

VOICE DYNAMICS FOR TELEPHONE CUSTOMERS

David Hartl

The purpose of this program handout is to help improve your sensitivity to tone of voice, yours and theirs, when having business conversations on the telephone. While talking on the telephone with a customer, focus your attention on the sound of the customer's voice. Listen to the qualities and tones that they put into their voice while also capturing the substance of what they are saying. Notice the qualities and tones that you find yourself putting into your voice. Is the modulation of your voice tone in response to a quality you perceive in their voice? What is the quality you hear and what responses are being evoked in you? Conversely, are you creating a certain tone in your voice in order to create certain responses from them? What qualities are you injecting into your voice, and what responses do you want to get from them?

Hearing and Projecting Voices

Here are some voice analysis criteria you can use to improve your ability to accurately perceive voice qualities in telephone conversations with customers and to exercise control in your own voice tone to achieve desired results.

VOICE QUALITIES	NOTES ON RESPONSES TO VOICE QUALITIES																										
<p><u>Hearing</u></p> <p>What descriptors would you use for the voice? (Check all that apply.)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Affected</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Angry</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Anxious</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Boisterous</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bored</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Confident</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Conspiratorial</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Depressed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Distant</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Easy-going</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Fearful</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Forgiving</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Harsh</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Impatient</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Intimate</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lazy</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Sad</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Tense</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Terse</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Timidity</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Vitality</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Affected	<input type="checkbox"/> Angry	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	<input type="checkbox"/> Boisterous	<input type="checkbox"/> Bored	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiratorial	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Distant	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy-going	<input type="checkbox"/> Fearful	<input type="checkbox"/> Forgiving	<input type="checkbox"/> Harsh	<input type="checkbox"/> Impatient	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimate	<input type="checkbox"/> Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/> Pessimistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad	<input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious	<input type="checkbox"/> Tense	<input type="checkbox"/> Terse	<input type="checkbox"/> Timidity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
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<p>How do you imagine the person using the voice would appear if you could see them? (Check all that apply.)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Smiling</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Frowning</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Flushed</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Composed</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Disheveled</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Neatly attired</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Stiff</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> At ease</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Smiling	<input type="checkbox"/> Frowning	<input type="checkbox"/> Flushed	<input type="checkbox"/> Composed	<input type="checkbox"/> Disheveled	<input type="checkbox"/> Neatly attired	<input type="checkbox"/> Stiff	<input type="checkbox"/> At ease	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____																		
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<p>What “meta-message” does the person seem to be projecting to you through their tone of voice? (Check all that apply.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tentative <input type="checkbox"/> Victim</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Confidence <input type="checkbox"/> Parental</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Domineering <input type="checkbox"/> Warmth</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Coolness <input type="checkbox"/> Demanding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Seeking sympathy <input type="checkbox"/> Arrogant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Humble <input type="checkbox"/> Aloof</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	
<p>What feelings do you experience in response to their voice tone? (Check all that apply.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Credibility <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicious</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraged</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pleased <input type="checkbox"/> Put-off</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Curious <input type="checkbox"/> Cautious</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interested <input type="checkbox"/> Bored</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Willing <input type="checkbox"/> Resistant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Competitive <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	

Does the speaker’s voice tone match what they are saying; are the tone and the content congruent together? If they don’t match, which aspect is most appropriate to respond to, tone or content?

Projecting

How do you modulate your voice when you are projecting your message?

- ◆ Business-friendly, in-charge, competent, helpful
- ◆ Inquisitive, questioning, challenging, confronting
- ◆ Displeased, annoyed, upset, angry, outraged
- ◆ Pleased, enthused, happy, joyful, delighted, thrilled
- ◆ Disinterested, bored, impatient, jaded, fed up

When talking by telephone with business customers, are you able consistently to deliver your content message with a business-friendly, in-charge, competent, and helpful tone in your voice? The challenge is to maintain this projected quality in your own voice even when the person on the other end of the line is giving you problems or sounding like they are “over the top.” Being able to hear both their words (content) and their tone (their “music”) is the ability that keeps you in control of yourself and your voice tone even when the voice on the other end of the telephone line is out of control. This is the challenge of the true professional telephone customer-service representative.