



Verbal Elements of Delivery

Pitch – measure of how high or low your voice sounds

- Monotone (no inflection) sounds boring and unemotional
- Inflection helps you maintain audience interest and get your message across
- Avoid dramatic, upward shifts in pitch or ones on the final word of a sentence unless asking a question

Rate – speed at which you speak

- Speedier talkers prevent listeners from absorbing the ideas and making connections between points
- Speak in shorter sentences
- To vary your rate, you can change the length of natural pauses and change the rate at which you speak syllables and words within phrases

Pauses – a temporary stop in speech

- Used to add emphasis and meaning to selected phrases and sentences
- Can be inserted to allow audience members a moment to think about an idea, to indicate a shift to a new idea, to a new section of your speech, or to heighten audience anticipation of your next idea
- Avoid the temptation to fill any silences with verbal pauses; they annoy listeners and hurt your credibility
- Start each thought on a new line to remind yourself to pause at the end of a line

Volume – loudness of the voice

- Overcome background noise and reach every listener in the room

Beebe, S. A., & Mottet, T. P. (2010). *Business and professional communication: Principles and skills for leadership* (pp. 175-176). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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- Open your mouth as you speak and use all of your breath to send your words out to the audience.

Variety – changes related to pauses, rate, pitch, and volume

- When your voice isn't predictable, your audience won't know what's coming next, and they'll stay alert to find out
- Variety adds a personality and an immediacy to your words that can bring you closer to your audience by making your speech sounds more like a spirited conversation

Pronunciation – ability to say each word correctly by making the proper sounds and accenting the correct syllable

- Correct pronunciation is invisible, but incorrect pronunciation can damage your credibility

Articulation – ability to correctly form the sounds of each word (making vowel sounds and consonant sounds clearly and distinctly as you speak)

- If you substitute one consonant for another, slush your s's, or drop some vowels or consonants, your audience may not be able to understand you

Dialect – the pattern of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that's used in a particular region or culture

- Listeners form impressions based on their stereotyped notions about people who speak with certain dialects (less capable, less intelligent)
- If your audience can't understand your words because of your dialect, you may want to soften it so that you can get your message across

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