



Special Report by Ryan Ottman, Partner at Angleterre Partners LLP

Verbal communication skills are a professional necessity for many, if not most lawyers; yet it is all too easy to reach a plateau of competence and forget about the further development of our strongest communication asset – our voice.

If you are in a court room on a regular basis you will likely have had further training in advocacy skills, and if you find that you are successful in the courtroom it is probable that you will have found a reliable 'voice' that contributes to your success. The same analysis, in respect of the finding a 'voice', holds true when dealing with clients and counterparts outside of the court room; we instinctively find a pitch, tone and cadence suitable for the situation.

That said, if we rely solely on our instincts to tell us what to do with our voice we will be limited to the extent of our instinct in any given situation. Without training and skill building exercises we are at the mercy of instincts (for better or worse), whereas with training we have the distinct advantage of being able to control and know what to expect from our skill set – or Steve Hudson, creator of the Hudson Voice Technique, would say, with appropriate training we would have a 'technique' to go by rather than just the guesswork of our instinct.

The Hudson Voice Technique, as taught by Voice Master International, is a unique approach to voice training. Steve Hudson developed the technique as a result of his many years as a communications trainer and voice-over artist. Hudson's motivation for creating the technique was his desire to help people really communicate by using the voice to entertain, seduce, charm, inform, educate, or inspire any kind of emotion they want to.

CPD for lawyers was invited to experience the Hudson Voice Technique on a first-hand basis by attending a half day intensive course, and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The technique, by Hudson's own reckoning, is not inherently complicated or complex. That said, there is a specific and considered methodology behind the technique that does require real concentration and willingness to reconsider speech patterns and habits that have been ingrained by instincts and repeated use.

Learning the technique is certainly not a free form of exercise; the day unfolds in a logical and planned manner, and although Hudson maintains a very positive atmosphere throughout the afternoon, the course is hard work. Learning the technique is also hard work because it is not passive learning – it is a very active and physical process.

Hudson's experience as a voice-over certainly informs much of the technique, and this is a welcome distinction from many other "classic" communication skills courses we have been on over the years.

The voiceover's professionals sphere is limited to what can be communicated solely through the voice, and the technique, as a result of voiceover experience is truly focused on creating an audio picture that is vibrant, multi-dimensional and memorable.

Hudson's experience and genuine enthusiasm for the human voice enhanced the training session immeasurably. In fact, it is difficult to imagine the technique without Hudson's personal involvement and commitment to the learning process.

There is no question that Hudson believes in the technique and that he has and is a skilled voice. So what did we take away from the Hudson Voice Technique? At the very least we left with a renewed belief in the capacity of the human voice to communicate an audio picture, a picture that is worth 1000 words on paper.

Deployed with thought and skill, the voice will always have an advantage of a letter, email or written submission as a form of effective communication, and the technique reaffirmed this reality.