

## Your Voice Is Your Key to Success

**How to hone your vocal delivery to mesmerize your audience with confidence, style and passion.**

In the last article on **Passion** when we communicate, we discussed Facial Expression.

Here I would like to share with you the vital role that your **Voice** plays in conveying passion.

When many of my clients first come to me they ask why they don't seem to be able to capture the attention of their audience when they are speaking in a meeting or delivering a presentation. They feel disillusioned that people are gazing out the window or looking down at the floor. Of course part of the reason for that could be that they have not assessed what their audience needs to hear, i.e. the message needs to be accurate and relevant, so that it strikes a chord. However, once that aspect is covered you absolutely need to deliver your message with confidence, style and passion. The voice plays a crucial role in conveying those three qualities.

So, here's the next component for Passion...

**Voice Visualisation:** this is conveying the meaning behind the words by consciously varying the tone and energy of your voice. Voice visualisation is also referred to as varied intonation.

The opposite is of course a monotone voice and let's face it, we've all experienced listening to such a voice at some point in our lives. A monotone voice gives the impression of low energy, low enthusiasm and low passion and will often send the audience off into a trance or even to sleep.

Quite often people are completely unaware that they slip into monotone mode when they present. Even if they receive feedback that they are delivering in a flat tone, or flatlining as I call it, they are not consciously aware that they are doing it. They can be delivering good news but it sounds like the end is nigh, just like in this tea commercial...

So how do you start to become consciously aware of your voice and ensure that you incorporate voice visualisation?

Let's imagine a grandfather reading a story to his three young grandchildren at bedtime. When he is reading the part where "The giant ogre thundered through the village, crushing homes and picking up

people with his gigantic, monstrous hands!" his voice and facial expression convey panic, terror, horror, run for your lives.



Later on in the story he is reading the part where "The teeny, tiny elves relaxed after a hard day's work in the forest by sitting on the forest floor, drinking mead from elf-sized tankards and laughing and telling jokes and old traditional stories about their land and people." Here the grandfather's voice and facial expression change to a warm and friendly tone to convey the sense of fun, laughter, happiness and safety. It is vitally important to understand the need to convey the meaning behind the words, otherwise they are just words without meaning.

Here are some practical exercises to help you lift your words off the page and convey passion...

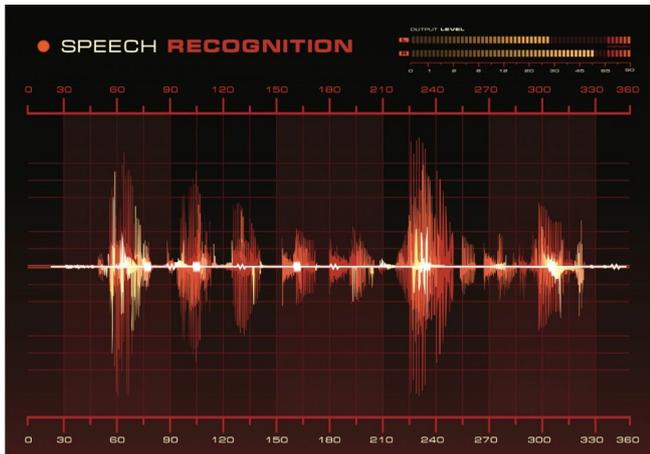
**Listen:** to an audio storybook of your choice (you can download audio storybooks from iTunes and many are also downloadable through Amazon) and really listen for the varied intonation of the narrator, the light and shade in the voice, the voice visualisation and the speed of their delivery.

**Read aloud:** now record yourself (audio or video recording), delivering an extract from the audio storybook. You can buy the physical or Kindle version of the book too, so you have the words.

**Playback:** play your recording back and compare your voice to that of the narrator. Become aware of where you need to start lifting words off the page in order to bring them to life.

Visit **INSEAD Knowledge**  
<http://knowledge.insead.edu>

**Speed:** You also need to appreciate and become aware of the speed of delivery of your words. The narrator will have a clear, slower speed, which adds gravitas and a richness to the story. It also ensures that each and every word is articulated well. To do this apply the rule of every single word is sacred. Picture that each and every single word has an imaginary cushion of air around it to protect it from being melded into the next word. A Voice Recorder app with sound waves will help you see where you leave a space between words and where you don't.



**Accent and native tongue:** Please be assured that accent, or the fact that the language we are presenting in may not be our native tongue, are not necessarily barriers or hurdles. The slower and clearer we are, the more we will be able to articulate our words, so that they are easily understood by our audience. However, if we speak fast and meld our words together with an accent (and we all have an accent) it will be hard for our audience to clearly understand everything we say when we are presenting in a multinational environment.

**Practice, practice, practice:** So, keep on practicing and recording the words from the audio storybook until you succeed in sounding as varied and passionate as the narrator and also that your words are clearly articulated.

**The real thing:** Once you have mastered the above, practice bringing those skills into your everyday conversations and certainly into your meetings and presentations. The good news is that we have lots and lots of opportunities to talk each and every day, both in formal and informal settings, so start to become consciously aware of your voice and how you are using it. Where legally OK to do so, start recording your telephone conversations, using a voice recording app, as previously mentioned, and play them back to check your voice visualisation and speed of delivery.

**How is your voicemail greeting?** Also, while we're at it, check your personal greeting on your

Visit **INSEAD Knowledge**  
<http://knowledge.insead.edu>

voicemail...how is the intonation of your voice? Have you conveyed the meaning behind the words, i.e. does it sound professional and welcoming? How is your speed of delivery? Have you used fillers such as erms and errs? You know what to do if your answer is yes to any of the above.

For more info: [www.yourvoiceispower.nl](http://www.yourvoiceispower.nl)

Photo: Shutterstock, Noam Armonn

Image: Shutterstock, Viktorus

>> This article is part of the LinkedIn Influencers series; I welcome your questions, thoughts, observations, and experiences there:

**Find article at**

<https://knowledge.insead.edu/blog/insead-blog/your-voice-is-your-key-to-success-3202>

**Download the Knowledge app for free**

