



## SELLING YOURSELF OVER THE TELEPHONE

In the hands of a skilled professional, the telephone is an effective sales tool. But selling products or services with features and benefits is not nearly as challenging to many as selling themselves over the telephone.

Job seekers and career opportunists often find themselves uneasy and not prepared to verbalize their own qualifications over the telephone. The challenge of any telephone conversation with someone you don't know is to bridge the gap of anonymity. Your voice must project a proper image or the message you convey falls on deaf ears. The human voice is like a car; when the systems are properly maintained the car goes where the driver wants it to go.

Selling yourself over the telephone requires a balance of energy, pace, flow, tone and clarity.

1. **Energy** is the force needed to command attention whether speaking on the telephone, into a microphone or to a large group. But don't confuse energy with enthusiasm and happiness. While higher volume is persuasive and cheerful and a lower volume evokes feelings of warmth and affection, a hard-to-hear voice displays neither confidence, enthusiasm nor leadership.
2. **Pace** is a measure of how slowly or quickly a person speaks. Speak too slowly and risk being viewed as befuddled; speak too fast and images of a "slick" high pressure sales pro emerge.
3. **Flow** is the continuity of a person's voice, including pauses. Naturally flowing speech reflects an earnest, confident, and persuasive person. Avoid vocalized pauses, the "ahs," "ums" and "uhs" which annoy and distract listeners. Excessive pauses can imply a lack of confidence.
4. **Tone** is the quality of the speaking voice and should be varied for best results. The deepened tones in a voice project a sense of confidence, control, trust and credibility. Voices that are high-pitched, nasal, throaty, raspy, squeaky or monotone impede the listener's reception. Ideally, tone and inflection should vary.
5. **Clarity** is vocal precision. It doesn't matter what's said on the telephone if the listener can't understand the words. Don't shorten words; "going to" isn't "gonna." Don't add, eliminate or substitute consonants; it's "Atlanta", not "Adlanta," "didn't" not "din't", and "idea", not "idear."

A finely-tuned speaking voice, whether heard face to face or through a telephone, is only half the battle. Job seekers must perfect the art of listening and answering questions that help the interviewer determine how well the candidate will fit into the employer's environment. Remember, what you say to a future employer is just as important as how you say it.