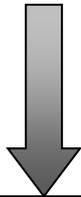


3 KEYS for Confident Communication

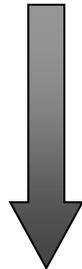
A voice and speaking manner that will impress clients, customers and colleagues has three key qualities.

CLARITY



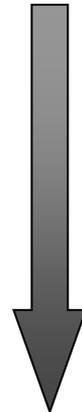
Easy to understand

CONTINUITY



Easy on the ear

COLOUR



Easy to enjoy

A FEW FACTS

- If you *sound* confident, commanding and capable then people will believe you *are* confident, commanding and capable.
- Statistics indicate that as much as 35% of people's response to us is based on how we sound (and only 7% on what we actually say).
- The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US found that men were much more successful in courting women if they used a well modulated voice. A monotone voice was a turn off, but vocal variations, especially in pitch and volume, were more likely to result in a second date. These principles also apply to make you more appealing to your customers, clients and colleagues in general.
- Using an energised and enthusiastic voice when speaking to people, combined with active listening sends the message that we are engaged, interested and completely there. People appreciate that and they'll keep coming back for it!
- Business owners, entrepreneurs, professionals and para-professionals from all fields often lack the speaking skills that will help them to market themselves and their organisations effectively.
- In today's information economy we are increasingly called upon to speak in many different contexts such as :
 - Face-to-face meetings with clients
 - Telephone enquiries
 - Project briefings
 - Negotiating and delivering proposals
 - Teleconferences and video conferences
 - Presentations to both large and small groups
 - Media interviews
 - Delivering workshops, seminars or speeches
 - Training and inducting new staff
 - Explaining products and services to a variety of people
 - Networking functions
 - Producing promotional multi-media packages
 - Video emails
- Empowering your speech can empower your life, your business, your career and even your relationships!

The information and exercises in this CD will give you immediate-use strategies that will transform your speaking!

PART 1 - THE BASICS

Breathing

1. Diaphragmatic breathing. Locate the diaphragm. It is the main breathing muscle. You'll find it in the soft fleshy area under the sternum where the ribs part. Go through this process:
 - Place heels of hands roughly on the lower ribs.
 - Place hands flat against the body with fingertips barely touching.
 - Take a very slow deep breath in. Don't overfill.
 - Feel the expansion under the hands and feel fingertips move apart slightly.
 - Keep shoulders still.
 - Be conscious of the powerful movement behind your hands in the middle of your body rather than in the upper chest.

It is important to realise that it is the powerful muscles in the core of the body that control breathing - it is not the lungs. The lungs simply facilitate the transfer of gasses (oxygen and carbon dioxide) in and out of the body. On their own they do not have the power to move the muscles around them. Rather the lungs respond to the movement of the muscles which constitute the breathing apparatus, the most important being the diaphragm.

Initially try these breathing exercises in front of a mirror so you can be sure that you are breathing in the right place. Observing the location of the movement can help to locate breathing in the correct place. If your shoulders are heaving up and down try to keep them still while localising the movement around the diaphragm.

2. With your hands still on your body part (like a dog) at different rates e.g. Deep and slow, shallow and fast. This will build strength and agility in the diaphragm.

To help build power and strength, try to think of your voice as being initiated from the middle of your body and not from your throat.

Warm-Ups

Athletes warm up before their events, speakers and presenters should too. These exercises are great as warm-ups but regular use of them will help to bring a rich, warm, relaxed tone to your everyday speaking voice. Do the first exercise below as often during the day as possible (though not during important meetings, consultations with clients or in the middle of a presentation).

1. Open the throat with the 'yawn-sigh'.
2. Use the 'vocal cascade'. Start at a high pitch and slide down as low as possible in a really relaxed way. Don't force the voice out or let the throat 'grab' it.
3. Count from 1-5 on the yawn and as you get better at this exercise increase that to 10.

Also include exercises from the following section in a general warm up.

PART 2 – THE THREE KEYS

Clarity

If you want really clear diction and distinct articulation then you need to give your articulators a work out to tone the speaking muscles. Like the other muscles in the body the articulators need to be exercised in order to function optimally.

Exercises for clarity

1. Get used to opening mouth more. Work on the AAHH sound.

- Drop your jaw so that you could fit **two fingers** side on in your mouth. Say AAAHHHH as if you are at the doctor or dentist. Use a small mirror to take note of the shape of your mouth and the placement of the tongue.
- Now do it again drawing down the tongue in the middle thereby creating a larger oral space in which the sound can amplify.
- Compare the two pictures below. Notice that in the second one the tongue is flatter and the back of the throat more open. This configuration produces a rounder, warmer, richer tone.



Observe the difference for yourself in the mirror. Say AAAHHH. Try to hear the difference in the quality of the sound produced by each of these configurations.

Say these sentences that have lots of AAHH sounds in them. For the purpose of the exercise open your mouth to two-finger width each time you say an AAHH sound:

- Mark sent a postcard to Lara's Aunt Martha.
- These dark glasses make it hard to see the path.
- We'll part when we reach Taree at half past one.
- Talia bought a rather revealing dress for the party.
- The teacher can't pass anyone in this class.
- The sparkling fireworks at the gala opening lasted nearly half an hour.

2. Exercises to develop strength and flexibility of the lips and tongue.

These are a combination of tongue twisters, and toners for the speaking muscles. Clarity of speech is essential if wanting to sound professional, credible and confident. Sloppy speech is often associated with sloppy work practices and even sloppy character. To achieve really clear diction and distinct articulation give your articulators a work out to tone the speaking muscles. TAKE THEM TO THE GYM with these exercises.

➤ Tongue twisters:

- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, a peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked, if Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, where is the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked.
- Betty Botter bought some butter, but she said this butter's bitter. If I mix it with my batter it will make my batter bitter. So she bought some better butter and she mixed it with her batter, and she made her batter better.
- Red leather, yellow leather, red lorry, yellow lorry. (x3)

Note: Initially **exaggerate** the **movements** of the lips and tongue so that you give the muscles a good work out. You want to stretch the muscles into places they don't usually go.

Another way to make the articulators work really hard is to say them through **clenched teeth**.

➤ Toners: These work on particular muscles e.g.

○ Lips:

- Peter, please pass the pens and pencils.
- Bobby burst the big blue balloon.
- When will you be going to see Oona?
- Wendy the weasel watched Walter the walrus walking wierdly.
- We will choose new the spoons

○ Tongue

- Leonard the lazy lion lay alone.
- Take the tarts to Terry at ten o'clock.
- William got wet while he was out walking.
- Eating tomatoes tempts Timothy's taste buds.
- Shall we shut the shop?
- Quick, catch the ball and kick it to Karl.

As you build strength and flexibility in the speaking muscles you will find that speech will become clearer and clearer. Mumbling or indistinct speech will be a thing of the past.

Continuity

1. Smooth flow of words. Good speech is about transiting smoothly and fluidly from one word to the next without losing clarity. We are aided in this by the use of a convention called the *neutral vowel*. This is where any vowel sound that is in an unstressed position is *neutralised* to take on a sound rather like a simple 'er' or 'uh'. Use it on unstressed vowels so that **speech flows smoothly and fluently**. Think of it as simply a stepping-stone between important sounds.

For example, say:

- bacon and eggs **as** *bacon 'nd eggs*
- cup of tea **as** *cup 'v tea*
- for ever and ever **as** *f'rever 'nnever*

➤ Try these sentences aiming for a very smooth delivery. Treat the sentence as if it was one long word:

1. Sooner or later the balloon will ascend
2. He was aware of the accident.
3. The pilot's parachute never opened.
4. They applauded the excellent performance.
5. The meeting was postponed at short notice.

2. Elongating vowels. The complementary exercise to the one above is to elongate the vowel sounds. These two conventions together make speech very appealing to the ear.

➤ Say these sentences aiming for smooth delivery and long, round, open vowel sounds:

1. Her corsage was beautiful but costly.
2. The old man went home slowly.
3. He shouted loudly from the tower.
4. The basket was filled with the fruits of the harvest.
5. The obstacle course was very hazardous.
6. Other uncles and aunts aren't as argumentative as Alan and Amy.
7. The ancient oak stood over the old valley.
8. Ask Alice to order the eggs.

Watch out for '**glottal shock**' -the sharp edge on the beginning of words starting with vowel sounds.

Colour

Let's apply the term 'colour' to anything that will make our voice more interesting and expressive. Such a voice makes good use of vocal contrasts i.e., is **well modulated**. This means that it uses appropriate changes in *pitch, pace, power* (volume) and *pause*. **The 4Ps!**

Pitch

We have at our disposal a two-octave vocal range, but only tend to use a limited portion of it. Expressive speakers use a slightly larger range in ordinary conversation.

Say the following sentences travelling up and down the pitch scale.

I can make my voice go higher and higher.

then

I can make my voice go lower and lower.

➤ Say these sentences at different pitches as appropriate.

1. The excited children ran along the golden sand.
2. I just don't feel very well.
3. Will this damp dreary weather ever be over?
4. The wind has changed the fire is coming this way!
5. Run for your life!

Pace

Rate of speech. If you need to slow down your general rate of speech then practice passages that demand a slow delivery. E.g.

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. (*"Ulysses" - Tennyson*)

Alternatively if you need to speed up practice passages that demand brisk delivery.

This is the song of the galloping, hurrying,
Gusty and dusty and whirling and worrying wind.
(*"A song of Wind" - Will Lawson*)

➤ Consider the following sentences. Which should be said fast and which slow.

- It's a bushfire! The flames are leaping higher and higher!
- There is no way out of it, I am simply going to have to face it.
- Look out for that car!
- She drifted to sleep in the warm relaxing bath.

Pause

Pause is important as it gives your listeners time to digest what you are saying. It also adds meaning and draws attention to important words. Eg

Not a single person - not one - believed him.

Pausing before and after the phrase -not one, really gets the message across.

Power (Volume)

Count from 1 - 10 going from very soft to very loud. Now from very loud to very soft.

Say the sentence *“I’m sorry I didn’t hear you. What was it you said?”* at different volumes.

Putting it all together

Use all the principles we’ve covered in this workshop to give vocal life, colour and energy to the following extracts.

“I looked round, I put down my pitcher,
I picked up a clumsy log
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.” (*“Snake” - D.H. Lawrence*)

“A merry Christmas uncle! God save you!” cried a cheerful voice . . .
“Bah!” said Scrooge. “Humbug!” (*“A Christmas Carol” – Charles Dickens*)

Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats.
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers. (*“The Pied Piper of Hamelin” – Robert Browning*)

The raindrops happily tip-toed across the barn’s metal roof. Then, as it playing a game, they decided to slide off onto the soft, soggy ground.

The battalion of tall, determined waves, slowly, but steadily, approached the unsuspecting, jagged shore like military columns. When they arrived, their fury was unleashed as they exploded against the rocks and ledges.

“We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields and on the streets. We shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.”
Winston Churchill

Practice reading out loud expressively from a variety of different texts.

When applying these skills **initially exaggerate** the effects until you become comfortable with using heightened articulation and modulation. Then use these skills to communicate expressively but naturally. Good speech does not draw attention to itself and away from the message.

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING THE 4PS WHEN SPEAKING

The 4Ps act as a **vocal highlighting pen** to emphasise to listeners the important words and points in your message. In other words vocal modulation and changes in tonality can **facilitate cognitive comprehension**. This is particularly important when delivering complex material. Effective use of modulation pre-digests (so to speak) information and makes it easier for listeners to assimilate it quickly.

When you read something you have the luxury of going back over it and re-reading it if you didn't understand it the first time. This is not the case when someone is listening to you speak. Sure they could always ask you to repeat what you said but people often won't do that out of politeness or even lack of time. Besides it is irritating. So make it easy for your listeners to understand you by using subtle changes and nuances in your voice to effectively convey meaning and hold interest.

Vocal modulation also conveys your level of enthusiasm for your content and message. An energised speaking voice will energise listeners to pay attention to you. A monotonous voice is the equivalent of crossing your arms across your chest – it can block rapport building and communication. Our voices are a reflection of our mood and state.

Some interesting research recently conducted at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US found that men were much more successful in courting women if they used modulation in their voice when speaking. The research also found that a monotone voice was a turn off, but that vocal variations, especially in pitch and volume, were more likely to result in a second date.

Using an energised and enthusiastic voice when speaking to people, sends the message that we are engaged, interested and completely there. It is worth reflecting for a moment on what messages we are inadvertently sending to people from the way we modulate when speaking to them