



## Mastering Technical Sales

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## Voice Projection

### Handling The "We Can't Hear You" Problem

The fastest way to lose the attention of an audience is to make them struggle to hear you. After just a couple of minutes, people will tune out even if they are in the same room as you. It's just too hard given all the other distractions around.

Unless your demos and presentations literally speak for themselves, your voice and your sound projection (volume) are important parts of how you sell. Especially when you are presenting virtually across the web and/or phone. This article provides suggestions how you can train your voice and make it easier to listen to you when you speak.

Voice training usually revolves around the three P's of Passion, Personality and Physique. I'm going to focus on your verbal physique - as unless you have had professional voice lessons it is unlikely you know what the correct verbal exercises are. Your voice can produce 325 different pitches. There are more muscles around the larynx than any other part of the body except for the eye. Considering that you use  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your body when speaking a single word, doesn't it make sense to have a vocal work-out routine just as you would have a work-out for your abs or your legs?

### The Quick, Easy and Effective Vocal Work-Out

1. **Breathe.** Breathe as deeply as you can 3 times. Hold for 5 seconds and then exhale making a hissing sound through the mouth.
2. **Mmmm.** Say "mmmmm" until you run out of breath. Repeat 5 times. You should feel a kind of buzz at the front of your face. The technical term is mask resonance and is the effect you are looking for. Google "mask resonance" for more information.
3. **Yes!** Now say "Mmmm-hmmmm" ten times. Think of this as a way of saying yes.

4. **Add Color.** Try adding colors to the end of the sentence. So it's "Mmmm Hmmm Red" and "Mmmm Hmmm Green". The purpose of the exercise is that the buzz should continue into the final color word. Use as many colors as you can.
5. **Add Names.** Now expand the sentence to "mmmm hmmm my name is George". Use your own name. The buzz should continue through the entire sentence. Repeat 5 times.

*<At this point you need to be by yourself or in the company of really good friends.>*

6. **Emergency Sirens.** As a variation say "ooooo-eeee" or your best interpretation of a two-tone emergency services siren. Raise and lower the pitch as if the ambulance is moving towards you and then away from you.
7. **Tongue Twisters.** Pick a couple of short tongue-twisters in your native language. Say them three times each but only as fast as you can speak and still keep them clear and understandable. My English favorites are "three free throws" and "the sixth sheiks sick sheep".
8. **Cool down.** Now cool down with several very deep breaths inhaled through the nose and exhaled through the mouth.
9. **Louder.** Remember that the solution to low volume is not to yell. It may be a short term fix as you pass more air through the diaphragm, but it will strain your voice and is not sustainable for more than 30-40 minutes.

**CALL TO ACTION:** Train your voice. When you have a microphone it will resonate better, when you don't people will understand you with less effort. Less conscious effort equates directly to a higher chance of making your message stick. Treat your vocal chords like any other muscle group in your body.

Talking Points is a monthly column authored by John Care, Managing Director of Mastering Technical Sales. For more information on this and other Sales Engineering topics visit the website at [www.masteringtechnicalsales.com](http://www.masteringtechnicalsales.com).

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