

What Your Voice Says About You

By Judith Filek—President
Impact Communications, Inc.

What's in a voice? Plenty! It is your calling card. It reveals your confidence, your competence, and your warmth. It also establishes trust and credibility with your customer or client. Regretfully, most of us don't spend much time thinking about how our voice sounds, and that is a huge mistake. If we don't use our voice well, it can convey boredom, neglect and even contempt. Since your voice has an immediate impact, it is critical to pay attention to it.

To assess how your voice sounds, record it or send yourself a voice message. Pretend you are a client when you review it. Are you friendly—convincing—sincere? Or are you just mouthing the words without feeling?

If you don't like how your voice sounds, commit to making a few changes and practice until your voice regularly sounds upbeat, warm and professional. Typically, a voice that sounds flat or unemotional is the result of not pausing and not breathing correctly.

Proper Breathing

In order to breathe properly, you must have good posture. The lungs are the largest organ in your body, and they require adequate support. If you sit in a slumped position with your shoulders sagging, your voice will suffer. Inevitably, you will breathe shallowly. To correct this, sit with your feet under your chair and your shoulders back.

The next thing is to remember to use your diaphragm. Your diaphragm is a muscle that sits under the rib cage. It works like bellows. To ensure that you are using your diaphragm, lie flat on your bed or the floor and take in some deep breaths. You should

feel your diaphragm moving in and out. Sometimes, people become sloppy and hardly use this muscle; consequently, their voice sounds strained or flat. If you want your voice to sound pristine, it has to have adequate air.

Frequent Pauses

People who sound friendly and sincere have inflection in their voice. They pause often and play their voice like a musical instrument—sometimes bringing it up and sometimes bringing it down. In any one sentence, they emphasize several words. You can practice by saying your typical greeting or your typical close. To bring emotion into your voice, you should pause for a second at least two or three distinct times. Tape your practice sessions and notice the difference as you pause and breathe.

Using your voice correctly goes a long way towards making the customer feel valued and genuinely appreciated. It builds a relationship. When customers and clients feel you care, they are less likely to get angry or to look elsewhere.

Question: *We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone 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 website, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.