Self Perception Report - Sample Report

Created on Jan 14, 2026

1. Introduction

Conversation shapes relationships and culture.

The way we talk and how well we listen has both immediate and lasting consequences for the way in which the people around us think, feel and act.

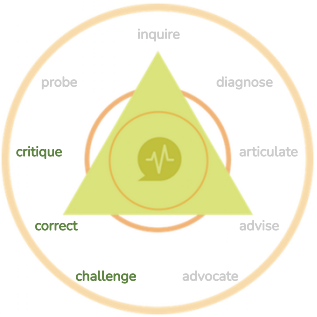
Because talk comes easily to us, our habitual use of it can produce amazing, creative and life-changing outcomes; it can also at other times produce unintended, undesirable and unproductive effects.

SoundWave explores how we talk and how we craft conversation in ways that are distinctive but observable through the frame of nine 'verbal strategies' or 'voices', all of which are necessary and relevant in conversation and all of which we need at one time or another.

SoundWave will help you to become more deeply aware of how you talk, affording you greater control over the way you create conversation, form relationships and effect the cultures in which you live and work. Own the conversation.

2. Your top three voices

The SoundWave model below shows you your top three SoundWave 'voices'. A definition of each voice is described in table 1. The full details of your report follows:



The SoundWave model

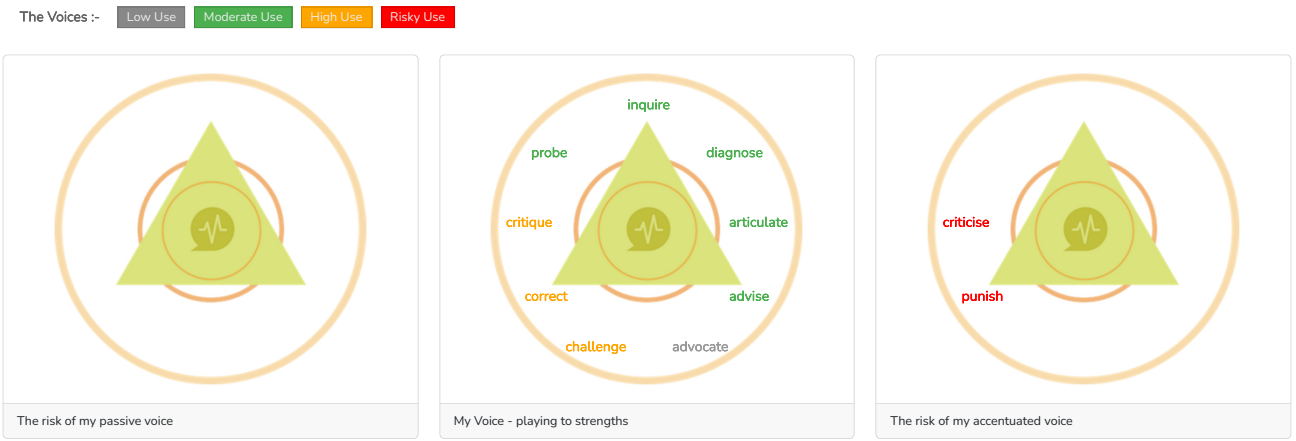
THE VOICES	THEIR DEFINITIONS
Articulate for influence	To describe, summarise or clarify in a neutral, matter-of-fact way
Advocate for impact	To strongly express an opinion for or against something
Advise for credibility	To offer a course of action or way of thinking based on experience or expertise
Challenge for change	To assert an opposing or different point of view to promote alternative thinking or action
Correct for improvement	To correct someone by (re)-stating a requirement, standard, rule or boundary
Critique for judgement	To evaluate objectively providing the positives and negatives in a situation or idea
Probe for insight	To question more deeply, going beyond what's given and teasing out what's hidden
Inquire for engagement	To ask open, exploratory questions in order to discover more
Diagnose for solutions	To question logically in order to understand the cause, symptom or origin of something

Table 1: The voices

3. Comparing yourself to others

Amazing things happen between people when the quality of their conversation is good. People feel enabled and respected and so their own creativity, collaboration, productivity and engagement all increase. Being really effective as a communicator takes self-awareness and skill. Your SoundWave results below provide the insight necessary to help you in this endeavour, letting you know how you think you talk.

With your various combinations of high, medium and low scores, how might you be heard by others? Click on any of the voices in the SoundWave models below to reveal details.



The three dials above provide an overview of your results. Accentuated and Passive scores (dials right and left above) are considered potentially risky and are highlighted in red in the two outer dials. In the centre dial, mid-range scores against SoundWaves international norms are highlighted in green (indicating that the voice is used at about the same level as most other people use it), high scores in orange (indicating that you may well use this voice a lot) and low scores in grey (indicating that you may use this voice less frequently).

The centre dial is the primary place to focus. This shows how you might naturally express yourself. It represents your strategy for success. It is this combination of verbal strategies (or ‘voices’) that has facilitated your career to date. A close examination of this set of results will help you to better understand how you interact and build relationships with others and what you need to do to be increasingly effective.

The dial to the right highlights risks that may arise when you overuse or accentuate a voice. Overuse is not just 'more volume' but a qualitative change in the nature of your communication, from 'inquire' to 'interrogate' for example. You are likely to be aware of the fact that you might sometimes gravitate to the use of these riskier voices. Do you understand what 'triggers' their use? Do you understand their impact? The use of the accentuated voice appears here only where you have scored in the top 15% of results against SoundWave's international norms.

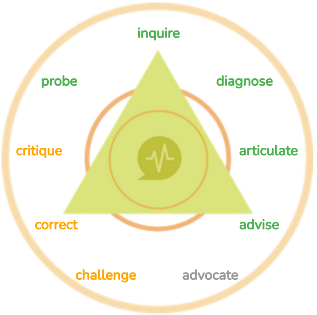
The circle to the left highlights the risks that exist from those voices that you use less often. Not using a voice when the situation calls for it can cause others to form impressions (rightly or wrongly) of who you are. Not articulating enough, for example, may lead you to be considered ‘peripheral’ to events whilst failing to critique may lead others to see you as lacking in rigour. You may well be aware that you use some voices at a lower level than others. Do you know why? Are you clear about their effects? The use of the passive voice appears here only where you have scored in the bottom 15% of results against SoundWave’s international norms.

4. Playing to your strengths

4.1 Your voice

This chart represents your own view of how you think you talk. The chart shows your preferences in using each of the nine voices in the SoundWave model. Strong scores against our international norms (the thousand's of people who have completed SoundWave) are highlighted in orange, scores in green indicate moderate use and scores in grey indicate low use.

With your various combinations of high, medium and low scores, how might you be heard by others? Click on any of the voices in the SoundWave model below to reveal details.



My Voice - playing to strengths

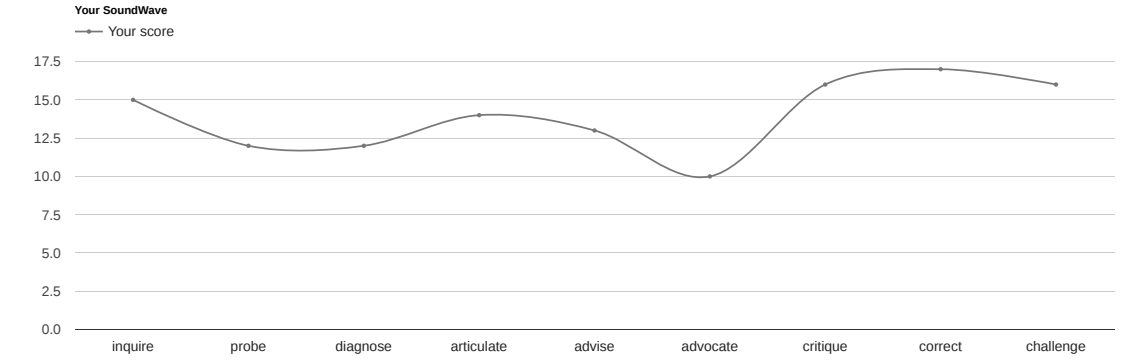
THE VOICES	THEIR DEFINITIONS
Articulate for influence	The neutral and judicious tone serves to facilitate conversation between people. The quality of narrating, summarising, explaining (but not arguing) holds attention and invites others into the discussion making it easier for people to build on each others contributions. Quietly assertive, it helps one to gain influence. It makes others' feel involved and included
Advocate for impact	Mustering arguments to take a position is an important leadership characteristic. When debate is necessary, advocacy seeks to persuade and to win-over. Taking a position enables others to do the same and so can help to clear the ground for robust discussion. To advocate is to have impact. It makes others' feel stirred to action and able themselves to take a position
Advise for credibility	When people seek the expertise or experience of others they are searching for advice and direction. Good advice offers that and leaves the recipient free to accept, adapt or reject it. In any case, the provider gains immediate credibility. It makes others' feel assured
Challenge for change	Being prepared to point out the assumptions or limitations in what someone else is saying, thinking or doing provokes change. It helps teams and individuals to consider and break free of habits and creates an environment in which differences can be valued and heard. It makes others feel variously unsettled yet motivated
Correct for improvement	A well measured corrective voice helps to maintain standards and expectations and used well sets people on the path to improvement. This is especially useful, for example, where a return from investment in process improvement is needed, or where health and safety standards must be maintained. Used skilfully, it can make others' feel secure
Critique for judgement	Reaching good decisions requires clarity and objectivity of thought. Critique provides this evaluative need. It helps people to avoid jumping to conclusions and creates space for discernment. It enables good judgement. It makes others' feel reflective, provoked and responsible
Probe for insight	Good probing generates insights. It's intuitive and investigative stance leaves no stone unturned in its search for the truth. Probing is particular and exacting in its style. It makes others' feel alert
Inquire for engagement	Where the context needs opening up or when more information is needed, inquiry is vital. Inquiry is tolerant and accepting of all and any ideas. It is vital in strategy formation and without it there is no innovation. Skilful enquiry makes others' feel engaged
Diagnose for solutions	Logical and analytical, the voice 'to diagnose', leads people tightly down the path of a search for causes, answers and solutions. Without it, we are left tackling symptoms and prolonging problems. It makes others feel supported and connected

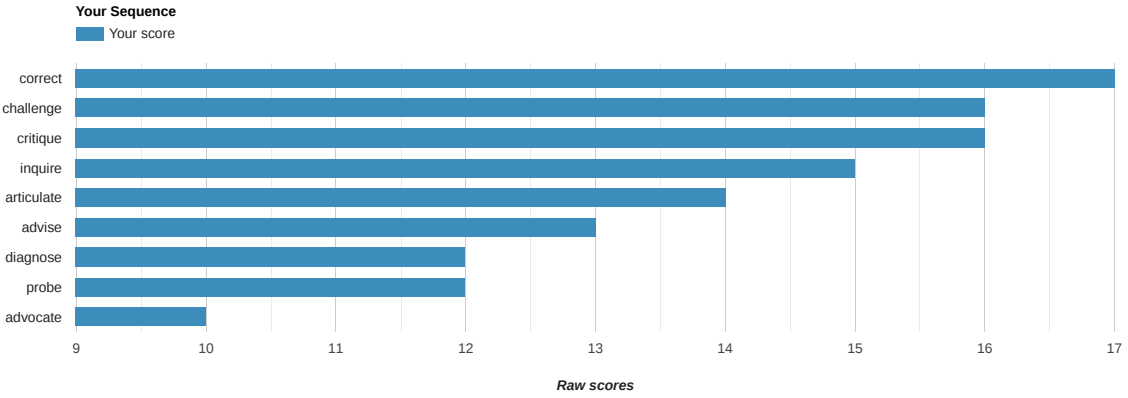
Table 2: The skilful use of verbal strategies

4.2 Your voice - the force and dynamic of your expression

The line-chart (below left), shows your raw scores for each of the nine SoundWave voices and depicts your ‘SoundWave signature’ It reveals how you think you talk. Some of this may even be your 'self-talk'. The bar chart (below right) shows where you might begin with your talk and where you might end up. It reveals a possible pattern or sequence of use, from the strongest preferences at the beginning to the lesser used voices at the tail.

Does your profile have many voices scoring at a similar level indicating a broad range of use or does it have a few high and a few low scoring voices indicating a reliance on fewer voices for success?



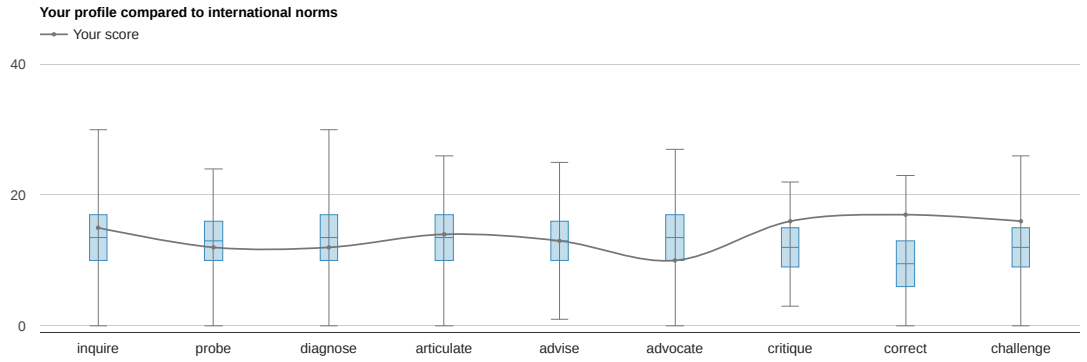


4.3 Your voice - spiky or smooth?

Some SoundWave profiles have a moderate amount of variation in the scores. We call these, 'smooth profiles'. They tend to track the mid-range of scores as illustrated by the vertical bars in the chart below. Other SoundWaves, have what we call, 'spiky profiles', with some voices scoring above the mid-range and others scoring below. There are advantages and disadvantages to both types of profile and of course, most SoundWaves are a mixture of the two. Smooth profiles tend reveal a more 'socially acceptable' style of communication since they come closer to the way most people speak most often. People with this type of profile may ‘fit in’ more easily. Spiky profiles offer a more distinctive communication style. These individuals might stand out more clearly from the crowd. Are you spiky or smooth?

Look carefully at the chart to see where your scores might be on the cusp between a mid-range score and either a high or a low score. You can then consider how a small change in your use of a voice might affect how you could be heard

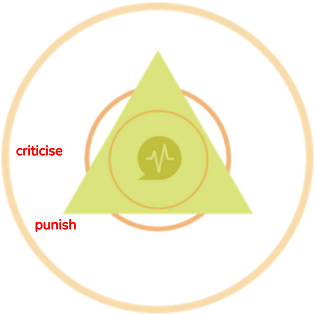
The chart below shows your own profile (the curved line) compared to how most other people use each of the voices (the blue bars)



5. Managing your risks

5.1 The risk of my accentuated voice

The Soundwave questionnaire identifies where you might accentuate the use of any particular voice. This may be because you deliberately decide to shift from your ordinary and everyday use of that voice, to a qualitatively different but connected voice, such as from inquiry to interrogation. At times you may consciously decide to make such a shift because you judge that the situation demands it; at other times, your shift may be the result of being 'triggered' by the actions of someone else that you find hard to handle. The use of the accentuated voice appears here because you have scored in the top 15% of results compared to other people. Click on any of the voices in the SoundWave model below to reveal details.



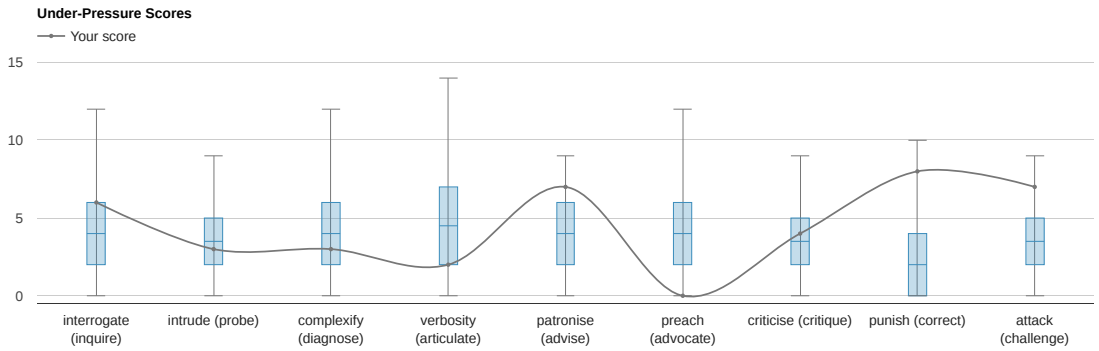
The risk of my accentuated voice

THE VOICES	THE RISK
Verbose (Articulate)	To talk endlessly without a clear narrative such that listeners become lost
Preach (Advocate)	To evangelise by repeating arguments in insistent ways
Patronise (Advise)	To speak to someone as if you know better than they do
Attack (Challenge)	To oppose or work forcefully against someone or something
Punish (Correct)	To impose a penalty for a perceived fault, offence or violation
Criticise (Critique)	To point out the failures and faults in others
Intrude (Probe)	To journey into the private sphere of individuals without their consent
Interrogate (Inquire)	To repeatedly and intensively ask questions without pausing to rest
Complexify (Diagnose)	To produce theories and explanations which seem plausible but which are not relevant

Table 3: The accentuated form of voice

5.2 - The risk when under pressure

A sub-set of questions in the SoundWave questionnaire seeks to identify how aware you are that you might accentuate (overuse) a voice. Take a look at the chart below to see if and where this might occur. If your score is above the blue box, this may indicate an increased risk of accentuating that voice



5.3 When to accentuate your voice

Accentuating your voice carries some risk; it's not often that people feel comfortable when they are criticised or punished, for example. Nonetheless, there are circumstances in which not using the accentuated voice (albeit in small doses!) may result in a worse situation. In which case, there is risk of a different kind. The secret is to know when and when not to use this accentuated voice; it's a case of being 'sensitive'

THE VOICES	WHEN MIGHT I ACCENTUATE A VOICE?
Verbose (Articulate)	When I need to 'buy some time' as in a negotiation, for example
Preach (Advocate)	When momentum is slow and needs an injection of enthusiasm and pressure
Patronise (Advise)	When it is critical that others really understand
Attack (Challenge)	When change is needed and has not so far been forthcoming
Punish (Correct)	When failure to observe the standard or expectation has or may cause harm
Criticise (Critique)	When tough decisions are to be made and clarity on options is needed
Intrude (Probe)	When the truth is not forthcoming
Interrogate (Inquire)	When the context needs broad exploration such as in strategy formation or deep conflic
Complexify (Diagnose)	When the root cause is elusive and multiple paths of exploration are needed

Table 4: When might I accentuate a voice?

5.4 - The risk of my passive voice

Many people make far less use of some voices than of others and some people have SoundWave profiles that show a marked tendency to use many of the voices at a relatively low level. Where this is the result of a conscious effort to listen rather than to talk, it may well be a good strategy. If however, the low use is a result of a lack of awareness, confidence or skill in the use of a voice, then this may result in missed opportunities for influence and impact. The use of the passive voice appears below only because you have scored in the bottom 15% of results compared to other people

How aware are you of under-using some of the voices? What effects might this have on those around you? Click on any of the voices in the SoundWave model below to reveal details

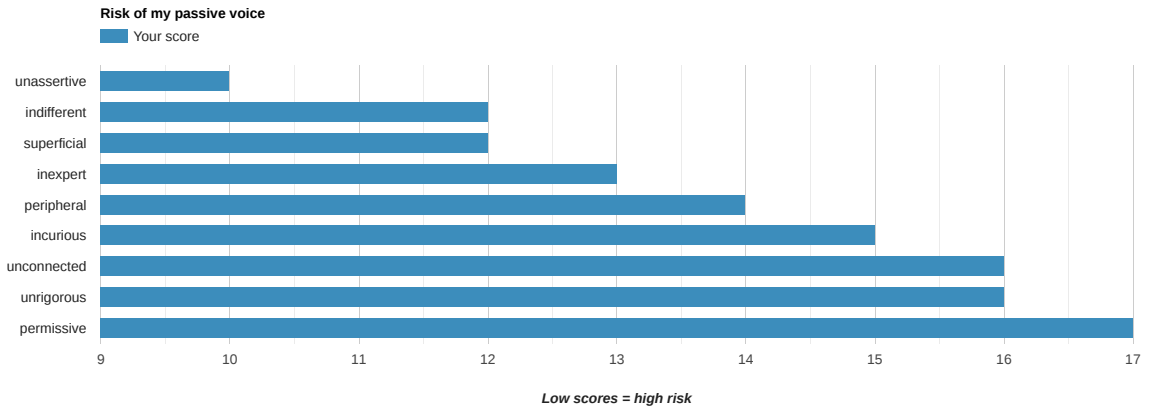
The risk of my passive voice

THE VOICES	THE RISK
Peripheral (Articulate)	To concede the space for facilitating conversation and holding influence
Unassertive (Advocate)	To limit the possibility for personal impact
Inexpert (Advise)	To miss the opportunity to support or direct others
Unconnected (Challenge)	To allow poor or conventional thinking or action to hold sway
Permissive (Correct)	To permit an undisciplined approach in situations where discipline matters
Unrigorous (Critique)	To limit the possibility of identifying useful from useless, good from bad
Indifferent (Probe)	To accept what is given as the truth without question
Incurious (Inquire)	To limit the opportunity to go beyond what is obviously known
Superficial (Diagnose)	To reach conclusions without adequate force of logic or reasoning

Table 5: The passive voice

5.5 - When not to be passive

As a rule of thumb, a broad range of voices, together with achieving a balance between listening and talking, is a good strategy. Having voices absent from your repertoire will create difficulties in some situations and is likely to create perceptions of you that may be false. For example, a limited use of inquiry may lead others to consider you to be incurious. The bar chart (below left) shows your voices in sequence from the least to the most used. The table (below right), outlines situations in which a greater use of any of those voices might be wise. Again, it's a case of sensitivity, of knowing when.



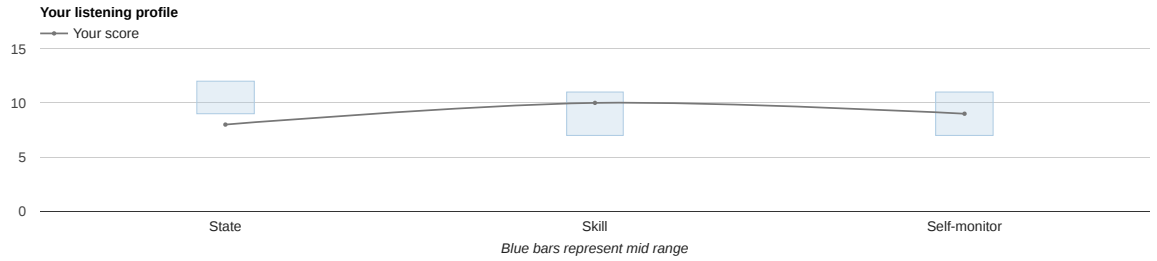
THE VOICES	THE RISK
Peripheral (Articulate)	When the story-line needs to be made clearer and more participation is needed
Unassertive (Advocate)	When leadership is required, debate is needed and commitment is to be tested
Inexpert (Advise)	When others need to be guided and guidance is absent
Unconnected (Challenge)	When much of the same old thinking or action predominates
Permissive (Correct)	When risks are being overlooked and/or standards not met
Unrigorous (Critique)	When issues haven't been fully evaluated and poor judgement may be made
Indifferent (Probe)	When much of what is true is not being voiced
Incurious (Inquire)	When the subject and its context has not been well explored
Superficial (Diagnose)	When there is disappointment at the the persistent nature of problems

Table 6: When not to be passive

6. Listening

6.1 SoundWave - listening dimensions

Skilful dialogue depends fundamentally on the quality of our listening as well as on the conscious use of our voice. SoundWave seeks to identify how well and in what way you believe you listen. The chart (below left) shows your scores against the mid-range of SoundWave's results on the three dimensions of listening. The table (below right) explains how we have defined these three dimensions. The data presents a base-line against which SoundWave 360 results can prove to be particularly useful.



DIMENSIONS OF LISTENING	
State	The physiological and psychological state of mind of an individual as a pre-condition for listening well. Being present, attentive, calm, centred and relaxed
Skill	The ability of an individual to listen well as measured by re-call, accuracy, empathic mirroring and concentration
Self-monitor	The extent to which an individual is aware of their own capacity to listen well and of their ability to self-monitor and regulate their skill and state

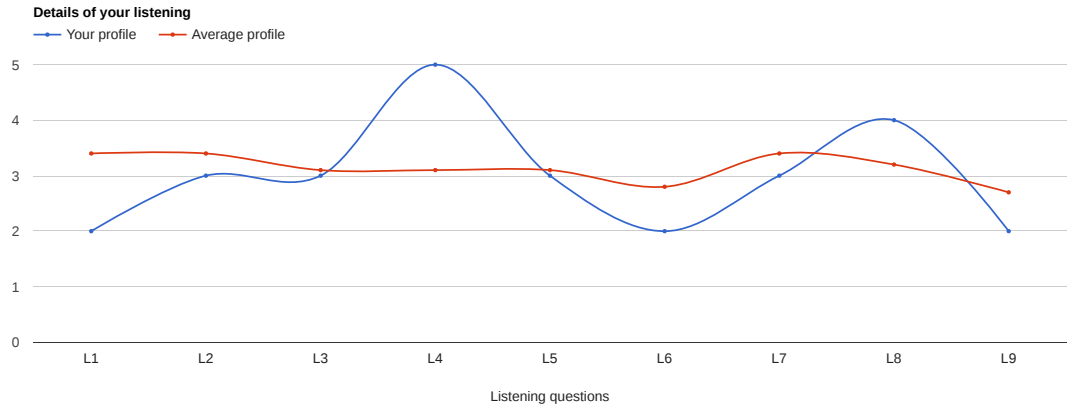
Table 7: Dimensions of listening

Our research tells us that a there are no statistically significant correlations between any of the listening dimensions and any of the voices. So no matter what SoundWave profile you have, you can be a good or a poor listener.

6.2 The details of your listening

We talk at about 350 words a minute and process words at three times that pace. It's no wonder that it takes practice to become a really effective listener. The chart (below left) shows your results for each of the nine listening questions within SoundWave and plots those against the simple mean average of those people who have completed SoundWave. The table (below right) lists the questions that you were asked.

In what ways does your listening need to improve?



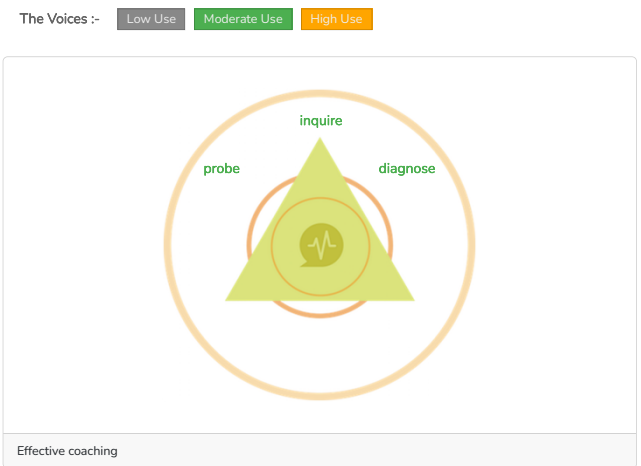
LISTENING QUESTIONS
L.1: When I listen, I can maintain a state of attentiveness even when there are significant distractions around me
L.2: Being calm, so that I can give others my full attention when listening, comes easily to me
L.3: When I listen, I can maintain a state of attentiveness even when there are significant distractions within me
L4: My sense is that I listen well
L5: My sense is that I find the right balance between listening and talking
L6: My sense is that I show I've listened by the way I adjust my point of view
L.7: I am aware that I can detach myself from the conversation to see and hear all perspectives
L.8: I am aware that I listen with patience at the pace and rhythm of the speaker
L.9: I am aware that I am comfortable with the silence between myself and others

Table 8 - The Soundwave listening questions

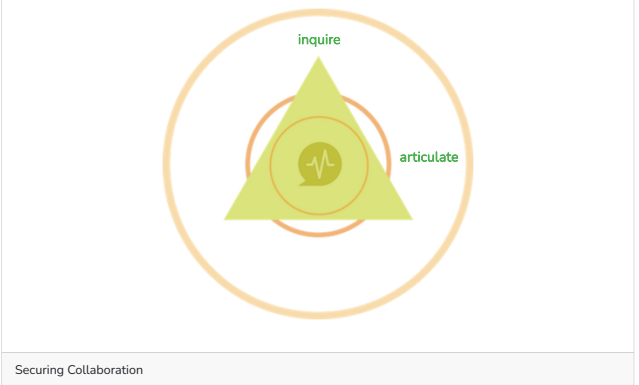
7. Role implications

From our research with SoundWave, we have selected just four role types often demanded by organisations and illustrated the pattern of voice that corresponds most closely with the realisation of that role. Your own SoundWave results are overlaid on these preferred voices. Our research on 'coaching' and 'maintaining standards' is empirically derived; that on 'collaboration' and the 'expert leader' derives from comparative studies with particular psychometric instruments. What voices would you need to (de)emphasise to fully play these roles?

As you consider the voices that are required in the roles described in section 7 below, ask yourself how important it is to really tune in and listen well in each of these roles. Where in your own role do you need to be listening more fully? What difference would it make?



Effective coaching



Securing Collaboration

7.1 Effective coaching

Our research shows that professional coaches exhibit a pattern of voice which emphasises the use of the ‘asking' and minimises the use of the 'telling' and 'suggesting' voices. Our research also tells us that people who are not professional coaches and who have more modest preferences for the 'asking' voices, can coach well, so long as they do not draw too heavily on the 'telling' and 'suggesting' voices as substitution. What voices would you need to develop to become better at coaching?

7.2 Securing Collaboration

Our research shows that the voices of inquiry and articulation, used together are helpful in securing collaboration. Articulation, with its quality of invitation, serves to create the space for dialogue while inquiry fuels the conversation through its questioning. The quality of listening needs to be of a very high order with the collaborators building on what they are hearing one another say to look for new solutions or approaches. What voices would you need to develop to become better at securing the conditions for collaboration?

The Voices :- Low Use Moderate Use High Use

Maintaining standards

The expert leader

7.3 Maintaining standards

Our research shows that the voices of correct and probe are critical to ensuring that appropriate corrective actions are understood and taken. The corrective voice seeks to maintain standards whilst the probing voice serves to pinpoint where the source of the problem might be. Moving backwards and forwards between the two voices helps to 'hold gains' made. What voices would you need to develop to become better at maintaining standards?

7.4 The expert leader

Our research shows that the voices of challenge, advise, advocate and critique are dominant where leadership requires people who have the answers. This is vital in time-pressured situations or where genuine technical excellence is at a premium. The quality of listening centres first and foremost on checking that others have understood the expert position. The tendency for the use of these voices is also a feature of entrepreneurial leaders. What voices would you need to develop to become better at being an expert leader?

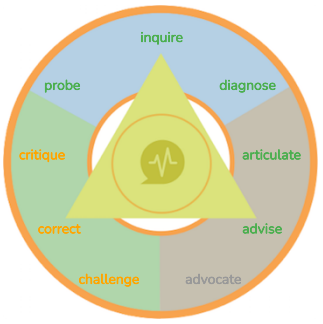
What are the demands of your role? What voices do you need to develop to fulfil your potential?

8. SoundWave - ask, suggest or tell

8.1 Your dominant cluster

This report has focused on an analysis of your voices. Below we invite you to come up a level and to consider whether or not you have a clear orientation towards one or other of the three clusters in which the SoundWave voices sit. The final paragraph in this section ranks your voices within the cluster and offers a short and snappy explanation of that ranking

key :- asking telling suggesting



The SoundWave model above shows your SoundWave results broken down into the three clusters of Asking, Telling and Suggesting as shown

1. The telling voices
2. The asking voices
3. The suggesting voices

It appears that you use the telling voices in the following order

1. correct
2. challenge
3. critique

This pattern of voices begins with the correctional voice and then raises the game to invite challenge before offering a final critique. This is something of an improvement strategy particularly if the dialogue is managed inducing self-reflection on the part of the receiver - ‘This is wrong!; how could it be better?; How did you do?”. The cluster requires skill and sensitivity.

9. Making sure that you 'own the conversation'

Hopefully this report has given you a good deal to think about and will help you to extend your repertoire and effectiveness as a communicator, a creator of productive dialogue and a leader. Having insight into which voices you tend to use, and which you may under-use or even over-use, is an essential step.

So where should you go from here to develop further competence in 'owning the conversation'?

Validation: You need to corroborate the picture that emerges from your profile, since it has been derived from your own view of yourself. You might obtain both a reality check and further contextualisation of your results by discussing them with a trusted colleague, who works with you closely and is willing to give you a candid view. You can get systematic feedback from more people by using the SoundWave 360 and 360+, which is designed specifically to tell you how you are in fact heard by others.

Reflection: Use SoundWave as a lens through which to reflect on your actual conversations with others. You can use it both to review interactions and to prepare for them, whether they take the form of meetings, telephone calls or exchanges of email. Reflection can help you to recognise the recurring patterns in your interactions, when you use particular voices, and what happens when you do. This report describes your general pattern, but in practice you need to be sensitive to the particular sub-patterns and combinations of voices that you use as you shift from one voice to another.

Practice: The vital step is to practise your use of the voices. Experiment and refine until you have developed a ready awareness of when particular voices are appropriate, an ‘ear’ for whether they are having the intended effect, and the capability to modulate your use of words, tone, volume and movement from one voice to another. The use of conversation is a dynamic skill, the underpinning competence for all interactions. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is best developed through practice in real dialogue.

Personal coaching: Working with someone who is already a skilful user is the single best way for you to develop the skill and sensitivity required to become competent when you need to be, ‘in the moment with your communication.'' Our Accredited Practitioners are trained to identify and provide the coaching and training that will be most useful for you to develop your SoundWave. Our experience is that close one-to-one support is the single most effective method for acquiring the communication skills that you need to meet the challenges of today. The table below provides you with some initial ideas for developing your voice.

DEVELOPING YOUR VOICE		
VOICES	WAYS OF STRENGTHENING	WAYS OF REGULATING
Advocate for impact	Focus on your own strong feelings about the issue under discussion; verbalise these rather than holding them back, so that others know your views and feelings and can take them into account	Offer your views rather than delivering them. 'I wonder whether it would be a good idea to...' Invite others to develop your starting point rather than doing it all yourself
Advise for credibility	Identify, either through personal reflection or by consulting colleagues, the areas in which you have a particular depth, breadth or quality of experience and know-how. Look to share your distinctive expertise	Ask if the other person would like some advice before you offer it
Articulate for influence	Apply Horn's maxim - Q principle:make your contribution sufficient; say as much as you can. R principle: make your contribution necessary - say no more than you must	Practise writing short summaries, no more than 50 words long, which accurately distil what is being said in a much longer piece of text
Challenge for change	Frame your challenge as a comment on the quality and effectiveness of the discussion, eg 'The assumption that we're making there is...' or ''The problem with the way we're going about this is...'	Count how many times you interrupt or talk over others. Develop the sensitivity required to stop yourself
Critique for judgement	Before any important or high-stakes decision is finalised, go – and invite others to go – deliberately through the logic which supports that decision, actively seeking out differences of perspective, contradiction and counter-evidence	Listen for negativity in your language (and watch for its effects when others perceive it). It is easy for the critiquing voice to focus too heavily on problems, obstacles and reasons why not. Seek to balance this tendency
Correct for improvement	Ask yourself what standards or expectations your role makes you responsible for enforcing. Make sure you can be explicit about those standards and expectations	Don't keep going on and on about the same episode, since this can be utterly demoralising. Call attention to the problem. Spell out what is required. Check that's been understood. Draw a line under the episode and give all concerned the opportunity to move on
Inquire for engagement	Stay with inquiry for longer than you ordinarily would. Avoid the temptation to shift quickly towards conclusions or action	Reflect and solicit feedback on the impact of your Inquiry. How does your inquiring make others feel? Acknowledged? Involved? Respected? Cornered? Exposed? Belittled? And how does it make them react and behave? Productively or not?
Diagnose for solutions	While listening and taking part in meetings, build up a model of how the issue under discussion actually works in practice. Make a diagram or draw a picture which represents inputs and outputs, flows and obstacles, causes and consequences. Offer your view as a possible explanation, inviting your colleague/s to take part in developing a better shared understanding	Invite others to input facts and data which will serve to 'ground' and provide a reality-check on your models and interpretations
Probe for insight	If you feel uncomfortable about asking a probing question, or are concerned that it might come across as inappropriately intrusive, then explain why you are asking. You can legitimate probing by explaining how it relates to bigger issues	Show that you are aware of how it can feel to be on the receiving end of a difficult probing question by first 'inviting permission' to ask it: 'May I ask a very direct question...?'

Table 9 - Developing Your Voice

Thank you for having spent some time exploring your SoundWave. If you would like some further help in developing the quality of your dialogue, then please take advantage of the resources available to you in your personal SoundWave dashboard or contact us on https://soundwave.global - The SoundWave Team.