

THE SOUND OF SUCCESS

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ALUMNA'S COMPANY HAS INVENTORY OF MORE THAN 100,000 VOICES

When Stephanie Ciccarelli graduated from Western in 2006 with her Bachelor of Musical Arts, she knew voice would be where she made her living. But Ciccarelli has found success promoting other people's voices internationally with a company she founded with her husband David in 2003.

[Voices.com](#) is an online marketplace that connects business people with voice actors and professional voiceover talents. Initially the main clients were radio and television stations, advertising agencies and other businesses. But the growing need for voice talent for video games, iPhone, audio books, and other technology applications has generated explosive demand. In 2009 Voices.com was named number 20 on Profit Magazine's Hot 50 list, after experiencing a 534 per cent growth in revenues from 2006 to 2008.

So how did a music major wind up married to an audio recording technologist, and giving birth to both a fast growing business and a fast growing family? The couple met in February 2002, says Ciccarelli. "I was a first-year music student and my mom knew one of my goals was to record a demo. David had a recording studio, the Flying Disc, and he was featured in the London Free Press. Mom clipped the story and left it in my room. I liked the story, and he was pretty handsome, so I set up an appointment to meet him and have a tour of the studio." She decided his was the recording studio she wanted to use, and as they worked together to make the demo, she says, "It turned romantic."



A whirlwind few years followed – they married in 2003, launched Voices.com and started their family (the couple now has three children, ages six, five and two)...all while Ciccarelli was still a full-time student at Western. Not that being busy was a new thing. Growing up, Ciccarelli studied both music and acting. She was a member of London's Original Kid Theatre Company and performed with the music programs at St. Mary's Choir School and Catholic Central High School and with the Amabile Youth Singers. In her spare time she taught voice and sang for weddings, funerals and other occasions.

Through those experiences, Ciccarelli says, "I was used to being my own boss," so the start up of Voices.com seemed like a natural entrepreneurial transition. The Ciccarellis jumped into the marketplace in the early days, when the internet was starting to gain popularity as a tool to find voice talent. The company's client roster includes dozens of recognizable names including NBC, ESPN, PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, Sony Picture, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, ING, Western Union, American Airlines, Ford, GM, Toyota, and the US Army.

Voices.com has an online inventory of more than 107,000 voices in dozens of languages and a range of ages and capabilities. Businesses looking for talent can browse the sound bites to find that perfect voice for their project. Some people specialize in specific sound effects. One woman can sound like a baby at various stages, from newborn up. Another has perfected the sound of a barking dog. There is a puppeteer who worked with Jim Henson of Muppets fame. Others can replicate celebrity voices, which comes in handy if a soundtrack needs slight editing and the original actor is unavailable.

Ciccarelli's voice is not part of the voices.com repertoire. Instead she uses her voice in different ways these days, writing blogs, coaching voice actors, and authoring e-books related to voice acting, from Script (a collection of royalty-free voice-over scripts that talent can use when recording their demos) to The Internet Marketing Plan for Voice Actors. It may not exactly be what Ciccarelli envisioned when she enrolled in the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western. But it sure has been an interesting journey.