

Why Your Tone of Voice is a Problem

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When callers hear your voice on the other end of the line, they imagine the person behind the voice. If they like what they hear in the tone of your voice, chances are they will perceive you as knowledgeable and confident. If they don't like your tone, they may want to speak to a supervisor or another phone representative. The tone of your voice should be sincere and friendly, no matter whether this is the 30th call of the day or the first.

So what makes the tone of voice a problem?

Previous phone calls are often the culprit. If the prior call was a difficult one, it is likely the voice might come across as strained, rather unfriendly. Obviously, callers can sometimes be aggressive, particularly if there is an issue with their computer, for example. When we get those challenging calls, we need a moment to re-coup. Perhaps, take a walk down the hall, get a cup of coffee or leave your self out of cue for a few minutes. Do whatever it takes to calm down before going on the next call. If you don't, the new caller might be put off by what they hear in the voice.

Sometimes, boredom is the issue. If we take call after call, our voices may lack enthusiasm as the day progresses. Producing a consistently upbeat voice requires concentration and staying in the moment. Many people find taking notes or making more frequently acknowledgements helps to keep them "tuned in."

Improper breathing and speaking without pausing also affect the voice. When the voice runs out of air, it becomes a monotone. It sounds flat, disinterested. The antidote is to pause and take a breath at the end of a thought or sentence. As one gets more comfortable with pausing, his or her voice has more inflection, and it is more pleasant to the ear.

Finally, tone of voice is affected by caffeine, smoking, dairy products and eating. Caffeine is a diuretic and pulls water from the vocal cords, causing the voice to sound strident. Smoking makes the voice sound raspy, sometime gravelly. Dairy prod-

ucts, such as milk, cream, yogurt or ice cream, produce mucous which makes the person's voice sound stuffy and causes the individual to clear his throat constantly. If you eat on the job, listeners will sense it and find it rude.

Your voice is the best tool you have for convincing customers that you can solve their problem and that you value their business. If you sound friendly and warm, they will see you as helpful and caring. They will be more likely to trust you and continue to do business with you.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their presentation and telephone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.