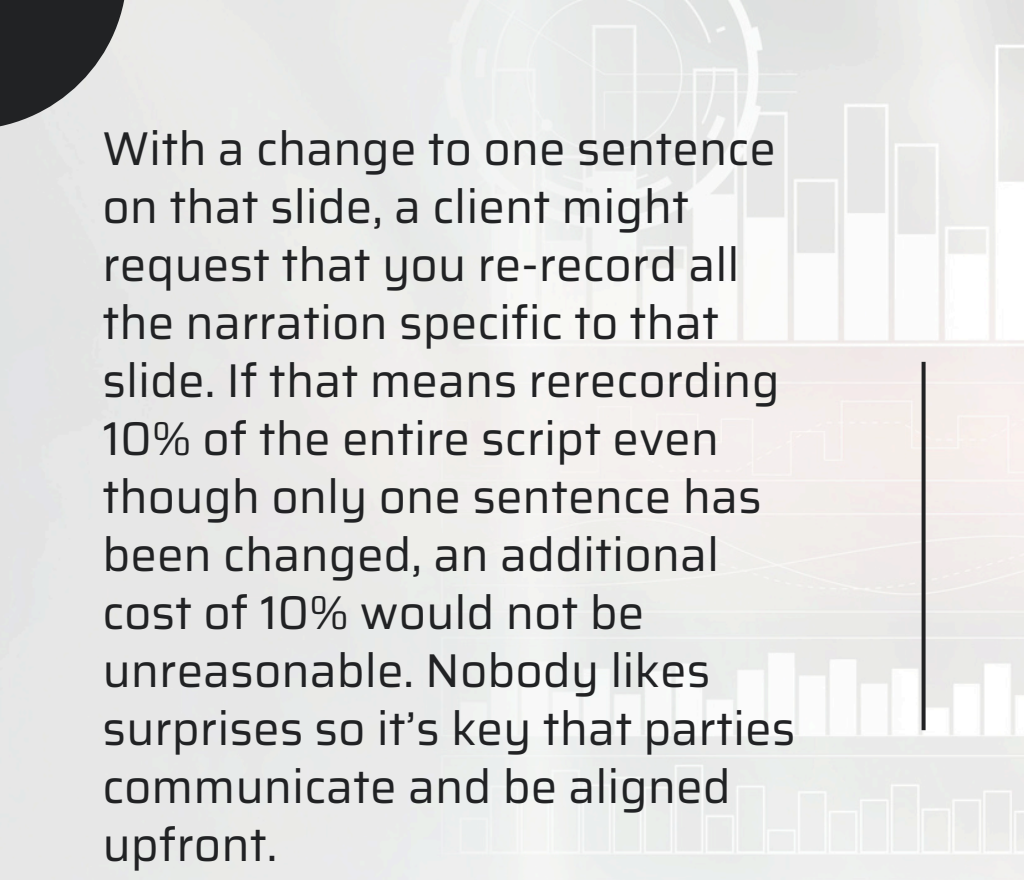
6. REVISIONS VS RETAKES

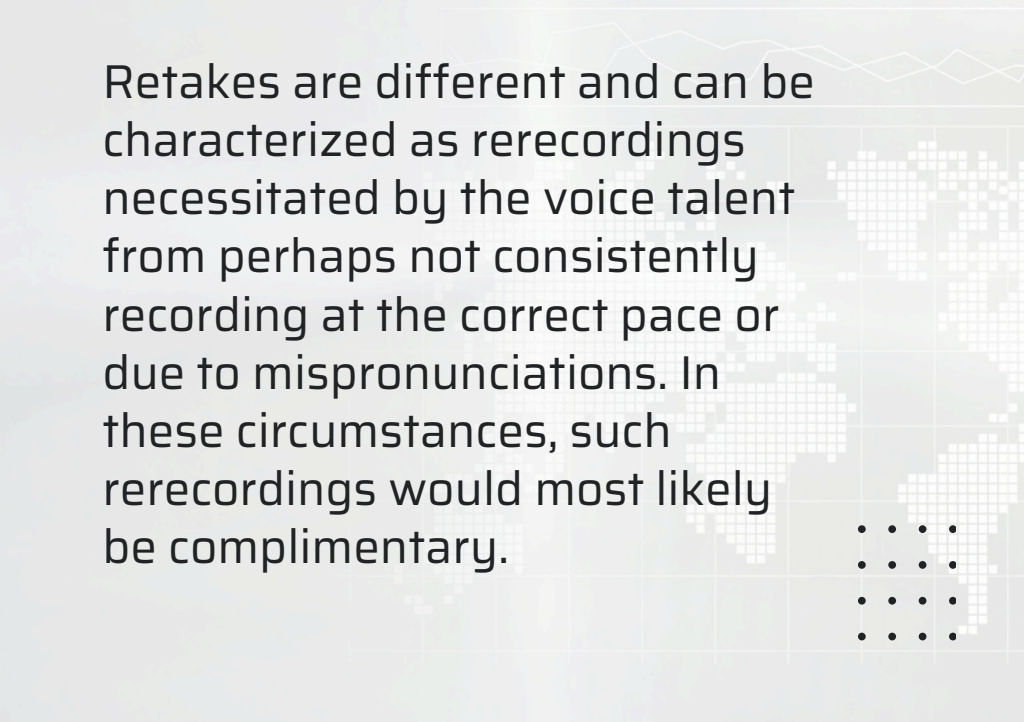It's important to clarify the policy in place regarding revisions and retakes.

Revisions are changes made to the script after the content has been recorded. This can lead to significant additional costs.

For example, on a long-form corporate video, a significant amount of verbiage may pertain to a single slide (picture a cartoon character taking a user through a learning module and highlighting different areas of the same slide).

With a change to one sentence on that slide, a client might request that you re-record all the narration specific to that slide. If that means rerecording 10% of the entire script even though only one sentence has been changed, an additional cost of 10% would not be unreasonable. Nobody likes surprises so it's key that parties communicate and be aligned upfront.

Retakes are different and can be characterized as rerecordings necessitated by the voice talent from perhaps not consistently recording at the correct pace or due to mispronunciations. In these circumstances, such rerecordings would most likely be complimentary.

7. TONE & PACING

Agreement on the tone and pacing of the script is key. Expectations should be set either by having the voice talent provide a sample recording or by the client providing a reference recording such as an online clip or previous work.

8. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Another key point: both parties should agree on the technical specifications to be used during the recording. This includes file formats, bit rates, or any other specific audio requirements the client might prefer.

9. DELIVERABLES

For the love of all that is good and holy, when the client specifies how files should be split and labeled - and if they don't, ask - that is how they should be split and labeled.

10. SCHEDULING & DEADLINES

When setting deadlines, sufficient time should be allowed for review and approval by all client stakeholders. This helps manage expectations and avoids the need for rush work and any additional fees.

By following these guidelines, the project has the best chance of running smoothly from conception to completion.

CHECKLIST

☐ Contract and Terms of Engagement

☐ Script Format

☐ Script Instructions

☐ Pronunciation Guide

☐ Final Script

☐ Revisions vs Retakes

☐ Tone & Pacing

☐ Technical Specifications

☐ Deliverables

☐ Scheduling & Deadlines