



Using Your Voice

Overview	A number of different short activities that illustrate the importance of voice tone, and allow delegates to appreciate the effect their voice can have on others. They can then decide how best to use their voice when dealing with customers, colleagues and suppliers.
Timing	5-10 minutes for each variation.
Equipment Required	None.
Instructions	<p><u>Exercise 1 – Developing Authority</u></p> <p>Write the following quotation from John F Kennedy on the flipchart. “Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask delegates to read the quotation in their normal conversational style voice whilst sitting in a relaxed position.2. Then, ask delegates to sit up straight, take a deep breath and read the quotation as if they are speaking to someone at the other end of the room.3. Finally, ask delegates to read the quotation again but this time stand up and imagine that they are addressing a meeting of about 10 people. <p>Debrief: Consider how the elements of the voice tone (Volume, Energy, Speed, Pitch and Articulation) changed. What can delegates learn about sounding authoritative on the telephone from this activity?</p> <p><u>Exercise 2 – Pitch your meaning</u></p> <p>The aim of this exercise is to show how effective you can be in giving your words more impact by just changing the pitch of your voice.</p> <p>Ask delegates to read the statements below following the instructions as regards the pitch. That means they will be starting out with a low pitch i.e. deep down in their diaphragm and gradually moving upwards until they reach the highest pitch with which they are comfortable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Today is..... Miserable (lowest pitch)2 Today is..... Alright (moving up the pitch)3 Today is..... Good (middle pitch)4 Today is.....Great (higher pitch)5 Today is.....Fantastic! (highest pitch) <p>Debrief: Discuss how changing the pitch put emphasis on the meaning. Also, discuss how changing the pitch altered the other elements of voice tone, and the effect this had on the meaning.</p>



Exercise 3 – Change the Meaning

This exercise shows how changing the emphasis or inflection can affect the meaning of a sentence.

Write the following sentence on the flipchart:

“I didn’t say he stole the money”.

Then, ask delegates to read it aloud, putting the emphasis on a different word each time.

Then, write this sentence on the flipchart:

“You’re coming home with me tonight”

Then ask delegates to change the inflection of the words (and emphasis if you like).

Debrief: discuss how (even though the words remained unchanged) the sentences took on different meanings when we changed the WAY that we said them. How might this affect our communications with customers, colleagues and suppliers? How easy is it for misunderstandings to occur?

Exercise 4 – Feel what I’m saying

Ask delegates to select an emotion or characteristic, but keep this a secret. Then ask each one in turn to introduce themselves as follows: “Hello, my name is XXX, and I’m from (town)” in the style of that emotion or characteristic. Other delegates must guess the emotion/characteristic.

Debrief: Voice tone gives a lot of clues about how we are feeling – what does that mean for us when listening to others, and for when we are handling their enquiries? Also, discuss how the different elements of voice tone (Volume, Energy, Speed, Pitch and Articulation) alter to display each emotion/characteristic. What else could that combination convey?

Learning Points

Voice tone is very complex, and people make all sorts of conclusions based on what they hear. This has lots of implication for how delegates use their own voice tone, and how they interpret and react to that of others.