

How to Speak with More Effect in the Business World

This section focuses on how to sound more professional in business situations and how to use the speech stairs method more strategically for different types of speaking situations such as leading a meeting or delivering a presentation.

Strategically Applying Downward Steps and Pausing on the Speech Stairs

Just as you know to end your final syllable on a lower step and fully execute the final sound in the word, the same is true for executing the final sound in the word, where a natural pause would be in the statement. A natural pause is where a comma would be in print. This will position you to speak with more effect. By executing the ending sound of a word where there is a place for a natural pause, you are likely to have your listener's attention and be more captivating to an audience. This is important if you give presentations or lead meetings. Listed below are examples where you could shape your statement down the stairs and insert a natural pause:

- In the beginning, (pause) speaking in this new intonation style might feel strange.
- After we talk about the contracts, (pause) let's renegotiate the rate.
- You're right, (pause and final sound execution) that data does not match the report (final sound execution with the /t/).
- According to Rick, (pause and final sound execution) I think she will be back by the end of summer.
- Her phone number is (714) 555-9754 (when listing information, move down the stairs).

When listing words or providing a series of numbers or an e-mail address, move your speech down the speech stairs. It will help significantly with clarity, and your speech will sound more captivating. Practice with your speech notebook, and when a longer statement has been written, indicate where an appropriate natural pause would be.

How to Speak with More Effect at the Bottom of the Speech Stairs

When you need to negotiate, convince or be perceived as a leader, the best intonation pattern is to end your final word in a sentence on a deliberate lower step. For added effect, pauses can be strategically placed in statements. Imagine that you are giving a presentation or leading a meeting. The subject is last quarter's finances. Here is an example of how you could speak with more effect by using deliberate downward steps and adding pauses.

Although quarter three had less revenue, (deliberate downward step and pause) quarter four grew by 15% (deliberate downward step on 15%). (Add pause.) Let's make next quarter our most profitable one to date.

Adding downward steps and pauses strategically adds effect to statements you want people to remember or leaves an impression. This is important for perceived leadership. Before your next meeting or presentation, rehearse your thoughts, and place some strategic downward steps or pauses in a few of your statements. Afterward, I bet you will feel more confident and see how this speaking style can shape the responses or behaviors of others.

CAUTION: Sabotaging Your Leadership Image with Upspeak

Avoid sabotaging your message with weak intonation. Never end a statement with upspeak. Upspeak is when you send your speech back up the stairs at the end of your statement. This is a terrible speech habit. When messages end on upspeak, they sound doubtful, lack confidence and give the impression that you are seeking approval. This is not a good speech habit for professional situations or where it is important for you to be perceived as a leader. Studies show that people form impressions and make conclusions and judgments based on how people use their voice and speech.

Test the Theory

Say the line “This is why I support the idea” using the three types of intonation styles listed below:

1. Say the line with monotone speech.
2. Say the line ending the final word in upspeak.
3. Say the line ending the final word on a downward step.

What differences did you notice by ending your statements on an upspeak instead of a lower pitch tone?

The Power of Ending on a Lower Step at the Bottom of the Speech Stairs

Speaking with upspeak creates a weak impression. It sounds soft and unsure and does not communicate confidence. Ending important statements on a lower step demonstrates a leadership and executive presence. Think of skilled public speakers or politicians when they are campaigning. When they want to make a point or strong impression, they end their statements on a downward step. The next time you watch the news, observe the network broadcasters. Many of them demonstrate this type of intonation speech pattern. They end their statements on the lower step and never produce speech with a sing-song melody or end a statement with upspeak. They are also well trained with intonation to say all of their ending sounds without deleting them. Be aware of your habits to gain the speaking skills you want to have in the world of business.

Excerpt from: [How to Speak like a Broadcaster and Lead like a CEO, Third Edition](#)