

voiceover

Guided by Voiceovers

What makes someone qualified to write an encyclopedia? It all comes down to experience – and numbers. Kate McClanaghan is executive producer, senior casting director and founder of Chicago's 14-year-old Sound Advice and Big House Casting & Audio. She's been a commercial producer and copywriter for the better part of 23 years, a casting director for the last eight years and a voice-over talent since the age of 11.

If those figures don't add up to equal the requisites of someone who's qualified to write a comprehensive tome on the ins and outs of voiceover, then you're just not doing the math.

McClanaghan, the author of *The Sound Advice Encyclopedia of Voice-over*, has coached more than 6,000 talent and produced more than 1,200 voiceover demos. Those numbers add up, and McClanaghan hopes others will benefit from her own very diversified experience on both sides of the mic. "Having the unique vantage point of being an actor/producer/copywriter/casting director, I've been on many sides of the production," she says.

McClanaghan discovered early on that she wasn't alone in wanting a single reference to turn to for no-nonsense advice on every aspect of the voiceover industry and becoming a working talent.

Her encyclopedia, which was first published in 1998, is the culmination of her vast experience. "You start to notice a few trends," says McClanaghan. "Like what an actor is likely to do and what is required of him on a session. It can conflict greatly with what the copywriter/director is trying to say."

McClanaghan believes directors, copywriters and producers are often too busy monitoring the overall production to help talent in the way they'd like to and are often not quite sure how to help them. She recommends this book to creatives who want to "get an honest sense of what's truly required



Illustration by Brandon Carrison: 734.644.7611

of an actor and how to better direct them on a session."

This guide to getting voiceover right is also a resource for seasoned talent looking to jump-start their careers as well as fresh talent who want to do it right the first time. "Even someone with an inherent ability can become a better, more effective talent," she says. Yet she also believes a person without inherent ability can learn to be a great VO artist.

Among the many issues addressed in this encyclopedia are guidelines for getting an agent, what's expected of talent, how to determine what commercial styles one is best suited for and a full section devoted to nomenclature and some of the finer points

of these concepts.

McClanaghan has taken great pains to update this newest edition of the encyclopedia, surveying 4,800 creatives nationwide – not once, but twice. Respondents described what they were looking for in voice talent, how they found new voices, what they absolutely didn't want to hear, what was the most difficult thing to direct and more. She incorporates a good deal of that data and feedback into the book.

"I think we really tapped into what the creatives really want – besides a voice."

The updated edition of *The Sound Advice Encyclopedia of Voice-over* is available at www.voiceoverdemos.com.

— Scott Greenberg