

15 Top Tips For Self-Publishing An Audiobook

by Michele Cobb

You've written a book, you've seen the growth of the audiobook market, and you want to turn your work into an audiobook. Planning to be your own audio publisher? There are many options to create an audiobook. [Professional Production Studios who are members of the Audio Publishers Association \(APA\)](#) can help make your audiobook creation process seamless. Here's a guide to working directly with a professional studio to make your audiobook dream a reality. Follow these 15 tips to make the experience smooth and produce results your audience will love.

- 1. Final Manuscript In PDF**

You'll be asked to supply the final edited version of your script as a PDF. Word count is also helpful (this will give you a sense of final run time – approximately 9000 words per finished hour).
- 2. Establish A Budget**

Know your budget up front, and be realistic. A lot of hard work goes into recording and editing a high-quality production.
- 3. Address Your Visual Content**

If there are graphs, charts, anything visual, consider which ones you would want re-written for the audio version and which ones can be skipped. You can also add instructions to your audiobook script that tell your listeners to go to your website and download related materials.
- 4. Determine Distribution**

Have your distribution plan figured out – what company will help you get your title into the retail and/or library markets? [Check out the distributor options at the APA website's Getting Started page.](#) This will help your studio know the required delivery specs (which differ by format and distributor) and help keep the process smooth.
- 5. Assess Your Own Reading Voice**

Determine if you would like to narrate your own book or have a professional audiobook narrator record it. If you would like to record your own title, skip to step 10.
- 6. Create Casting Notes**

Let the studio have any casting notes up front. For instance, if the book has two characters, one male and one female, and you'd like those parts read by different narrators, indicate that at the start. The studio will provide casting options to you based on a number of factors.
- 7. Evaluate Voice Talent**

Trust your producer. There's a reason they choose the talent they submit to you (fitness for the role, experience, proficiency in a particular genre, reviews/awards, etc.).
- 8. Choose Your Narrator**

If you have narrator approval, go with the narrator who best reflects your message or brings your story to life. You can also do some due diligence. Check out their reviews on [AudioFile Magazine's website](#) and look at their body of work on your preferred audiobook vendor.
- 9. Prepare Pronunciation**

Provide a pronunciation list for the studio/narrator – especially those difficult character names.

10. Communicate With Studio

Know your point of contact and who you will be working with at the studio so you can direct questions to the right place. If you are having your audiobook narrated for you the rest is up to the studio.

11. Schedule The Recording

If you are narrating the book yourself, have an idea of the schedule on which you would like to record. Keep in mind that this is an acting job and if you don't have experience or training, you may find this more challenging than you imagined.

12. Dress For Success

When recording - leave your jewelry and rustling clothing at home. Loose, dangling things make noise. Clothing can rustle. Soft, cotton clothing is best.

13. Use A Script That Scrolls

You should be working from an iPad during the recording session. The studio will likely provide one, but if not, you can load your PDF to the app iAnnotate on your iPad and bring it with you. When you scroll through the script, it won't rustle, like paper, and you won't have to stop and go back as often.

14. Make Narration A Priority

If you aren't a professional narrator, it will likely take longer than you think – pace yourself. Don't plan on attending social events on days when you are recording because loud talking will compromise your vocal quality.

15. Be Physically Ready

Be prepared - eat moderately, and bring snacks. Once your stomach starts rumbling, you will have to take a break.

The world of audio publishing is growing quickly. The APA looks forward to having you join us! For more information about the association and its members visit www.audiopub.org.