

# LOCKDOWN LEGENDS TIME TO THRIVE NOT JUST SURVIVE

I was deeply inspired by watching certain VO's shift a gear to grow their business during the last 6 months. Early on in the pandemic I asked myself "what are they doing that I am not?" Asking that question opened the doors to new realms of opportunity and I was compelled to find out more. I asked these four amazing VO's these questions:

- 1 How did the pandemic impact your business?
- 2 How did you adapt?
- 3 What new realms of work did you find?
- 4 What new transferable skills have you learnt?
- 5 What top tip do you have to find work?



**By Alan Shires**  
Voice Actor, VON  
Communications Manager



**Jeffrey Bentley**  
US Based  
Voiceover Artist

I'm definitely busier since lockdown began. Because of this, I've been able to invest in things such as The

VoiceOver Network. I was

already working from home pre-COVID; all set up and ready to go with my mic, booth and computer. When they made the announcement telling me to stay home even more, I said, "Ok." I was stoked to get more time with my family in between gigs. My brain has been launched into full creative innovation mode. More parody songs/scripts keep popping into my head at least once a week, and I've continued to advance my skills for auditions involving animation and interactive video games thanks to proper training of course. A skill I have learnt during lockdown is to make cleaner, more professional sounding audio and video editing especially with my next step to create my own animated shorts and add voiceover to that in the near future. If I was to offer any advice to someone struggling to find work, it would be first of all to BREATHE. We are all artists walking on different paths heading towards the same goal. Your speed may not be the same as someone else's and that's ok; "It's a marathon; not a sprint". Find your niche, explore all areas of that niche, become an expert in it. Listen to your gut, feed your creative outlet, learn something new every day. Remember to have fun, never stop growing and always be yourself! That way your tribe will always find YOU.



**Karis Pentecost**  
UK Based Voiceover Artist

When lockdown began, I had on-screen jobs pulled, postponed and in some cases cancelled altogether. Fortunately, having a home studio with remote recording capabilities

meant that I could continue to work

as a voice over artist throughout lockdown and although the volume of jobs had noticeably decreased, they were still present. It was just a matter of having to work harder to find them. I knew that despite productions coming to a halt and advertisers pulling their ads, there had to be other realms of VO that were going to accelerate. I knew that if I was going to tap in to what was trending, I had to display the right skills, so I pushed my Corporate reel to the forefront of my website and social media presence and very early on decided to have a Medical reel produced. On the back of my medical reel I started to book VO in this genre. It's a realm of voiceover I hadn't ever considered before but it has opened up a whole new world of VO to explore and it's brilliant. I'm somewhat of a 'word nerd' anyway so coming face-to-face with tricky pronunciation and biology was like music to my ears. My top-tip would be to start by looking back on clients that you have already worked with, it may even be a client you worked with in a previous career. The likelihood is that there is a department within their company that produces content and just as likely that they will require a voice. Find the company on LinkedIn, research the correct person to connect with and start a conversation. Be useful, be helpful, be nice.



## Ian Russell

*UK voiceover Artist  
based in the US*

When lockdown began, I was lucky in that I had two long projects already underway, so perhaps the biggest impact was my family being in the house all

day and all of us having to adjust our routines to accommodate my work. For myself, having to start earlier and take longer breaks in the middle of the day and for them, being sensitive to the need for relative quiet. Also my marketing message has adapted. I'm lucky that my business has grown, and I have been somewhat sheltered but many of my clients, friends, colleagues, they have been more significantly affected and my outreach message has adjusted to try and reflect that. As a home-based talent, heavily invested in having a high quality home studio, potential clients were suddenly looking for people like me; clients who previously would not have considered a home-based talent before Covid-19. I signed with a London based agent; a real breakthrough for a Brit living in the USA! I think I've learnt that I need to keep doing what I'm doing but even more moving forward. The investment I made (lots of dollars!) had helped me prepare for this unforeseen situation. So I'm not so sure it's a skill I've learned, but rather that continuing to invest in your business through a quality set up, honing your performance skills and sensitive marketing will give you the best chance of riding out any storm. If you're struggling to find work, what I would suggest is to think deeply about what you offer and how you can best market that service. There is a mountain of work available but it is a crowded market, so consider how you can differentiate yourself. Finally, my favourite quote sums this up; "be so good they can't ignore you" - Steve Martin.



**Be so good they  
can't ignore you.**

**-Steve Martin.**



## Lorraine Hodgson

*UK Based  
Voiceover Artist*

When lockdown began in the UK my acting work ceased. I had just been booked for a TV commercial

which got pulled, the funders pulled out of the community theatre company I had started in January, then I start to hear all the recording studios are closing! Arrrrr what next! Panic began to set in. I took a deep breath and started to calm down. I thought what is important to me right now? My family, friends and my health. Of course being part of The VoiceOver Network these last few years I had learnt to build a home studio and gain voiceover work from home. I realised when you are a creative it's important to have a few strings to your bow which help generate various incomes. During lock-down I found more time to dedicate to my voiceover career, I reached out to my client list and also searched for new potential clients. I started to book work. I was able to dedicate myself to the voiceover auditions that came in whereas before pre-lockdown, I was struggling to keep up with it. During this pandemic I have had time to reflect and tune in with how I feel about work. I believe work puts our creative energies to use, it stimulates us and can bring us huge successes BUT when it takes over our lives to a point where we no longer find the satisfaction in what we do or we become slaves to our jobs - then that is when work infiltrates our lives in a negative way. My top tip is work/life balance is the key. Don't be greedy then there will be enough work to go around for everyone.