

**TALKING BUSINESS:**

# **THE VOICE OF SUCCESS!**

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Corporate Speech  
Solutions

# Talking Business: The Voice of Success!

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# Welcome!

If you're reading this book, you most likely recognize that strong communication is critical to professional success. Whether acing an interview to land your dream job, giving a knock-out presentation to a group of clients, or negotiating a raise with your boss, clear, professional communication can make a critical difference in success in the workplace. That's why **we at Corporate Speech Solutions**, strive to provide you with the tools you need to take your professional communication skills to the next level and move forward in your career.

This workbook focuses on how to use your voice to help you take your professional communication to the next level. We cover how to develop and maintain a strong, healthy voice, how to use your voice in a dynamic, engaging way in presentations and conversation, how to project your voice in a confident way, and much more!

At Corporate Speech Solutions, we are constantly creating new materials to equip you with the tools for successful professional communication. Join our community to stay connected and receive strategies and techniques for better communication:

Sign up for our newsletter at [www.corporatespeechsolutions.com](http://www.corporatespeechsolutions.com).

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For further information or individualized communication training, send us an email at [info@corporatespeechsolutions.com](mailto:info@corporatespeechsolutions.com).

Our goal is to "help you say it better!"

~Jayne Latz and Stacey Rimikis

# Speak UP for Success!

## The Importance of a Clear, Dynamic Voice

When trying to improve professional communication skills, most people focus on two factors: developing efficient, effective professional language, and speaking with clarity and confidence. However, there is one crucial factor that often gets overlooked: vocal quality. Unless there is an obvious problem, most of us don't give more than an occasional passing thought to how our voice sounds. However, your voice can have a significant impact on how others perceive you. In fact, research has shown that the quality of your voice can have an even stronger impact on how you are perceived than the content of your message! In order to project the most effective professional image possible, you need to have a voice that is strong, clear and commanding, while also being versatile, dynamic and engaging.

This workbook will help you take the first steps to developing a strong, healthy voice that will help mark you as the confident professional you are.

Ready? **Let's get started!**

# Maintain a Strong, Confident Voice with Vocal Hygiene

If you're like most professionals, you use your voice non-stop throughout the workday. Vocal strain and fatigue are common by-products of over-using your voice. However, there are certain strategies you can use to keep your voice healthy and strong no matter how much you use it.



**Don't Scream:** We often find ourselves in situations in which normal, conversational speech volume isn't loud enough to be heard. Usually, when people are in these situations, they simply continue to raise their voice until they can be heard redundant. This can cause strain and damage to the vocal cords. To maintain a strong, healthy voice, avoid doing this unless absolutely necessary. Your first line of defense should be to change the environment, not your voice. If there is significant noise from outside the room, shut the windows or door. If you are speaking to someone who is far away, walk over and speak to them instead of shouting. If there is sudden, transient noise, wait for it to pass and then continue your conversation instead of raising your voice to be heard above the noise.





**Hydrate:** Parched vocal cords can be easily damaged and decrease the quality of your voice. Keep a bottle of water with you throughout the workday, especially in situations in which you'll be speaking for a long time or in front of a group of people. Also, try not to over-do it on the coffee—caffeine is dehydrating and can dry out your vocal cords. For every cup of coffee you drink try to have two cups of water.



**Relax:** A tense voice can not only cause strain and injury; it can significantly diminish your vocal quality as well. Read on for some great relaxation tips!

# Vocal Preparation: Relaxing Your Voice and Body

## ***Vocal Relaxation***

Just as one needs to stretch parts of their body before they run or workout, one needs to stretch their articulators (parts of their mouth) before they speak. Limbering up before you speak will help reduce the risk of vocal strain, and can help your speech sound more fluid and natural. Ernest C. Daw, a member of Toastmasters has shared some wonderful exercises for you to do before you speak. To get the most out of these exercises, start by performing them in front of a mirror until you become accustomed to the way they feel.

1. Relax your cheek muscles by simply massaging them with your hands.
2. Continue to stretch all the muscles in your face. Slowly work your jaw, and move your brow up and down. The more you stretch, the more agile your muscles become. If you look in the mirror, you may see that you do not open your mouth wide or retract your lips into a smile when needed for the sound /ee/ as in feet instead of a small movement for the short /i/ in fit.
3. Move your tongue! The tongue needs to move to create speech. Open your mouth and stretch your tongue beyond your lips in all directions. Tongue twisters are a great exercise. Begin slowly reciting them, and then pick up speed.
  - Four furious friends fought for the phone.
  - Three short sword sheaths.
  - Rolling red wagons
  - Green glass globes glow greenly.
  - Six slimy snails sailed silently.
  - The queen in green screamed.



## ***Body Relaxation***

Relaxing your body before speaking is also essential to strong, dynamic voice projection. If you feel tense it will negatively impact your delivery. People tend to hold much of their stress in their shoulders. Try to release this tension in the following way:

1. Stand up with feet directly beneath your shoulders. Push your shoulders back and allow your chest to rest over your center of gravity. Let your arms rest comfortably at your sides with hands open. Try to release any tension you may feel in your body. Make a fist and relax.
2. Roll your shoulders, first forward, then backward
3. Roll your hips in a circular motion, first clockwise, then counterclockwise
4. Return to the position in the first step. From this position you can move or gesture more easily.

## ***Vocal Warm-up***

Now that your face and body are relaxed, it's time to warm up your voice itself. Start with these exercise:delivery.

1. Stand up with your hands at your sides
2. Breathe deeply. Focus on breathing from your diaphragm (your abdomen) instead of your chest. Place one hand on your stomach; you should feel your stomach expand and contract as you breathe. You should not feel your chest or shoulders rise.
3. Breathe in (through your nose) and focus on the expansion & breathe out (through your mouth) focusing on the contraction. Repeat five times.
4. Breathe in and exhale on "ah." You should not feel tension in your throat; relax into the sound. Repeat five times.

## Vocal Warm-up (continued)

5. Breathe in, then exhale on “mmmmmmmmaah”. Pay attention to the vibrations you feel during “mmm”. Try to focus on keeping the sound “forward” even after shifting into the “aaah”. Repeat five times.
6. Say “uh-hmm” the way you would say it if someone asked you if you would like one million dollars. This will help you to find your natural tone and will focus your voice upward and forward in your nose. Then say “meme” followed by the numbers 1-10. Be sure to stretch out the vowels so they sound like a glide: memeoone, memetwoo, memethree, etc. Take a nice deep, abdominal breathe between each number.
7. Say “ee” or “oo” at a soft volume and comfortable pitch for as long as you can. Do this five times. Hold the sound for as long as you can, but don’t push or strain.
8. Take a deep breath and say, “My name is Jean-Claude Teulade” with an easy, clear voice. Repeat three times. your throat; relax into the sound. Repeat five times.

# Vocal Projection

Once your vocal mechanism is relaxed you can practice projecting your voice. Try the following exercises:

1. Read the following paragraph slowly and deliberately. Start low, but gradually build as you focus solely on a single spot on the back wall, directing your voice only to that one spot. Once you have finished reading, improvise your own conversation with the wall rather than reading word for word. The importance of this exercise lies not in the exact wording of the paragraph, but in the idea that you are speaking directly to an inanimate object.

*I am looking at a spot on the back wall. I am talking to that spot, and only to that spot. But that spot does not hear very well, and I must focus carefully or the spot will miss my message. Listen, spot: hear and know what I say. My voice is clear, the room is quiet. Hear me, if you will.*

2. Say the words green, blue, yellow, orange, and red, beginning very softly with green, then increasing your projection with each word until you are very strong on red. Have five distinctly different levels of volume. After four or five repetitions, change and come downward, starting with a strong red and ending with a soft green. Repeat four or five times. Do not alter your pitch during this exercise, only your volume.

# Breath Support: The Power Behind Your Voice

Remember that air is the power behind your voice. Proper breathing will help you to project your voice and present yourself as clear and confident.

## ***Breathing Exercises***

As you do the following exercises, always breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Keep your chest and shoulders relaxed – not rising and falling with each inhalation/exhalation.

1. Lie on your back and put a book on your stomach. As you breathe in, watch or feel your stomach and the book rise. As you breathe out, watch it lower. Repeat ten times.
2. Stand up, and repeat the above exercise with your hand on your stomach. Concentrate on your diaphragmatic breathing and inhale and exhale slowly. Repeat ten times. Be aware of and try to eliminate any upper body or laryngeal tension.
3. While you are doing the exercise above, count how long you inhale and exhale. Try making the inhale equal to the exhale. Start with 1 second; inhale for 1 second / exhale for 1 second and work up to 5 seconds.
4. Take a deep breath and as you exhale, say /s/ like a hiss. Try to sustain for 15 seconds. Now try with /z/.
5. Inhale and exhale on a long “shhhhhh.” Repeat ten times.
6. Inhale and exhale on several short “sh” “sh” “sh”s.
7. Take a straw, and blow through it with a strong, but relaxed breath. Now, blow through the straw while squeezing it slightly to create resistance.
8. Use the straw to blow bubbles in a glass of water. Then, repeat but add voicing or humming as you blow.

## ***Increasing Sustained Breath Support***

Use the following exercises to practice breath support and increase the amount of speech you can produce with a single breath. Remember to breathe deeply from your diaphragm and reduce any tension in your upper body or throat.

- Where is the archived file?
- Where is the archived file that I need?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned on statistical analysis?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned on statistical analysis which is due tomorrow morning?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned on statistical analysis which is due tomorrow morning before he arrives at work?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned on statistical analysis which is due tomorrow morning before he arrives at work and drinks his regular cup of coffee?
- Where is the archived file that I need to help me with my paper the boss assigned on statistical analysis which is due tomorrow morning before he arrives at work and drinks his regular cup of coffee? The assignment won't take long once I find it!

# Keeping It Interesting: The Dynamic Voice

Some people mistakenly equate a lack of intonation and vocal variety with professionalism, thinking it makes them sound more sober and serious. However, the result is more often dull, monotone speech. This type of speech conveys disinterest and a lack of enthusiasm for the topic. Speaking with varied intonation keeps your listener engaged and makes your speech far more interesting to listen to.

Read the following list of phrases out loud. Read each phrase three times, using a different intonation pattern from the list below each time.

-Demanding	-Impatient	-Concerned
-Confident	-Disappointed	-Confused
-Irritated	-Bored	-Pleased
-Embarrassed	-Impressed	-Excited

1. Will the meeting start later than expected?
2. I thought he was going to be here at three o'clock.
3. Are you completely sure the information is correct?
4. Let's take another look at those numbers after lunch.
5. I think it would be better if we saved this conversation for another time.
6. You're saying that you never received last week's report?
7. The results from last quarter are completely different from what I expected.
8. I haven't spoken to Susan from accounting in over a week.
9. I really need to talk to you after the meeting this afternoon.
10. The CEO's presentation next Thursday is mandatory.



# Thanks for Joining Us!

Completing this workbook is a great first step to developing a confident, dynamic professional voice. But don't stop here! Take the time to incorporate your new skills into your day-to-day life. Whether you're giving a presentation, speaking in public, or even just conversing with a colleague, make sure to incorporate the skills you've learned. The more you utilize your vocal strategies, the easier they'll become, until speaking with a strong, engaging voice is second nature.

## Are you looking for more help?

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