

myweeklymarketing.

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing.

Join me as we talk about marketing, small business, and life in between.

Welcome to My Weekly Marketing.

Janice Hostager: 0:28

You might not know my guest today by name, but you may have heard her voice. Jodi Krangle is a voice actor who's done commercials for Dell, Bose, Subway, Lindt Chocolate, 3M, Kraft, HGTV and many more. But it's not just speaking the words that are important, it's matching their brand with her voice, not just her literal voice, but the type of persona she creates to match the company's brand, and that can be a challenge. So on today's episode, not only will you learn about the fascinating world of voice acting, but also what you should do to create a literal voice for your own brand and the steps you should take if you want to use a voice actor on your videos or commercials. Here's my talk with Jodi.

Janice Hostager: 1:20

Hey, Jodi, thank you so much for being on my show today. I appreciate it.

Jodi Krangle : 1:24

Thanks for having me.

Janice Hostager: 1:29

So in the intro I talk a little bit about how you are a voice actor, but you also talk a lot about brand voice. So before we go any further, I think it's important that we kind of define the difference between the two. A brand voice isn't necessarily the voice that somebody would have on a commercial, or though it might be right? How would you define a brand voice?

Jodi Krangle : 1:52

Well brand voice is kind of an umbrella. What I talk about really is audio branding. So the idea behind that is that it's a larger umbrella. So brand voice is kind of the idea that your brand has a certain way that it presents itself to the world, and that is kind of part and parcel of brand voice. So brand voice does encompass the voice of your voice actor, whoever is on your campaigns. It also talks about the type of music that you use, the

type of fonts that you use, the colors that you use, all of the ways that you present yourself in the world. And you know, what I like to talk about as far as audio branding is concerned is where sound fits into that, because a lot of people will think about their colors and their fonts and you know the way that they make their videos and all of that. And that's all great. But if you're only thinking about the sight part of this, you're missing out on the real emotional connection which comes from the audio.

Janice Hostager : 3:01

Right, right, or even the written communication, right.

Jodi Krangle : 3:04

Yes, that is exactly brand voice more of that as well. How do you sound when people are reading your words? So I kinda feel like a well defined brand voice helps create sort of this consistent recognizable maybe relatable identity that you have. That's part of your larger brand and I think that's important because it builds some trust, right, loyalty. People like what's familiar to them, so they'll recognize something. Sort of like when you walk into a store you made, or a mall maybe, and see a Disney script, you say, oh, that's Disney, I recognize it right away. And with a voice, with the audio voice or music or anything like that, it can certainly fall into that same category. Is that what you'd agree with that? Okay, yeah, I definitely would. Yeah, if people experience your brand and they know exactly who it is before you even say your name, then you have your brand voice figured out.

Janice Hostager: 4:05

Oh I love that definition Very, very thorough. So before we jump way into this, I want to hear your story Like how did you end up doing this? How did you get to this point?

Jodi Krangle: 4:20

You mean voiceover or audio? I don't actually do audio branding. I talk to people about it, so but yeah.

Janice Hostager: 4:29

All of it actually, because there is certainly a lot of audio branding that goes into just being a voice actor right?

Jodi Krangle : 4:44

So voice acting, I sort of got into the bug bit early in like 95, 96. And I volunteered my time at the CNIB, which is the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. So I was doing that sort of reading articles on like magazine articles onto reel to reel tape at the time

and I was actually running the equipment as much as I was doing the voicing and I loved it both. So I was. I was hooked really from that point on. But I was making a living doing internet marketing and SEO. So I've kind of always had both a creative and a logical side, like sort of right and left brained, and I loved computers from the minute that I got one. I was first introduced to a computer in 86. And I was on the internet in 95. So, like early adopter, loved it all, ended up doing internet marketing and SEO until about 2007. And 2007 was right around when Google became it, when they're really all the other search engines had dropped away and really Google was the only one remaining from all of that time. And I got bored. I got so bored, janice, it was bad. I hate to be bored, I hate it. So I went and decided okay, I'm out on my own already, so now it's time to switch the focus. That's really all it was. No safety net, no, nothing, just start doing voiceover now.

Jodi Krangle : 6:14

So, I went online and back in 2007, they didn't really have social media to speak of, so I went on to a message board, and the message board I went on to was done by another voice talent. Her name was Julie Williams and she had a message board that she was running at the time and everyone that I knew was on that message board. There were a whole bunch of people there that I met while I was doing my initial figuring out how this all worked, and I made the usual mistake of going to what they call a demo mill, which is someone who, a place, who will basically just take your credit card and make you a demo without you really knowing what the hell you're doing. You know, saying that they could get you a good demo to start selling your services right as a voice talent. And I got it done. I got both a commercial and a narration demo done.

Jodi Krangle : 7:17

They were awful, as you would expect, and I put them all over this message board and I was like, "okay, I was expecting you everyone to oh yeah, congratulate me, you know, pat me on the back, kind of deal. I had no idea." I really didn't have any idea, and it was completely. It was awful. The, the reception was not what I had hoped it would be. And after I got over being a little butthurt because we all have our moments I went and asked the person who was the loudest in his criticism of the demo what I should do now. Like, what do I do? I've spent all my money on this demo and now I can't use it because it's clearly awful. So what do I do now? And I'm a singer, so I come at this from a music background, not an acting background, and what I needed to know was that voice acting is acting.

Jodi Krangle : 8:26

So, as a musician, I was used to being on stage and performing and you have a persona. When you're singing a song, you know you are relaying it from a deepness that connects

with that song in a way that you can convey to the people listening. But it's like acting light. I'd almost say it's acting, but it's not like it's putting on a persona, but it's not really understanding technical aspects of how you are relating to what you're singing. You're just feeling it. You're feeling it in the moment and acting is a little more conscious.

Jodi Krangle : 9:10

So, that's kind of how I relate it. I know that there are a lot of people who get into voice acting from music and you do have the basics pretty much. I think it's a good place to come from because you understand the notes and the beats of a script, but it has to be a little more of a conscious acting push. You need to know why you're saying what you are in a way that is, yes, instinctual, but there's also, like I said, a conscious method to it. And in my aspect of acting in commercials, the aspect of that that comes in that actually displays acting, is that I am in a booth with headphones on or not, depending on whether I'm being directed or not. I'm looking at a padded wall and nobody, and I have to sound natural and like I'm having a conversation with someone, because you're never talking to the universe at large. You're talking to one person, so you have to imagine that one person. You have to sound natural in a completely unnatural environment that's voice acting and that's why it's acting, Right?

Jodi Krangle : 10:27

So it could be for, like, I do it for commercials and corporate narrations and that kind of thing. That's my, my area of expertise. But a lot of people do it for video games and animation and audio books and all of this stuff, and you need to have that really good theater of the mind to understand how that works. I had no clue when I first started how much I had to learn, so this fellow very kindly took me under his wing. He helped me figure that out. Obviously, I had a lot to learn and I am still learning. I am still taking coaching and it's something that I learn every day of doing this. But that's what I needed to know. When I first did this, I had no acting at all, and so when I was speaking on those demos, I was just speaking and maybe I had a pleasant voice, but it didn't matter because I wasn't connected with what I was saying, so no one believed what I was saying.

Janice Hostager: 11:27

Okay, that is really really interesting. But it's definitely a distinction. And you don't think about that, like I was listening to your recordings on your website. And it was amazing for me to how much your personality changed from one video or audio tape to another. And how you sounded almost like a different person, I could tell it was always you.

Jodi Krangle : 11:57

It's still me, there's still. There's still a core of me in there, you know, but yeah.

Janice Hostager : 12:02

Well, and I guess you're absolutely right. That's where that acting comes in. And you do take on a different persona really, and you have to talk to that ideal customer, like you said, one-on-one, because we always want to talk one-on-one, we don't want to talk to the crowd. So how do you discover that right voice for each brand?

Jodi Krangle : 12:23

A lot of times I do some research on the brand before I actually voice for them. So I will look at how they present themselves to the world, what their website looks like, what their YouTube channel looks like, what other videos they've done. It depends on whether they want to continue with what they've been doing or whether they're taking a different tack entirely that's. You know that's part and parcel of advertising. You never know quite exactly. You know where that is going to take them, but direction and of course, the script itself gives you a lot of hints. So a lot of companies companies are different as far as casualness or professionalism are concerned. So if they use a lot of contractions, for instance, then maybe they're more casual. If they don't use contractions, then maybe you're dealing with a bank.

Jodi Krangle: 13:15

You know I mean, which I've done a lot of, so you know, and, or a hospital. You know that that happens in that kind of an environment too. I do a lot of medical stuff, so you know a lot of healthcare. When you're talking about travel and tourism, again same deal. Some people are really casual and some people are quite formal, and you would hear classical music while you're experiencing their brand. You know you don't really understand until they send the script and you see what's in the script and how it's written. And oftentimes I will ask a client if they can send me the music that they want to put behind it, because as a musician I get that emotional context from them almost immediately from hearing the music they want to use. That's the power of sound right there the music they want to use. That's the power of sound right there.

Janice Hostager: 14:12

That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? So they don't necessarily come to you and say all right, here's our branding guide, or do you get that too sometimes ?

Jodi Krangle: 14:17

No, in fact, I usually never. I never get that, almost never. I have to do research on my own, mostly because a lot of times the bigger companies will come for an audition. They won't just decide, they want to use you out of the blue. So I usually will get those kinds

of auditions from my agents and my agents may provide some of that, or the client may give a link to a previous video that they liked or something like that, so you can sort of get an idea of tone and what they're after, what they're trying to get from this new advertising campaign. But mostly they won't tell you the music, mostly they won't give you the brand guidelines of any kind. You just kind of have to guess, and often I'll approach these by just saying look, I'm me, this is my voice type, this is how I sound and this is how I would sound on your brand. So either you like that or you don't. A lot of it is quite subjective.

Jodi Krangle: 15:22

It may sound like someone's awful mother-in-law and who knows, they would never hire me in that case, right, you know. Or they like their mother-in-law and you know it's all very subjective, so you never really know what's going on in their mind. Like what did they hear when they wrote this script? What kind of voice did they hear? Oftentimes I will find also that my voice type is very smooth and like smooth, warm, maybe with a little gravitas, like that. But that's me, that's just how I talk, and to some that might sound like our discussion may sound very commercially to someone right now, but that's how I talk, you know? So they either like it or they don't.

Janice Hostager: 16:10

Interesting, interesting. I know we were talking prior to our recording here today about consistency in brand voice. Yes, and you were saying that some of them, some clients, were very consistent like I think you mentioned insurance companies and some were not, some kind of pulled from different voice actors for everything they did. So how is it that you are able? Do you know that up front? Is that something that somebody will say to you? How do you figure that out, like I guess? I guess I'm getting at is how do you, as an actor, go and start working with a company, especially if you don't necessarily know their whole branding guideline? Do you? I know you said you do research, but yeah.

Jodi Krangle: 17:06

A lot of their stuff is out there already so you can do enough research to sort of figure it out. But I find that the larger companies are really bad for actual like loyalty to a voice actor. It doesn't happen. Sometimes the car companies are really good with this. They'll go with someone for a really long time Great Fantastic. For a really long time, great Fantastic. But that consistency is really rare, especially these days, like I don't know about how many Verbo commercials you've heard. They have a voice type but they do not have a voice loyalty.

Jodi Krangle: 17:40

So they have a voice type in that it's really raw and real and you know, someone almost tossing it away. Like it's almost flat and very real and raw, and I get it. That's the way that they want to be. They want to. This is, you know, your vacation. So they don't want someone to put on anything, they just want someone who's in the middle of it right now. You know, and I get that, I totally do. But they are hiring a different voice actor for every commercial that they do. So there's no loyalty to any one voice actor. It's a type.

Janice Hostager: 18:19

Yeah yeah, and and not that you want to be critical to vrbo, but do you feel like that's a smart thing, or maybe not?

Jodi Krangle: 18:28

I think, as long as they are consistent with the type of voice, it can work in their favor, in that people get used to hearing that voice type. But I do think that if you're looking to actually give your brand a personality, you need to choose a voice and a sound. And the way that I suggest this is that you for music. I know that a lot of advertising campaigns will use a license-free music directory which is fine. But your nearest competitor can use the same music that you've been using. And you can say nothing about it. You have no say so.

Jodi Krangle: 19:08

As far as I'm concerned, you want to own these sound assets the same way that you own your visual assets. People don't give that enough thought. So think about actually getting a composer to make music for your spots, for your specific company, and it's not. That's where audio branding comes in right. It gives someone a comprehensive sound for their videos, their on hold, the way they play their CEO onto a stage if they're doing a talk. You know the, anything that the, the radio commercials that they are that are heard right. All of these things have different touch points.

Jodi Krangle: 19:50

Even working inside the environment where that company lives. The music could have aspects of that audio brand in it, so that the employees are hearing it. Internal videos can have this music on it. It's a comprehensive way to get people to understand your brand in a split second, because it takes very little time for people to figure that out when it's in audio form. And it makes them care. It makes them care. That's the way that audio affects us. It hits us in the heart. And the way that I talk about this usually is by saying look, if you are watching a movie and you turn off the sound and you get what the movie's about, you'll kind of see what's happening on stage or on the screen. You know

what the plot is, but will you care? That's the bigger question. Does it actually matter if you turn off the sound.

Jodi Krangle : 20:56

Cause you're getting nothing. Right? You're not getting the sound design, you're not getting the foley. You're not getting the dialogue. You're not getting anything. You're not getting the music. You're not getting any of the emotional cues that show you how you should feel about a certain scene. You're getting none of that. That's like a brand you know. You can understand what the brand is, but sound is how you care about that brand.

Janice Hostager : 21:23

Yes, love that. I love that analogy about because you're right, if you're watching a movie and you do turn off and even if you're reading the subtitles, you're not going to get a big part of the way that they're communicating, which is your sound, their voice, background music and so on. So I love that analogy.

Jodi Krangle: 21:40

So the idea behind this is that you want to own your assets. So that's the point of yes, you can go with a license-free music directory, but really what you want to do is own all those assets, because then no one else can use that it's yours. That means that you've actually done a comprehensive study. You've worked this out how you want people to experience your brand, how you want them to feel about who you are and you own those assets. And then you have to use them. So it's not only about owning them, but using them consistently and frequently, because that's how you build an audio brand Right.

Janice Hostager: 22:24

Do you get contracts that ask for exclusivity in a certain area?

Jodi Krangle : 22:29

Oh yeah, oh yeah, as a voice actor, definitely. Yes, I do Okay.

Janice Hostager: 22:33

Okay, that would make sense then. So if you're a smaller business, or, let's say, you're not so small, you're branching out, you need to do some videos or you maybe want to do some commercials. What steps should someone take when developing their brand voice?

Jodi Krangle: 22:51

Ooh, good question, because there is a lot involved and I'm sure you're aware of that too.

Janice Hostager: 23:00

I was just gonna say, you can pass the normal, the typical branding. Cause I'll do, I'll work with clients and we'll talk about their brand. But the voice is something we really don't even... honestly its not even on my radar most of the time. But the brand itself is. So that's like you said, holds a lot of clues. But so, I don't mean to interrupt you. So go ahead.

Jodi Krangle: 23:21

No, thats fine. I really wanted to know. Yeah, when it comes to a voice, usually someone will approach me with some, uhm with a script. They'll have the script already they may also have the music that they are planning to use. They might even have the video done. So it really depends on how, how further, how far along they are and when they've contacted me, depending on how far along they are. So I would say that always it's a good idea to talk to the voice or figure out the music before you do the video, because often the voice pacing might change the pacing of the video just a tiny bit.

Jodi Krangle: 24:10

And it's nice to have that ability to move things around rather than be locked into picture. Just because it's a little easier for the people making the video to be able to slot things in and make things work. So a certain scene comes up when you're talking about something, or a certain crescendo in the music comes up when the voice says something, and then you see it on screen. You know like that kind of cohesiveness is really important when you're doing advertising, marketing, branding of any kind. Really you need to have that all working together. So often I will say that leaving the sound until the last second is not wise because you're leaving money on the table.

Janice Hostager: 25:01

So you would recommend, first of all, and assuming they know what their brand looks like and know the aspects of their brand, and maybe they shoot video, maybe not edited, and then a script and then approach you before that. Okay, so at the point where you have the script, you probably have recommendations just for the script itself.

Jodi Krangle : 25:27

Oh! Certainly is they ask me. Yeah! Again, once I research again into what their brand is, like how their brand presents itself to the world then I have an idea on whether or not the

script needs to be less formal or more informal or more formal. I mean, it really just depends on where they're coming from and they, you know, obviously I'm asking for them their direction on that as well. I'm not just doing this myself. I want them to tell me what they want. But there's all sorts of things or cues that they can give me, direction, what kind of voice do they want it to be, warm and approachable. Or they want it to be more promo and a little bit of gratatace. Is this a big broad scene. Or is this an intimate little gathering. There's a difference in the way that you would approach that, and for me it's. Am I talking to a friend or am I talking to my mother, or am I talking to my sister, or am I talking to my husband, or am I like, because there's like different people you would, or am I talking to an eight year old child? Like you know, it depends, because all of those are different perspectives, all of those are ways that your voice would change when you're speaking to someone. So how do they see their audience?

Janice Hostager: 27:00

Right. Right, and I definitely noticed that when I was listening to your audio this morning is that if it was in the house, for example, you spoke a lot more softly versus something that was maybe political, where you were strong, and it almost sounded like a different person. Honestly, which kudos to you for being able to do that. So I mean, I think this is just extremely fascinating and I love getting to know this. I always say I learned so much from my podcast guests and it's so true, and I think the fact that occasionally I'll do have clients where they will want videos and they'll want somebody to narrate them. So all of this really comes into play when you're thinking those terms and we don't know what we don't know, and so I love that you're covering a lot of this.

Janice Hostager: 27:52

Are there ways that? Do you sometimes want to be involved before the script is written? I know I said that typically we'll create a script, but sometimes I would imagine that people can write a script that sounds very generic or insincere, where you may look at it and have an eye for or an ear for, something that ways to revise it so that it actually sounds very real, and it's going to have a huge impact, I would think, on the way that video, or that commercial or whatever it is you're shooting, audiospot comes across. Do you ever recommend getting involved before the script is written?

Jodi Krangle: 28:36

I would recommend hiring a professional copywriter definitely. I think that that is important because the writing is important and ChatGPT may give you the basics, but it's not something you should rely on to do your advertising. SO I would always recommend hiring a human to do that final bit with your script. Not necessarily me. I usually operate from having the script at least in its beginning forms, at least in some

kind of form, just because it makes more sense for me to have something to work from, to know. But beyond that, yeah, I mean copywriters are a good thing to talk to, they're good to have in your court and a lot of times the copywriter will be the one that has the voice in their head. This is how I heard this in your voice, in your brand voice, and yeah it should be someone from your company that knows who you are or at least has done enough research to know who you are.

Janice Hostager: 29:46

Right, they need to know that brand inside and out if they're writing copy for sure. So, Jodi, this has been super interesting. I could talk to you all day, I think, and have hundreds of questions I could ask, but we're limited to time here. So how can people find out more about you? Or let's say they want to work with you or hire you for a job?

Jodi Krangle: 30:06

Sure, I'm at voiceoversandvocals.com so they can find me there. Or if they're interested in the audio branding podcast, they can visit that at audiobrandingpodcast.com. Pretty simple.

Janice Hostager: 30:20

Love it. Thank you so much for being here today. Appreciate it.

Jodi Krangle: 30:23

Thanks for having me, Janice, this was a lot of fun.

Janice Hostager: 30:26

I don't know about you, but I learned a ton today and I'll never listen to a commercial or video with a voiceover. The same way again. For more information about Jodi or anything we talked about on the episode today, myweeklymarketing.com/69. That's episode 69. Thank you so much for joining me today. If you feel moved, please leave a review on Apple Podcasts or share this episode with somebody who will find it valuable. See you next time. Bye for now.