

# How to Improve Your Telephone Voice

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Many people think they have a bad telephone voice. While it's true that not every one's voice sounds like a radio announcer's voice, very few people have a terrible voice. What they have is a badly produced voice. To sound confident and be perceived in a professional manner on the telephone, one must pause and breathe and follow some simple maintenance tips.

A good voice requires lots of power or air. The way to get that power is by breathing from the diaphragm. Unfortunately, many people breathe shallowly. They fill their lungs only to ten percent of their capacity. A voice that is starving for air becomes a monotone or sounds tinny and unfriendly. Also, the ends of statements fade, and there are lots of "ums" and "ahs" as the person drags in a quick breath of air.

To check whether you are breathing from the diaphragm, place one hand on your upper chest and one hand on your diaphragm. Take in a deep breath and notice where you feel the breath first. Unless you feel your diaphragm moving, you are breathing shallowly. To heighten your awareness of how diaphragmatic breathing feels, raise your arms above your head or lie prone on a bed. The only way you will be able to breathe in these positions is from the diaphragm. To remind yourself to breathe from the diaphragm when calling a client or a customer, place your hand on your diaphragm. Your diaphragm should move like bellows while you are talking.

To keep a voice sounding terrific for the entire conversation, take frequent pauses to breathe. It will improve your voice dramatically. Suddenly, it will sound rich and resonant. A one or two-second pause at the end of a statement or at the end of a

thought is ample. The additional benefit of pausing is that your articulation will be clearer since you will have time to enunciate every syllable in the word. Pausing will also eliminate non-words, like "ah," or "um" that make a person sound unsure. Most importantly, it will give you time to formulate your thoughts and make compelling statements.

Besides pausing and breathing, it is important to pay attention to posture. The lungs are the largest organ in your body, and they can't move properly if they are restricted. When talking to a customer, make sure your feet are flat on the floor under your chair and that your arms are on the desk rather than crossed on your chest. If you are nervous, consider standing up and walking around. It will help you to release energy and to breathe.

Also, try gesturing. It will bring more air into the lungs, and the voice will sound more enthusiastic. The client never wants to feel you don't care. If you are tired, gesturing is a great way to get your own energy level up and to get you back into the conversation.

People want you to sound like you like your job so make sure you are smiling and that you keep a mirror by your phone. Smiling will cause the tone of your voice to sound warmer. As you look in the mirror, notice how far you open your mouth when you talk and whether you use both your upper and lower lips. Lazy lips and a mouth that hardly opens create a badly produced voice.

Lastly, drink lots of water. Avoid caffeinated drinks that pull moisture from the vocal cords. Avoid having milk in your coffee or eating cream cheese on your bagels right before you start your calls. Dairy product cause mucus, and you will constantly be clearing your voice.

Those who are radio announcers have learned the importance of pausing and breathing. They have also mastered how to maintain their voice all day long. Many of your customers only know you through your voice. Make sure it creates the image that you want.

*Continued on page 2*

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).*