

Do You Sound Like a CEO?

New [research](#) from [Duke University](#)'s Fuqua School of [Business](#) shows the earning power of a voice extends to male chief executive officers. The research looked at 792 male Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and found that CEOs with deeper voices manage larger companies, make more money, and tend to be retained longer.

Which doesn't surprise me, since my husband was a professional "voice over" talent for many television commercials, and he also found that men who got the most announcer or voice-over jobs had the deepest voices. (A trait he attributed to the fact that they all smoked heavily!)

The results of the Duke study are consistent with other experimental predictions suggesting a role for voice pitch in leadership selection for politicians as well as the upper echelons of corporate management.

Paralinguistics is a form of nonverbal communication – concerned with *how* you say what you say. It includes your vocal volume, pitch, inflection, intensity, clarity, as well as your rate of speech and use of silence.

Paralinguistic cues are important in any conversation, and they are crucial when you want to project authority and leadership. Here are three tips for sounding like a CEO:

First Tip – Belly breathe before you speak

Stress constricts your breathing and tightens your throat – which raises the pitch of your voice. Look straight ahead with your chin level to the floor and consciously relax your throat. Take several deep "belly" breaths. Count slowly to six as you inhale and expand your abdomen, then count to six again as you exhale. This simple exercise will help you sound focused and in control.

Second Tip - Modulate Your Voice

Vary your vocal range and tone – avoiding a monotone delivery that sounds as if you are bored. Remember to enunciate and speak clearly. Vary your volume, but always make sure you are speaking loudly enough to be heard.

Third Tip – Drop your voice into its optimal pitch

Here's a tip I learned from a speech therapist: Before you enter the meeting room or get on the telephone, let your voice relax into its optimal (and lower) pitch by keeping your lips together and making the sounds "um hum, um hum, um hum."

You may not be a CEO, but if you want to sound like one, keep these tips in mind!

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