

Carol Ofori on becoming an award-winning voice-over artist



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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South African media personality and East Coast Radio radio host, Carol Ofori recently won a Society of Voice Arts and Sciences (SOVAS) Voice Arts Award in the Outstanding Commercial - Radio or Streaming - Best African Voiceover category for her performance in the 'Ratings For Schools' radio advert which flighted on East Coast Radio.



Carol Ofori recently won a Society of Voice Arts and Sciences (SOVAS) Voice Arts Award in the Outstanding Commercial - Radio or Streaming – Best African Voiceover category. Image supplied

SOVAS was established in 2013 and is uniquely designed to honour the community of performers and craft professionals who perform, direct, produce, cast, engineer, and publish media productions where voice acting is a central creative element of the work. The purpose of the Voice Arts Awards is to provide a stage for international acknowledgment of the extraordinary skill and artistry that goes into voiceover acting and to hold up an evolving best-in-class standard of achievement to which the voiceover industry can continually aspire.

The awards are similar to the Oscars, Emmys, and Tonys, where the work is entered in various categories, judged and scored by a panel of industry experts, and where the top 5 scores in each category become nominees. A final round of judging determines the winner in each category.

Sigourney Weaver, Jonah Hill, Cate Blanchett, Kit Harrington and Kristin Wiig are among the previous winners.

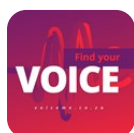
Ratings For Schools is the platform which Ofori started with her husband Greg Ofori. Ratings For Schools offers parents, students, and educators the opportunity to find schools based on their individual needs. The goal is to assist parents across South Africa by making the process of finding the right school for their children simpler than ever before. Parents can find schools from creche to high school level.

Ofori has cemented herself as a stand-out voice-over artist with decades of experience in the voice arts field. She is the voice behind a number of radio and television adverts as well as the official voice behind one of the largest radio stations in the country. Naturally, she is thrilled that her hard work has been recognised on an international stage.

We chat with Carol Ofori about the ins and outs of becoming a voice-over artist...

■ ***How did you get into becoming a voice-over artist?***

Twenty years ago, a colleague of mine, now the drive time host on Hot 102.7, Simon Parkinson, told me that I have a lovely voice and that I should consider doing voiceovers. He then proceeded to give me the details of [Intertalent Agency](#) to approach. I did just that and today our relationship has been close to 20 years strong. So, thank you Simon for your confidence in me and for pointing me in the right direction.



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■ ***What sort of training and skills are needed?***

I was lucky because when I started my voice-over career, I was also a news reader on 947 on the weekends and a reporter for the station. So, we had voice training with a coach on a regular basis. That helped a lot with the annunciation of words and slowing down when I talk. Over the years I have invested in some courses - like when I visited New York to do a one-day voice course. I also believe your clients are your biggest teachers because they know exactly how they want their recordings to sound - so every "do it again" has been a great lesson as well.

■ ***What makes a voice-over artist stand out from the crowd?***

Your voice. You just have to know how to use it, push it, and play with it. Don't be shy, do strange things and use arm gestures to get the words and tone outright.

■ ***Are there any (institutions/colleges) where people can go and train to become a voice-over artist?***

I believe there are some schools that offer this - but today compared to when I started, there are so many courses online that you can pay for or even get for free. You are your biggest critic so its important to listen back to your audio and see how you can improve.

■ ***How competitive is the industry when it comes to being a voice-over artist in South Africa? Are there ample opportunities?***

Over the past few years, the industry has become very saturated. The opportunities were endless maybe 5-10 years ago - but now with more artists coming into the mix the struggle for work is real. However, I do not see the industry dying completely over the next few years. It's just about identifying where you fit in and working hard to "owning" that space.

■ ***Describe a typical day as a voice-over artist.***

A typical day is hopping from studio to studio on a good day - with one or two voiceovers coming in as you get home and having to record after dinner or after tucking the kids in for bed. After Covid, I have had a lot of home recordings - and I luckily invested in a studio way before Covid, so during the pandemic I was still able to work. I absolutely love doing voiceovers!

Disclaimer: Due to the confidentiality agreement, there is no audio in this video

■ ***When recording a voice-over, how do you prepare?***

You prepare by warming up your voice. I do a radio show and all my voiceovers are after the show so my voice is nice and warm from talking on the radio for four hours. Your voice gets "warmer" and "crisper" when you have warmed it up. That's when you will get the best from your voice. Reading the script over a few times if you get it in advance is a plus, especially if it's a long corporate video. It saves a lot of time - especially if there are some words that are hard to pronounce or are complex.

■ ***You recently won a SOVAS Voice Arts Award. Tell us about this?***

It is literally the "Oscars" of the voice world. I still can't believe I won this award. I entered thinking - let me use an ad I wrote and voiced to avoid having to ask different studios for permission to use the audio. This ad is for a website my husband and I created called www.ratingsforschools.co.za which is a school-finding portal. It means so much to win this award for an ad that was so close to home.

▣ ***What does this mean to you and what does it do for your career?***

It's an international accolade and will do wonders for my CV. I hope it will open more voice-over opportunities both here at home and internationally. I am excited about the future and even more excited for the golden statue to arrive in South Africa. I am still waiting for it to arrive.

▣ ***What tips/advice do you have for those wanting to get into the field?***

Do lots of research on the industry and find the best method for yourself. Some artists are independent, others have agents. It's important to do as much research as possible to avoid coming up short.

▣ ***Which voice-over role/s are you most well-known for?***

I do a lot of DSTV ads and the voice of one of their movie channels; Cell C's Fantastic Friday radio adverts as well as two massive radio stations in South Africa. Those would be the most stand out I guess.

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