

# Success...It's All In Your V.O.I.C.E.

Dee Dukehart

Let the words begin.

To be able to speak well, is to give water to the thirsty and dessert to the deserving. It's a gift well worth wrapping in creative and customized language.

How can you be a successful presenter? It's all in your V.O.I.C.E.

**V – Velcro;** Make your points stick in the listeners' minds

**O – Organize:** Opening/introduction, point, stories, point, statistics, stories, stories, point, Q &A (if applicable), then closing – call-to-action.

**I – Integrate:** Integrate your personality, facts and figures, stories, body language, benefits and value into your speech.

**C – Commit:** Commit the time, energy and research to compile the information you need. Commit the hours to practice and deliver value.

**E – Energize:** Stay current, energized and passionate about your subject(s). How you move, stand, and *engage* your listeners make the difference between a sleeper speech and a keeper speech. Movement – mental and physical – creates momentum for you and your listeners.

Every executive, manager, sales representative and aspiring leader will give multiple presentations during his/her illustrious career. You have to present proposals, ideas, new policy and procedures, or several cheerleading speeches to your employees. How do you gain not only their confidence, but also their undivided attention? If you think your audience doesn't want and need story, humor and information, then you haven't been an audience member.

Have you ever been enthralled listening to a speaker? What makes you remember a point, or points? What qualities do you admire in a speaker? Can you retell a story that someone told you from the lectern? You may not remember it completely, but its message stayed with you long after the lectern was put in the closet, the chairs folded and stored, and the lights turned out.

The first and most important part of any speech or presentation is relating to your audience. How do you relate to people? They relate to you through your personal experiences and your stories. This is the **Velcro**. Stories and personal experiences make your points *stick* in the memory of your listeners. In story, audiences recognize themselves; therefore, remember your point(s). Relationship speaking is to the audience, what a glass is to liquid, it holds it together. Stories break down the experiences that substantiate your ideas and points.

For all presenters **Organizing** your speech is the same as organizing your next vacation: How are you going to get there? What are you going to do when you get there? What do you need to take with you? When do you leave? (Show up?) How much research do you have to do? And, finally, you have to get on the plane, in the car, on the train, or...on the platform. Take your audience with you, allow them to enjoy the journey the same way you do.

**Integrate** story, facts, positions, opinions, call-to-action and yourself throughout the presentation. If you had to choose between listening to an executive read his/her speech or tell you a story about an experience that validates the points, which would you choose? No contest. The officious voice has gone the way of the rotary phone, some though may still be in existence, but they are obsolete and a pain. Paint word pictures. Give the listen substance, sizzle and self for a well received message.

Any time you **Commit** to a task you focus on the outcome, its value and the benefits for you and others. It's the same with speaking. I recommend that you commit to the outcome, the actual point of your message. Is it instructional? Is it inspirational? Is it informative? Is it persuasive? Entertaining? There are numerous facets of each message. Commit to giving your audience the

most value for your vocal chords. The audience is eager to commit to listening if they know you committed time, research, time, practice, and yourself to the message.

To add that special creative voice, add humor. This is the **Energy** and entertainment. No, you don't have to be a comedian, you just have to allow the audience to laugh with you. Make fun of yourself and some of your experiences, and again, they will remember the point. Energize them through humor, passion and anticipation.

Movement also helps alleviate nerves. The adrenaline is flowing and the butterflies are swarming. Move around, use your body and your voice to pump up your message.

Also, remember the magic number is three. Three points, max. You can have several sub points, but the magic number for the adult brain to take home is three. That's three, three points in one, one speech. Verbose versus vitality: which one resonates with you?

A few other tools and techniques that will help:

- Know the audience – include them in your presentation
- Know your material – don't just “wing it”
- Relax and breathe – before, during and during, and after
- Visualize yourself as successful – see the audience's positive reaction
- The audience is your Best Support Group – they want you to succeed
- NEVER apologize for any short-coming(s) – it makes the audience nervous
- NEVER read your speech – it insults your audience
- Practice, practice, practice – it makes a good speech, better, and a better speech riveting

Your opening and closing are bookends; they pull the presentation full circle. You have approximately 10-15 seconds to hook your audience. Grab them early, keep them enthralled and end with your initial “grab.” Remember, it's all in your V.O.I.C.E.

Now let the words begin.

Dee Dukehart, author and professional speaker, works with companies who want to master their communication skills—both written and spoken—and with executives who want to empower the people they lead. Dee can be reached at (303)753-1111 or [SpkrDee@aol.com](mailto:SpkrDee@aol.com) for coaching, training and keynotes. Learn more at [www.DeeDukehart.com](http://www.DeeDukehart.com).