



LIONS PRESENTS

Mastering the Virtual Pitch: The Expert Guide

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In her LIONS Live film, Voice and Public Speaking Expert, Caroline Goyder discussed secrets to owning the virtual pitch.

Use this summary as an ongoing tool to help you reflect on the advice given, and review the best-in-practice examples to help you apply this guidance in day-to-day work. Find additional notes on further reading at the end of this summary that will help you improve your knowledge and technique in this area.

You can watch Caroline's film in full [here](#).

What does it mean to “master the virtual pitch” and why is it important?

Inspiration is all about how much you can win hearts and minds. In three dimensions, it's easier to read the room, to adapt your message, to take your audience with you on the journey. On screen, it's harder. It all becomes a bit two-dimensional. Back-to-back meetings sap your energy and your empathy. Research has shown that your devices are sabotaging you. Staring at our screens takes us off our game.

The antidote – you need to reach through a screen with your voice, rather than speak at people. Your voice is the instrument that can carry your energy through the pixels to your audience. Your voice can make virtual conversations feel more like in-person conversations. If you can do this successfully, you stand out in a sea of flat voices and dead eyes, and you win hearts and minds, and new business.

Top Tips on Mastering the Virtual Pitch

TOP TIPS ON MASTERING YOUR VIRTUAL VOICE

1

SET THE STAGE SO YOU FEEL STRONG AND CONFIDENT – IN YOUR POWER

Set the stage when you present creative work – even if that stage is your improvised home office. A simple tip is to stand up for the meetings that require you to inspire. The audience only sees you chest-upwards on screen so likely won't realise you're standing, but you will feel grounded and strong. When we stand our voice naturally has more power. You can also gesture more freely so your voice has more of its natural intonation. You become far more engaging and compelling as a speaker. A final tip from film actors is gently project your voice to the back wall – even as you look at the camera.

2

TAKE A DIGITAL BREAK BEFORE YOUR MEETING. AND CHECK YOUR BREATHING

Studies show that our breath changes when we check digital devices. It speeds up and becomes more shallow, which starts to trigger anxiety. When we are nervous, like before a big meeting, it is natural to seek out our phones for some distraction. But this is an unhelpful habit if you want to remain calm and confident. Before your big meetings, unplug from digital devices, even if for only five minutes.

Try these techniques to relax you, and your breathing: Look up, turn your head around you and take in your surroundings. Relax your jaw and tongue. Breathe out deeply. Then focus on your body. First, your outer senses – the clothes on your skin, the air on your face, your eyebrows on your forehead. Next, consider your inner senses. Your guts, blood vessels, heart, lungs. Feel your breath going around your body. Don't do anything to change how your body feels; just pay gentle attention. As you focus on your body and breath, your mind will quieten.

TOP TIPS ON MASTERING YOUR VIRTUAL VOICE

3

LISTEN WITH EMPATHY TO UNLOCK ENGAGEMENT. ANTICIPATE WHAT AND WHEN YOUR AUDIENCE NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU

Our selfie-regarding culture has driven a need for likes and approval; it sucks life out of your voice, and your confidence as a speaker. You may become small and quiet as a speaker because you are censoring yourself, or worse you become loud and show off because you're desperate for approval.

Neither approach will make you stand out and the audience will switch off to someone who is too quiet or who shows off. Focus on presenting calm, centred, self-aware confidence. Contribute to the conversation, don't compete for a voice in it. Take these steps:

- Answer the question 'How can I help?' not 'How can I win?'
- Always consider the potential reward for people you are speaking to – your contribution should move the conversation forward.
- Consider what quality you want to show up with? Confidence? Humour? Kindness? Or a mixture of all of them? If you want your audience to be excited about something, you need to inject excitement into your voice.
- Start to map in your mind what you want the audience to feel at each point in the talk, as it will impact what you say and how you say it.

4

PROJECT YOUR VOICE

Confident, expressive voices benefit from boldness in the delivery. Onscreen you want gentle projection where even as your eyes look at the camera, your voice travels to the furthest wall. As you would when throwing a ball, use your whole body to project your voice.

Connect to your core, breathe in and throw, or project your voice in the same way. Try this exercise "Pull the sound in" to give your voice power and energy:

1. Find a quiet space. Stand up.
2. Attach an imaginary piece of string to the furthest wall, or to a point out of the window. Pull the string into your stomach with your left arm as you say 'Monday'.
3. Then pull in the string with your right arm and say 'Tuesday'.
4. Keep going through the days of the week, swapping arms each time. Notice how it ups your power. The more volume you want, the further you reach and then pull that piece of string.

Notice how when you use your hands – your voice power and energy kicks in.

TOP TIPS ON MASTERING YOUR VIRTUAL VOICE

5

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER – IT WILL BRING YOUR VOICE TO LIFE

A good speaker absorbs the energy of the room, asks for questions and uses what the audience gives them all the time to keep the ideas alive. Even if you are on stage presenting, you can have a conversation with minds and bodies, as much as voices. A confident speaker reads the feeling in the room and the mood of the audience to know what to say next and how to say it.

Use these pointers for listening to improve your active listening:

- Download what you already know: Confirm the expectations you had of that audience. Are they as relaxed, or formal as you expected?
- Notice what surprises you: Consider what elements you didn't expect? Take questions and be open to some surprises.
- Have empathy, and tune into what your audience really needs – look for the reactions. Do they need more energy, more detail? Pay attention to the body language of your audience.
- Enact generative listening: Tune in and deliver your planned speech, but aim to give the extra responses or information that answer their in-the-moment questions too.

FURTHER READING

Visit www.carolinegoyder.com

Watch Caroline Goyder's Ted Talk

[The Secret to Speaking with Confidence](#)

Listen to Caroline's advice on the

["Awesome at Your Job" Podcast](#)

Listen to Caroline on the "Calmer You" Podcast

[Find Your Voice and Get Out Of Your Voice](#)