

Effect Communication: *On The Telephone*

Audio Communication Workshops



FREQUENCY THEATRE



The Situation:

We use our phones more than ever, but when it comes to making an actual phone call, there are many people who find the experience problematic.

42% of people surveyed by the UK's Counselling Directory said that they 'hate' making phone calls. (1)

In particular, it has been widely reported that the younger workforce are more likely to be anxious about speaking on the phone. (2)

Despite the rise of written digital communication, phone calls are of course a crucial part of most businesses. The ability to communicate on the phone with as much confidence and skill as communicating in person or by the written word, is a bonus for any company.

In whatever sector we work in, making phone calls is an everyday task, but one which can have great implications for the company as a whole.

For some, seeking to become more confident on the phone may be about overcoming a major problem; for others, it is a case of wishing to improve their vocal communication skills, which can come under so much scrutiny when using a form of purely audio based communication.

1) <http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/blog/2017/09/11/telephone-anxiety/>

2) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/26/whatsapp-phone-calls-smartphone-messaging-millennials>

The Solution:

Effect Communication: Speaking On The Telephone Workshops, run by **Frequency Theatre**, enhance speaking skills and hone them for use specifically on the phone. They are **fun & play filled** sessions which will have acute positive effects on any workforce.

As an audio theatre company, Frequency Theatre's area of expertise is in the **pure spoken word**. The art of conveying meaning through sound alone is a delicate skill, and one which can be demonstrated most engagingly by using audio theatre techniques. Each participant will work with a microphone in order to gain mic. skills and basic voice acting skills, both of which will be applied within the workshop to work-based situations.

The training given in the workshops will improve:

Efficiency

Skilful communication means effective communication. The aim of any communication is to transmit your intended message as clearly as possible. We can improve this through paying attention to articulation; suitability of voice tone; using effective language.

Control

If we communicate, we usually do so because we want to have an effect on the other person. Perhaps paradoxically, we can only have an effect on others if we in turn allow ourselves to be affected by the other person. For this reason, we need to be as adept at listening to the details of the other person's voice and words as we are at speaking ourselves. Once we are able to quickly pick up upon the state and intention of the other person, we are able to respond in a way which will not only be appropriate to the conversation, but will manoeuvre the conversation in the direction we wish it to go.

Presentation

Whilst it's not a great idea to be overly self-conscious on the phone, when representing your organisation, it is naturally important to match your 'voice image' to that of your company. Having a 'voice image' can be simply maintaining a polite, calm and business-like approach to how you speak; or it can be more specific to the company in question.

Confidence

Real life spoken conversations never follow a script. We might carefully plan how we want a conversation to go, but then be totally thrown off track by what & how the other person speaks to us. By seeing speaking as a game rather than a formula, we are able to move towards a state of being prepared to handle even the most surprising and unwelcome of conversations.

The Workshop:

In advance of the workshop day, all participants will be asked to submit a short voice recording so that the facilitator can plan how to approach the training of each participant.

Timings are approximate and may be changed to suit the needs and schedule of the company.

9am: Group Sound Games

The group will firstly take some time out to simply have fun with sounds through a series of games. All the games will be based around the idea of telling a story purely through sound, and will all rely on the participants working as a group. Skills will be gained in this process, but the main aim of this part of the day is for everyone to simply relax and enjoy experimenting with audio!

10am: Emphasis Placement & Listening

We will firstly explore how ambiguous pieces of text can be spoken in a number of different ways; we will take note of the ways in which subtle tones and tiny changes of inflection can alter the meaning of a sentence. We will record our experiments and discuss how to handle the text in different ways.

The group will then take part in exercises designed to get the participant to communicate through tone and intention alone, without using words. This part of the day will perhaps be the most challenging, but also the most rewarding, as it will lead participants towards using their voices in a more dynamic and controlled way.

The idea of a 'voice image' will also be introduced during the course of these exercises.

11am: Awareness Of Our Words

This is a key section of the day; here we will look at how, even without much use of tone or inflection, the type of words we choose to use will affect our desired conversation outcomes. We will experiment with replacing words, and comparing the effects of the changes of words during mock-phone conversations.

12 noon: Voice Lab

Firstly, there will be a brief group discussion about phone calls. What do people find difficult about them? Of the people in the group who find it a serious problem, which particular part of phone calls do they find most challenging? For others in the group, is it more a case of wishing to promote a certain image over the phone, but wonder how best to do so.

This discussion will be followed by short one to one voice explorations with the facilitator. As the facilitator will have already heard each of the group's voice clips, she will have come prepared with possible techniques to help individuals.

In the case of larger groups, lunch for the participants may start shortly after the discussion ends; each participant will be given an individual time slot within the hour and a half.

1pm: Lunch

2pm: Being Unprepared Is Being Prepared

In this part of the day, we focus on the realities of live conversations, ie. anything can happen. It must be emphasised here that the advice isn't to start a business call without a clue what you want to say! Rather, all the preparation you need is to be prepared to be responsive; this preparation will be taken today.

The idea is to plan ahead what objectives you would like to come from the phone call, and what key pieces of information you need to convey. The path to a great conversation however, is to keep all of these pieces of information in mind, whilst fitting them into whatever the conversation actually turns out to be. Much like driving a car, we of course need to know how to drive it, but once we get on the road, our knowledge of how to drive will be pretty useless if we are unable to react appropriately to all the different variables which may crop up on our journeys.

Therefore, in this section of the day, we will be trying out improvisation exercises, alongside practicing difficult work phone calls.

3pm: Basic Mic. Technique, or How To Speak On The Phone With Controlled Power

This is the polish of the day. We've thankfully moved away from the 1950s ideal 'telephone manner'. Nevertheless, creating a good sound on the telephone by how we breathe and articulate will make us feel happier about the sound of our own voices, and therefore more confident on the phone.



3:30pm: Executing The Skills

The final part of the day will be for the participants to read, rehearse and record a short audio play! This will combine lots of the skills explored during the day, and will also encourage the participants to be more adventurous with their voices.

Participants will also be encouraged to think about how being a voice actor approaching a character is very much like being an individual taking on a 'voice image' on behalf of a workplace.

5pm: Finish

After the workshop

Each participant will receive either an audio file (or a hard copy on a CD if preferred) of some of the exercises they took part in during the day.

Additionally, all the participants will get a copy of the radio play they performed as a company (which will be edited along with music & sound effects by the facilitator after the workshop day)... which perhaps the rest of the company would like to listen to as well!

How to book the workshop:

Simply email Bethany Sharp via
bsfrequencytheatre@gmail.com

The price for a day long, group workshop is £400.00 *

This price includes; payment for the facilitator; the use of Frequency Theatre recording equipment & other supplies; payment for post-workshop editing; a minimum of 10% to go to Frequency Theatre for the creation of new plays.

When booking:

***Please state the number of participants. The maximum for the stated schedule is 20 participants, however larger numbers can be catered for/different schedules can be devised depending on the needs of the company. £400 is the day rate for one Lead Facilitator.**

It is preferred that the Frequency Theatre facilitator will come to your company's premises to conduct the workshop; should this not be possible, please state this in the email so that other arrangements may be made.



The Company:

Frequency Theatre produces audio drama, and is committed to delivering each and every piece to you for free. All our plays are new writing, and with most no more than around 20 minutes in length, they are perfect for a short, theatrical escape from your normal day.

Audio theatre has been part of the dramatic landscape since the invention of the radio, and it has experienced an ever growing revival through the availability of digital media.

A wide variety of plays can be downloaded or played directly on our website, or you can subscribe to our podcast feed via iTunes and have your plays delivered to you upon release. Frequency plays can be listened to anywhere, anytime, and for absolutely free.

Since its beginnings in 2012, Frequency Theatre has worked with over a wide range of creatives including award winning playwrights & BBC alumni, to produce over eighty-five digital audio plays.

Frequency Theatre is proud for keeping making all its plays as accessible as possible. **At least 10% of all corporate workshop fees will go towards making new, free to listen to, Frequency Theatre plays.**

The Facilitator:

Bethany Sharp is the Creative Producer and co-founder of Frequency Theatre. She also works as an arts administrator, as a playwright and as a character comedian. In 2017 she was shortlisted as a finalist for Out Of Joint's WiT Award for her play TIN GHOST. Bethany holds a BA in Philosophy and Theology from the University of London.

Feedback On Frequency Theatre Workshops

“I had a very good time and I have learnt a lot which I can use in the future”

“... really enjoyed the course”

“I will recommend this course to everybody”

“... the workshop was great fun and very informative”

“The workshop room had a really great vibe to it and I could tell everyone was enjoying it.”



www.frequencytheatre.co.uk

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