

# 10 WAYS TO GET YOUR MOUTH PAID



## VOICE-OVER ARTIST

Dominique Jennings

SALARY RANGE: \$25,000–\$100,000+

**I** knew early on that I wanted a career in entertainment but had no idea I could earn a living using my God-given voice until I discovered the world of voice-overs. As an only child growing up in Los Angeles, I used to imitate voices and put on shows for my father, a painter, who exposed me to the world of arts and entertainment. At 11, I appeared on *Sesame Street*. In high school, people kept telling me I had an interesting voice. Though I didn't know much about voice-over work, I jumped into it with both feet and learned as I went along. It didn't take long before I landed on *Spawn*, the Emmy Award-winning HBO animated series, and then on the WB's *The Zeta Project* and Fox's *Xyber 9*. My job involves going into a recording studio and coming up with character voices or adjusting my own voice to accommodate the producer's vision. Though it sounds easy, performing without the benefit of seeing the character on-screen can be challenging. That's because character development is often completed after the voice work has already been recorded.

"I've also done TV voice-over spots for Ford and Honda, and appeared in national commercials for UPS, the Got Milk? campaign, Listerine mouthwash and Cetaphil skin care. I've done radio spots for Budweiser beer, as well as several films. With numerous commercials on the air simultaneously, artists can earn residuals for years, making the pay quite lucrative. The hours are flexible, too. In fact, for two years, I played a villain on the NBC soap opera *Sunset Beach* and was nominated for a Soap Opera Digest Award while working behind the scenes. Never underestimate the unique power of your voice or what it can do for you." —S. A.M.

**GET TRAINING** Invest in either voice-over or improv classes, or both.

**LISTEN** Tape yourself making different sounds and voices, or develop your own signature sound.

**DIVERSIFY** Whether you choose to do character voices for animation or voice-overs for CD-ROMs, training videos or commercials, the more versatile you are, the more money you can earn.

**DO A DEMO** Invest in a demo tape with a reputable producer.

**CHECK OTHER SOURCES** If you don't have the money for professional classes, look into community colleges and other places that may offer a less expensive alternative.

**HIT THE INTERNET** Web sites such as castnet.com will post your résumé and offer industry news and employment information.

**FIND AN AGENT** A commercial-voice-over agent can get you paid. Some agents even have the capability to listen to your work on-line.

**HIRE A PRO** Jennings called upon Carroll Day Kimble, a Los Angeles-based voice-over coach and casting director, to help perfect her craft.

**GET REFERRED** Ask people who are doing what you want to do how they got into the business. They may refer you to their representatives, schools or Internet sites.

**GET IN THE LOOP** Loop groups offer a world of opportunities to perform voice enhancement for films and TV. But to land in one of these hard-to-join groups, you've got to do some research and pay some dues. —S.A.M. □

Just like companies, we all have a brand—a reflection of who we are, what we believe, what we do and how we do it, according to David McNally and Karl D. Speak, authors of *Be Your Own Brand* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers). By developing a strong personal brand, you'll create a life that's more successful and fulfilling.

SHAYMER PERETZ

I Love This Job!