

THE VOICE IMAGE

by Dr. Sadhana Nayak

Want to command attention at a board meeting? Want to create a lasting impact on your audience? Focus on developing and enhancing your voice image. Did you know that your voice makes people see you in a different light? Dr. Lillian Glass, a Hollywood voice and image consultant showed, in an interesting study, that people with an effective voice image were considered far more attractive than those who were good looking but had an ineffective voice.

Why is it that some people make an unforgettable impact on you, while others just turn you off? Whenever you think of someone who made a lasting impression on you, what is it that you remember about the person? Is it how the person looked or what the person communicated? What you communicate, makes a lasting impression on others based on how you say it - in other words, how you use your voice. Whether it is a staff meeting or a speech at a large convention, once the initial impact of your appearance and the eye catching power point presentation have worn off, what stays with people is your voice image.

What is the voice image?

The quality and energy of your voice, how you intonate or modulate your voice, the rhythm and pace of your speech, your accent, how soft or loud, how high pitched or low pitched you sound – all of these and many fine aspects of the voice comprise your voice image. These are the factors that will decide within the first few seconds whether your audience will listen to you or just switch off. The voice sends subliminal signals about who you are and what you want to say. When people listen to you, they subconsciously pick up signals from your voice and body. The ease with which you carry yourself, your stance, mannerisms, expressions are not only a part of your physical presence but also contribute to your voice – something that is an anatomical and scientific reality. All vocal, physical and speech habits

that you have developed over the years, whether distracting or impressive are a part of your current vocal image.

Is it possible to enhance the voice image?

The answer is a resounding 'YES'. A lot of people who hate the way they sound believe they that they are born with their voice and have to live with it. And there are others, whose voices set your teeth on edge and they are not even aware of it. And they often wonder why people react to them the way they do.

It is possible to cultivate an effective voice image and convey the professional and personal image you desire. Situations like job and promotion interviews, presentations and public speaking, representing your organization, appearing as a guest or expert on television/radio, client briefings, where you need to create an impact on the listener/audience in a short time, draw attention to your voice image.

Is there an ideal voice image?

There is no such thing as an ideal voice image. An effective voice image is what you need to develop. It reflects who you are- your conviction, ideals, emotions and thoughts. An effective voice is in sync with who you are and is totally connected with the message you want to convey. Most of us spend a lifetime, acquiring the necessary knowledge and expertise in our area of work. We also need to learn to convey that through the right voice image.