

# The Beauty of Pausing

By Judith Filek—President,  
Impact Communications, Inc.

The best tool an individual conducting business over the phone can have is the ability to pause. Most people think they pause frequently, but, in reality, they don't. Pausing for one, two or even five seconds between thoughts, not only benefits the speaker, but the listener.

## Benefits to the Listener

Pausing helps the listener in many ways. It highlights the speaker's ideas and focuses the listener on what is critical. It also allows the person on the other end of the line time to digest the information being given and to think about what has been said. The more opportunities listeners have to think; the more they can voice their questions about the product or service and about how it compares to the competitor's. It is only when people understand that they feel they can make an informed decision. People never move forward when they have doubts or when they are confused.

Listeners also remember more. Because they have been given information in bite-sized chunks, they can remember it after the fact. They do not feel overwhelmed. They can explain it to others.

## Benefits for the Speaker

Pausing also has many benefits for the speaker. For starters, it allows the person time to think about what to say or how to respond. If the speaker isn't pausing, he or she may respond inappropriately, and the person on the other end of the line may conclude the speaker doesn't know what he is talking about or didn't really listen to the question being asked.

Pausing enhances credibility. The speaker "sounds" more confident and knowledgeable. The listener feels that he can trust the person. If the speaker isn't pausing, invariably lots of "ums," "ahs" and other non-words will come into play. Once this happens, credibility is compromised. Therefore, the listener may want to end or escalate the call. He will not waste time with anyone he feels is incompetent.

Pausing eliminates a monotone and allows a voice to sound warm and friendly. No one wants to listen to a monotone. By pausing frequently for breath, a speaker enhances the resonance in his voice. When a listener feels the speaker cares, he becomes more receptive to problem solving and less annoyed. It is hard to be angry with someone who "sounds" as if he is trying to help. The only way a phone rep can demonstrate sincerity, or empathy is by pausing and breathing.

Pausing also minimizes the need to repeat. It moves the call forward and gets the phone rep off the call and onto the next one quickly. For phone reps with a call volume, pausing is critical.

Pausing is the speaker's best friend. The more the person pauses, the more the listener gets and the more the phone rep can focus. To practice pausing, phone reps should tape their calls and listen specifically for distinctive pauses. Also, they should place a post-it note on their computers to remind themselves to speak a sentence at a time. With pausing, a speaker will dramatically improve his comfort level and his listener's.

*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. When you have to have impact phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.*