

Career TIMES

Editorial phone: 021 762 7767, Fax 021 762 4149, Cell 063 261 0570, e-mail: sarahjane@omnifix.co.za
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'Master voice control to market yourself well'

STAFF WRITER

YOUR voice is your most powerful motivational tool and the way you use it strongly influences your total communication message, says John French of Corporate Intelligence Training, which specialises in corporate voice, communication and soft skills training.

"We use our voices to sell, motivate, express ourselves and succeed. An excellent education or a fancy wardrobe counts for nothing if you can't match your spoken word with your visual image," he says.

"Marketing and sales are impossible without using the correct vocal modulation. Public speaking is also one of the most stressful experiences and most nervous voices fail. Businesspeople need to learn how to master voice control before they can go out there and market themselves successfully."

Voice experts distinguish between the "natural voice" and the "habitual voice". Natural voices are free, open clear and expressive. Acquired or habitual voices are restricted by many bad vocal habits and psychological events. Voice coaches can help to free your powerful natural voice, says French.

"The famous study conducted by Professor Mehrabian of UCLA concluded that the words we speak account for only 7 percent of the final communication message that people perceive and understand. The way you use your voice carries a

massive 38 percent of your final communication message. More than 80 percent of your final vocal message comes across with the tone of your voice, which conveys your attitude. What you say is not as important as how you say it.

"German research indicates that the longest we can listen to a monotonous and boring voice is 90 seconds before we lose focus, and concentration. People judge you in the first seven to 15 seconds on the image your voice conveys. It reveals your gender, age, education, social standing, confidence, expertise and your attitude, especially over the telephone.

"The Gallup International poll on vocal habits reveals that mumbling irritates 37 percent of people; talking too loudly irritates 32 percent of people, and using a boring and monotonous voice irritates 27 percent of people. Most top politicians and businesspeople undergo vocal training. The most famous vocal make-over was probably that of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who went through two major vocal metamorphoses to gain and consolidate her political power."

French says it takes about six weeks to achieve a major vocal make-over as you need to improve your vocal habits.

"Anyone can develop and improve their voices with the right vocal training," says French.