

# The Power of Your Voice

One of the tools we use to judge each other is our voice. When customers call your business and talk to you, your voice plays an extremely powerful role in how they judge you. Whenever we hear a flat or monotone voice on the telephone, it sends poor perceptions. For example, if I called your business, and you said in a monotone voice, "Mr. Worthley . . . we're just thrilled you called our store." Well, you might mean that, but when I hear your monotone voice, I am left with the perception that; "Mr. Worthley we can pretty much give a rip about you." Anytime customers hear a flat or monotone voice, they perceive you are either:

1. Unfriendly
2. Indifferent to helping us
3. You don't like your job

All of these or none of these may be true, but that's how flat or monotone voices are perceived. Remember, perception is the customer's reality.

Statistically, approximately 86% of how you're being judged on the telephone is your voice inflection -it is the quality of your voice. The remaining 14% of how you are judged is the actual words that you use. If I'm trying to decide if I want to drive 30 minutes down to your location to do business with you, I'm not necessarily focusing as much on your expertise (even though it is still a consideration). I'm listening to your voice to hear if you are friendly, confident, honest, compassionate, empathetic or sincere. Once again, people may not care how much you know, until they know how much you care, and that can come from your voice.

Have you ever heard your voice on a tape recorder or a camcorder before, and liked it? The first time I heard my voice, I thought "Hey, that's not me, that's Satan!" It was not good news! Changing your voice is not an easy thing to do. But, if you're going to change your voice, you've really got limited options. One of the simplest ways is to raise the volume of your voice. When you pick up a business phone, use a more powerful voice and not a soft "home" voice. When you answer with 15% or 20% more volume, it comes across as much more confident. Another option, is to change your pitch and tone. This is much more challenging and takes quite a bit more time because your voice is obviously a habit that you are comfortable with. Trying to increase your pitch and tone can sound exaggerated to you, because you are simply not used to the new you.

Even simple words can change meaning, based on how they're inflected. Let's just say I see a young lady sitting on a park bench, I walk up to her and I say, "How're you doing?" in a friendly voice. By the way I said that, with high pitch and tone in order to make it friendly, we're going to be good buddies. But, if you have ever watched the show called "Friends" and heard Joey speak to women, he would say "How you doin'," in his macho voice. Well, you know Joey probably has more on his mind than being a good buddy. Our words can take on different meanings, based on how we inflect them.