

First dip in the pool: *I was teaching Italian and wondered why students who'd only had me as a source of the Italian language had very different accents. I had taught ESL for a long time, but pronunciation was never part of my training. I have always been a good mimic, and also good at deciphering what other people are saying, so it wasn't something I was concerned with. But in thinking about my Italian students and international friends, I got to wondering about where accents come from and how they can be changed.*

How I gained momentum: *I told everyone. I made up some flyers using iStockPhoto.com and iStockLayout.com, contacted my local newspaper's business section and asked if they'd like to write a story about my new business (they did). I sent an invitation to my open house to the local business magazine – although they didn't come to the open house, the invitation led to a story in their magazine. I also advertised on Craigslist. After the stories appeared in the paper, I included copies of them when I reached out to companies.*

Relevant Training: *I searched for training that was available and found the Compton method. I thought it was the most comprehensive of the methods I saw. After using the Compton method exclusively for a while, I began to research other programs, and took some training at LDS Associates on intonation. My program draws from ESL materials,*



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Compton, LDS, RULES, and a few others. I'm currently doing a lot of reading and training around mindfulness, which I feel is the most crucial key to helping people change the way they speak in spontaneous, everyday conversations.

Other Projects or Collaborations? *A LOT of networking. I have a few people who work on presentation skills. I have been exploring the possibility of offering Male to Female voice coaching for trans-gendered and trans-sexual people, and I'm working with a trans-woman at no*

charge to see if I can be of help to her.

First Paid Gig: *January 2007. After the Compton training, I rushed home to start a business. I went through a 13-week Compton program with a friend (Russian speaker) at no charge, to see how it would go. My first paying client was a result of the first newspaper article about my business. I was thrilled. It went well, and I was really glad I had worked first with my friend. My friend's husband also became a paying client, he told his supervisor about the program and they paid for him to work with me.*

Marketing Efforts: *Ads in local Spanish and Russian language papers didn't result in any business for me. Trade shows, sometimes with a booth, sometimes just walking around, brought some business. I did not join the Chamber of Commerce because I feel my local branch is oriented to helping big businesses and not small ones like mine. I joined an organization called BNI (Business Networking International) and got one key corporate client from that, which has led to a lot of repeat business. I have been in the newspaper and featured on a local PBS program about entrepreneurship, and those have raised my visibility in the community. I try to do as much free advertising as I can by being in the news – this lends more credibility than a paid ad, too. Currently, I'm fortunate enough to be able to rely most on word of mouth. I focus on having businesses pay me to train their employees, rather than having to get money out of individuals.*

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