



Self perception report

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## EXAMPLE X

19.10.2023

## Are you talk-wise?

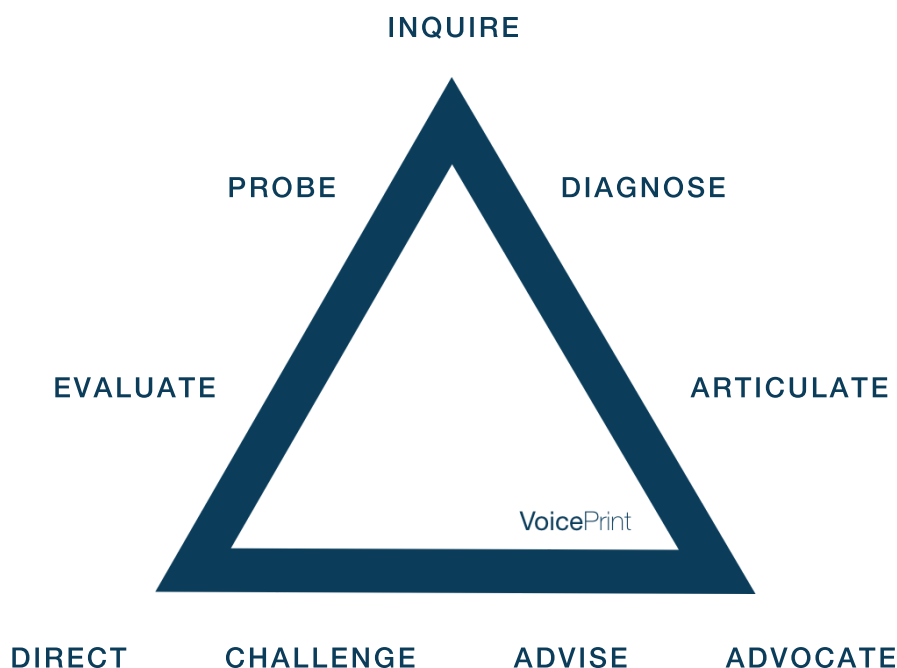
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Do you always talk to good effect? Are you aware of how you talk, and do you recognise what happens when you do?

These are important questions, because talk is our primary form of action. What we say and how we say it have immediate and lasting consequences. Our talk affects how others think, feel and behave. It affects how we ourselves think, feel and behave. So how we talk matters, especially if we want to influence, manage or lead other people.

The problem is that we tend not to pay much attention to how we talk. We usually speak automatically and this sometimes causes unintended, undesirable and unproductive effects, which disrupt the communication process.

VoicePrint is designed to make you more aware, more skilful and more consistently effective. It explores and develops how you use the nine distinctive forms of expression, or 'voices', which are required to be a truly effective communicator.



The VoicePrint self-perception questionnaire helps you to become more aware and more skilful, by translating your sense of your own actions into a profile of how you tend to use these nine different voices. This profile indicates:

- ▲ the shape and completeness of your repertoire;
- ▲ the extent to which you rely on some voices rather than others;
- ▲ your characteristic approach towards moving through your repertoire;
- ▲ whether and how your approach changes under pressure.

Ultimately, your effectiveness and success as a communicator depends on the impact of your voices and the skill and agility with which you use them.

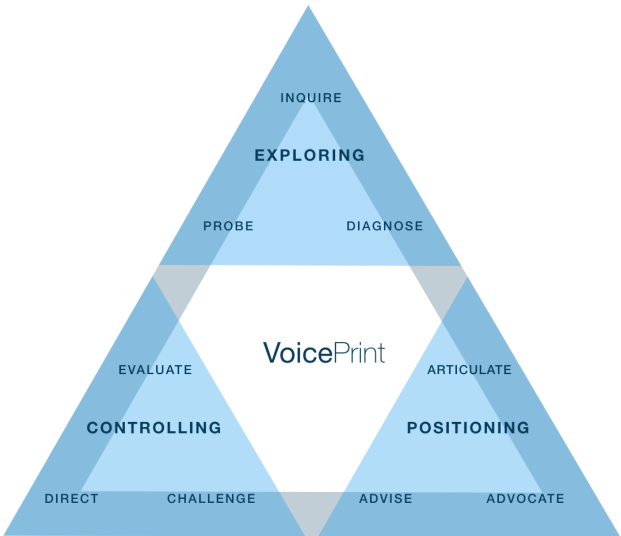
Self-perception alone can never be a reliable indicator of skill or impact, but it provides essential insights into intention and approach. Bringing these into your conscious awareness is the first step towards mastering your voices rather than being mastered by them.

# The Voices

Articulate	To describe and clarify in a precise, neutral, matter-of-fact way. The voice that combines and summarises other inputs
Advocate	To hold a personal position or view, either for or against. The voice that pushes a case or argues for a viewpoint.
Advise	To suggest a course of action or a way of thinking. The voice that offers a proposal or solution.
Challenge	To interrupt in order to improve the quality of what is happening. The voice that re-focuses.
Direct	To call (or recall) attention to a responsibility, required standard or boundary. The voice of authority that demands compliance.
Evaluate	To weigh up thoroughly and objectively, considering both strengths and weaknesses. The voice that deliberates and assesses.
Probe	To dig deeper, going beyond or behind what is already apparent. The voice that calls for futher detail or disclosure.
Inquire	To ask open-mindedly in order to find out more. The voice that seeks to understand others.
Diagnose	To analyse in order to come to an understanding. The voice that seeks to connect and make sense of information.

The nine voices are distinct. Each serves a different purpose

At the same time they belong to three broad clusters, Exploring, Positioning and Controlling, as follows:-



# What impact do your voices have?

## Do your voices work?

This partly depends on choosing the appropriate voices, the ones which provide what the occasion requires. But what matters most is impact. What effect do your voices have on others and on your interactions? The VoicePrint 360 feedback questionnaire is designed to complement your self-perception, because ultimately you need feedback from others to reveal your actual impact. But in the meantime you can start managing the impact of voices by paying closer attention to what happens when they are used. Noticing is at the heart of using the voices in a skilful, timely and effective way.

Productive conversations don't stand still. They flow. They develop. They engage people. They move issues forward. Each of the nine voices contributes to that process in a distinctive way. Here's a handy summary of what you can expect each voice to be doing, if it is working.

## If voices are not working effectively, then conversations get ragged, jagged or stuck

So do the subjects being discussed and the people taking part. Each of the positive voices has a negative counterpart, a voice which has an unhelpful impact, alienating, causing offence and distorting the flow of communication. Talking effectively is a combination of having a sufficient range of voices to know which to use together with the skill to know how and the sensitivity to know when to use them.

## It is vital to remember that talk is internal as well as external.

Your VoicePrint profile shows how you talk to yourself – how you think – as well as being an indicator of how you express yourself to others. You may use some voices more in your own head than you do in conversation with others, and this can cause as well as prevent misunderstandings between people. This is therefore an important aspect of getting to know your own highly distinctive VoicePrint pattern and of managing the impact of your voices.

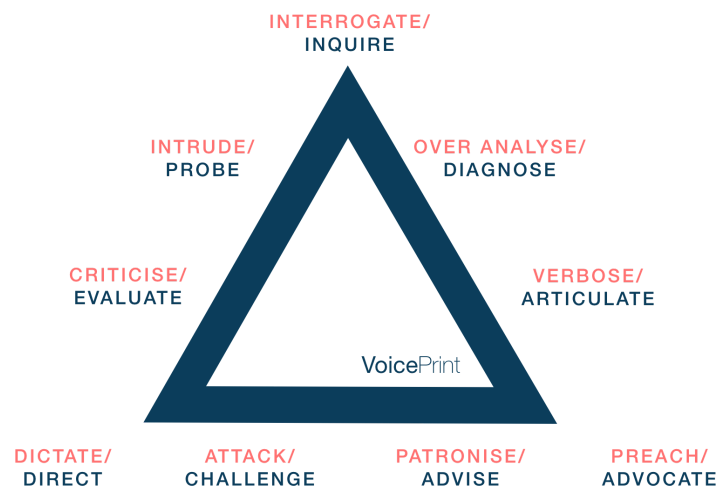
Voice	Used to good effect
Probe	Reveals and deepens
Inquire	Opens up and engages people
Diagnose	Connects and develops understanding
Articulate	Clarifies and explains
Advocate	Champions and represents
Advise	Guides and suggests
Challenge	Interrupts and improves
Direct	Regulates and orders
Evaluate	Assesses and weighs up

# The danger of negative impacts

## What shifts a voice into its negative, dysfunctional form?

The answer is partly in 'the ear of the listener.' We each have our own particular sensitivities and tend to react negatively to voices which we perceive as offensive. That's why it is important to be aware of the specifics: which voices tend to feel like a 'hot spot' for us and for the people with whom we interact?

Here are the negative forms of each voice, shown in red. Positive intentions can become negative impacts through 'over-using' our voices in a variety of ways.



- ▲ by simply putting too much energy into a voice, and 'over-powering' it;
- ▲ by spending too long in a voice and turning it into a 'sticking point';
- ▲ by mis-timing a voice, making it irrelevant to the needs and development of the conversation;
- ▲ by using our voices purely for our own personal purposes rather than to contribute to the flow, benefit and outcome of the conversation in which we are participating;

Heavy or insensitive use of a voice may be unconscious and unintended, but the effect is usually to alienate rather than engage or stay connected with other people. There can be a thin line between using talk well and using it badly. It is essential to stay alert to impact.

# Working with your VoicePrint profile

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## A VoicePrint profile is only a means to an end.

Its purpose is to raise awareness so that you can develop your capabilities and become more resourceful than you already are. It gives you clues and indications about where and how you can develop.

**As with any diagnostic, the results need to be put into context** and interpreted carefully to become most useful. Your VoicePrint consultant will help you to do this, because it requires joint exploration and you are central to that process.

Your consultant will explore with you how your profile relates to your past experiences and present circumstances, what your profile might mean for your current performance and your future prospects, and what you might need to do to develop these and to support your future aspirations.

You will have specific questions of your own that you want to explore. Others that you might find helpful are suggested below and towards the end of this report after the presentation of your profile.

## Some initial questions to consider:

- ▲ In what ways do you need to be able to interact and communicate with others?
- ▲ Which of your dealings with other people do you find most difficult or frustrating?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel most important to you, and why?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel least comfortable to you, and why?

If you are committed to ongoing personal development, then your VoicePrint profile, like this report, will only be a snapshot at a point in time. Decide what insights, issues and questions it raises for you. Capture your thoughts about what matters and start developing your plan of action on these pages. They are only intended to be a starting point.

**You are only constrained by this profile if you allow yourself to be.**

We start life unable to talk. By the time we've learned to do so, it's coming so readily that we don't notice how much our approach is based on habits and how much we still have to learn. Fortunately, all the voices can be developed. Skill can be developed. Sensitivity can be developed.

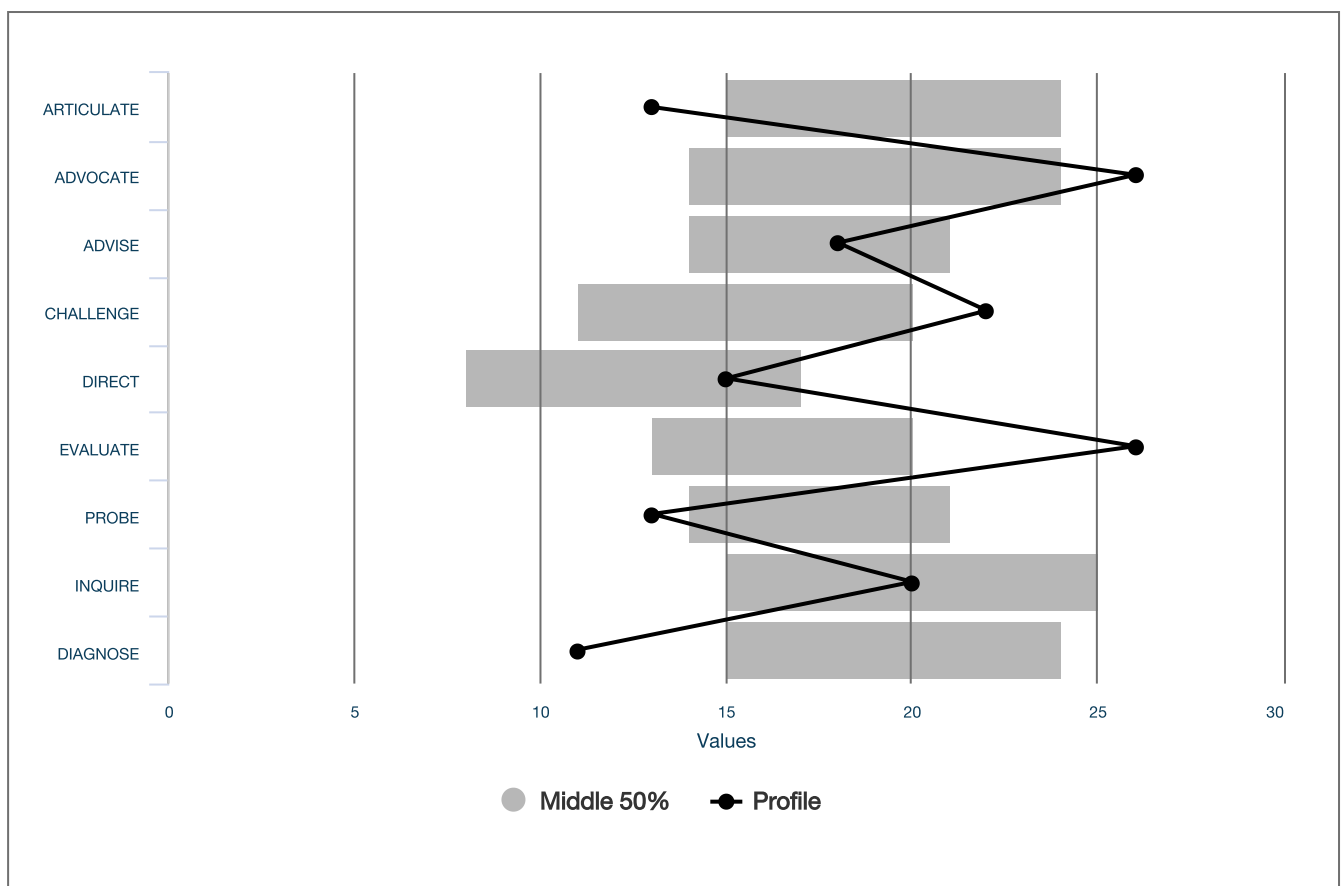
**Great communicators can be developed. VoicePrint is about developing great communicators.**

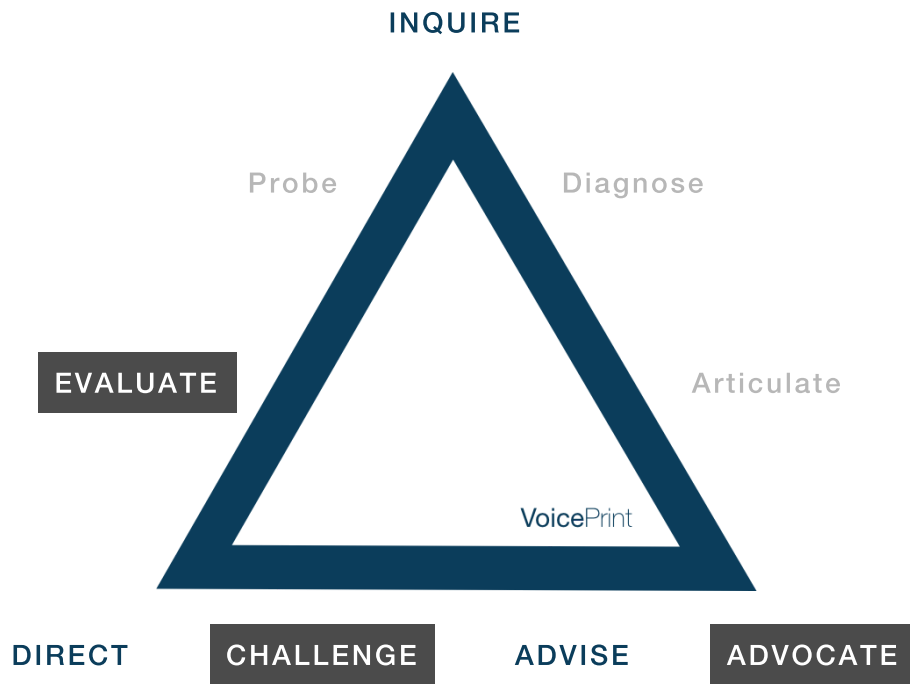
## Putting your profile in context

A useful way to appreciate the shape of your profile and to put it into perspective is to compare your scores with the results typically obtained by other people.

These two graphics do that by plotting your results in relation to the norms identified from our research. In the first picture the shaded grey area for each voice is where people's scores most commonly land. If your score falls in that area, then it is mid-range or 'typical.' If your score is left of the grey area, then it is in the lower quartile and indicates that you make less use of that voice than most people do. To the right of the grey area is the upper quartile range, which indicates relatively high use.

The second picture presents the same information on the VoicePrint triangle. If you have any high-range scores, these are shown in bold font. You use these more strongly than most people. They are likely to be your strengths, but like all strengths, they need to be used with skill and attention to be effective. Your low-range scores are 'ghosted' in a fainter font to show that they are potential gaps in your repertoire.





# Understanding your approach

It's worth reflecting carefully on the shape of your VoicePrint profile. Use your VoicePrint consultant to help you do this. Whatever pattern you have, it will have implications; there will be both advantages and potential disadvantages.

The graphic below shows your relative use of the different voices, with your most used voices at the top and your least used voices at the foot of the table.

This picture also provides an indication of the **dynamics of how you talk**, how you characteristically move from one voice to another. Your 'top' voice will tend to be your most frequent starting point. The other 'regulars' (but probably not the 'occasionals') will follow, revealing the pattern of how you like to 'talk things through.'

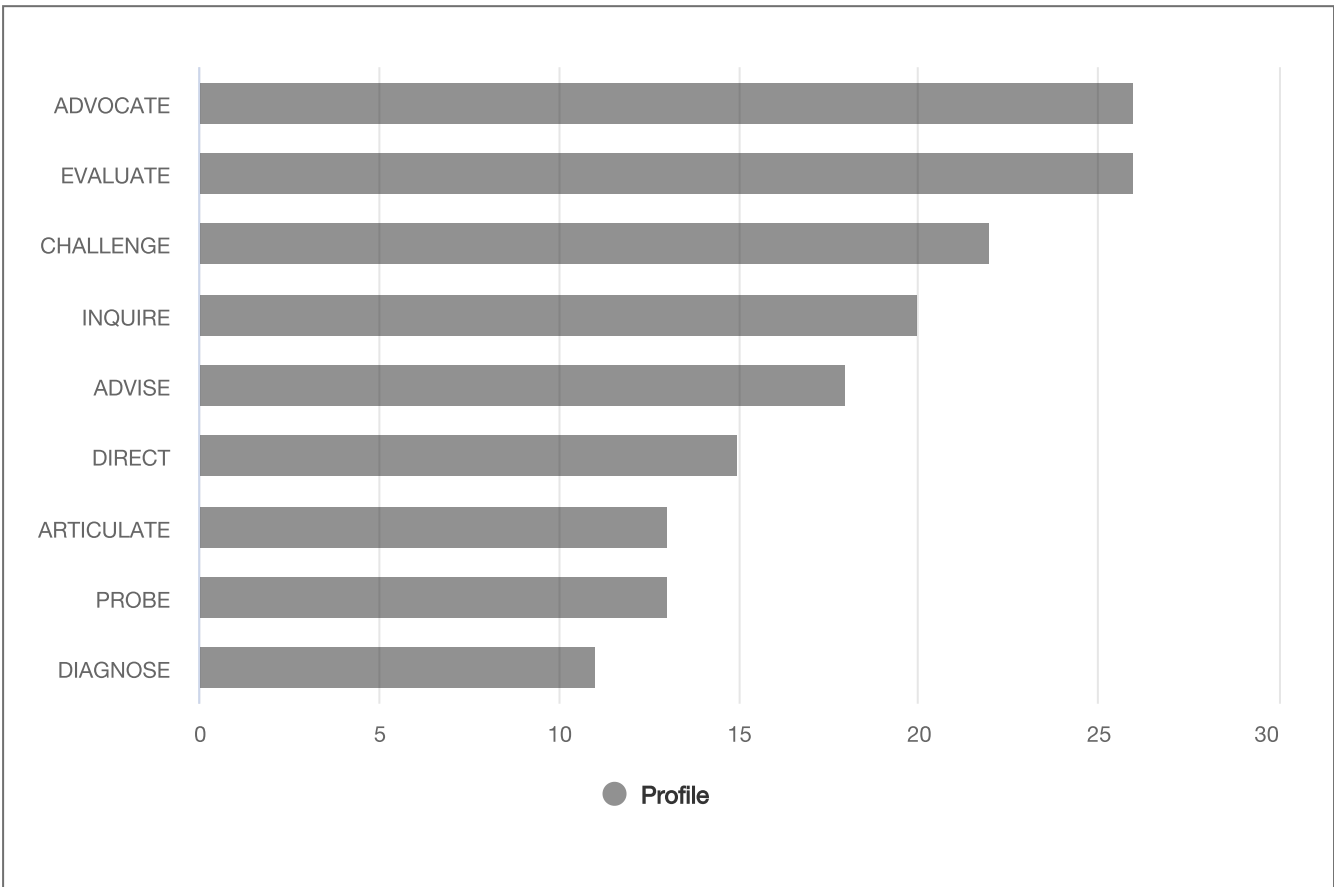
**Talk is part of your inner world, how you think and listen, as well as your external conversing with others.** Think about whether any of your voices are directed more towards the inner world of your own thinking and self-talk than towards what you say aloud.

## Your most used voices:

- ▲ Are your 'regulars' - the most frequently used part of your repertoire?
- ▲ Which of your dealings with other people do you find most difficult or frustrating?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel most important to you, and why?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel least comfortable to you, and why?

## Your least used voices:

- ▲ Are your 'occasionals' - the least frequently used part of your repertoire.
- ▲ Which of your dealings with other people do you find most difficult or frustrating?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel most important to you, and why?
- ▲ Which of the nine voices feel least comfortable to you, and why?



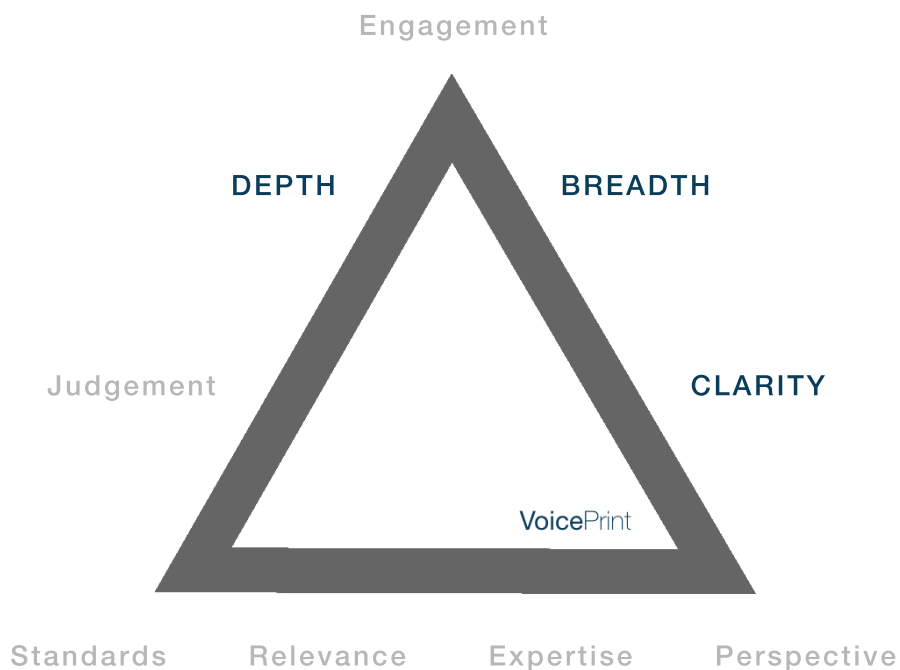
## Your potential absences

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A low range score does not mean that you do not use that voice at all, but it may point to certain qualities that could be missing in your use of talk.

The grey triangle graphic below shows the important contribution that each voice can make. It highlights which of these contributions may be lacking, because the relevant voices are in the low range in your own profile.

- ▲ Do you notice these absences? When? What is the impact of that?
- ▲ In what situations or relationships would it be useful for you to be able to access the voices more readily?



## Does your profile change under pressure?

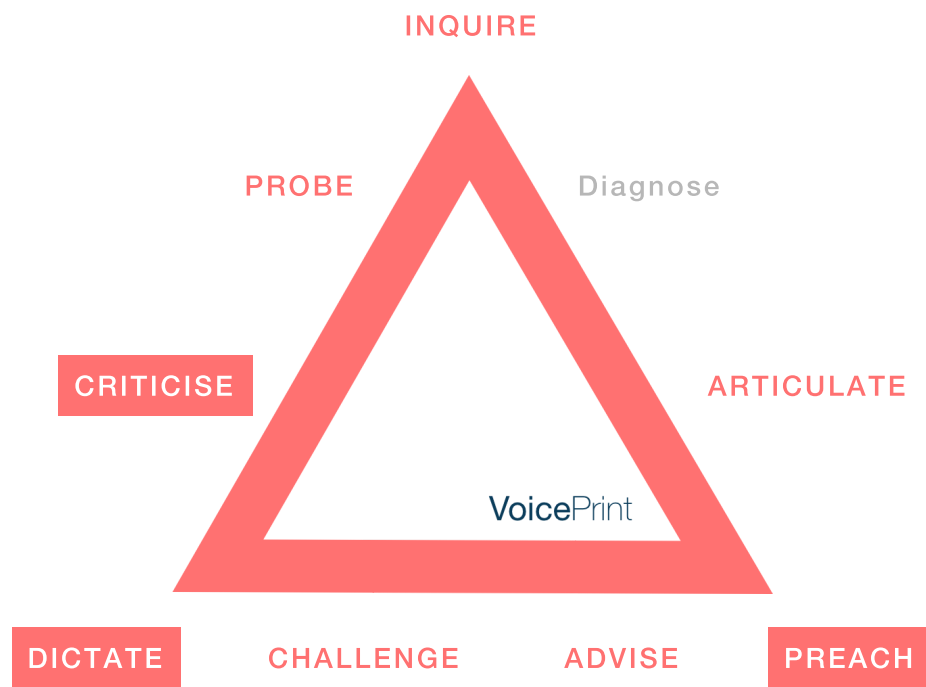
The way we talk can shift, when we are under pressure.

We may start to make more use of voices which are not ordinarily a regular part of our repertoire. Alternatively, and more commonly, our repertoire may shrink, with particular voices falling away as we feel increasingly under pressure. Either way, it is important to understand how your VoicePrint profile is affected by pressure, because awareness is particularly important in stressful situations, and lack of awareness will always tend to make talk less competent.

The following pictures focus on your self-reported tendencies, when it comes to using the more extreme forms of the voices, and so reveals the shape of your profile when you are more stressed. Compare these pictures with your overall profile to see whether and how your general approach changes under pressure. Bear in mind that different people experience pressure differently. As an individual you are likely to find some pressures inhibiting or debilitating, while other pressures feel stimulating or energising. It is important to consider both negative and positive pressures, when you reflect on how your profile relates to yourself and your own experiences.

Extreme forms of the voice and pressure situations both greatly increase the risk of being heard negatively. Any high-range scores in your profile are consequently given their negative names to call your attention to these risks.





# A closer look at your pressure profile

The first of the graphics below, comprised of red bars only, will help you to see your ‘regulars,’ your ‘occasionals’ and your tacit strategy when under pressure.

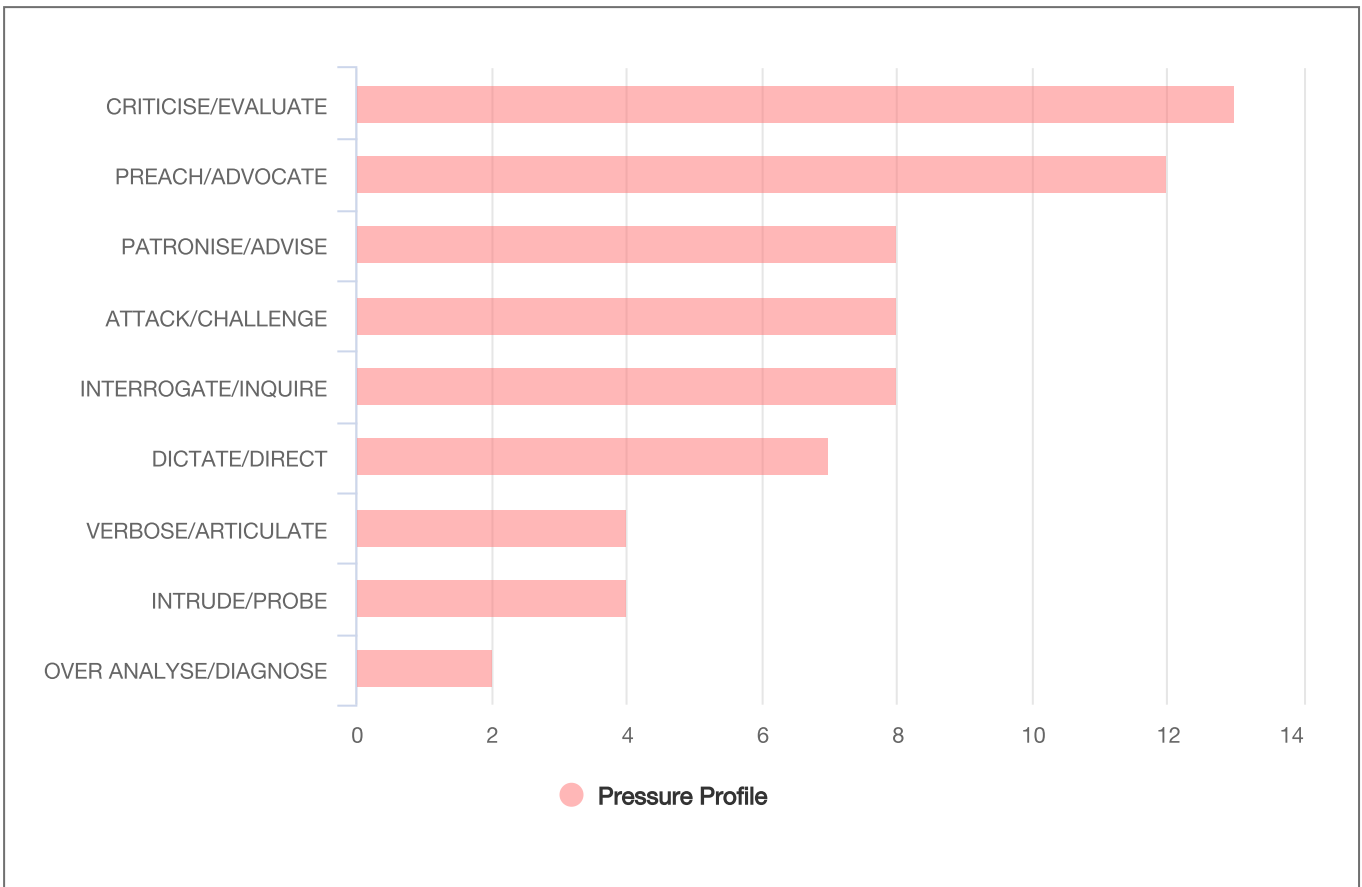
The second graphic, comprising the combined red and black bars, helps you to explore your sensitivity to the dangers of pressure situations and of the more extreme forms of the voices. If much more than half the length of the bar is red, it indicates that you make disproportionately high use of the more extreme forms of that voice.

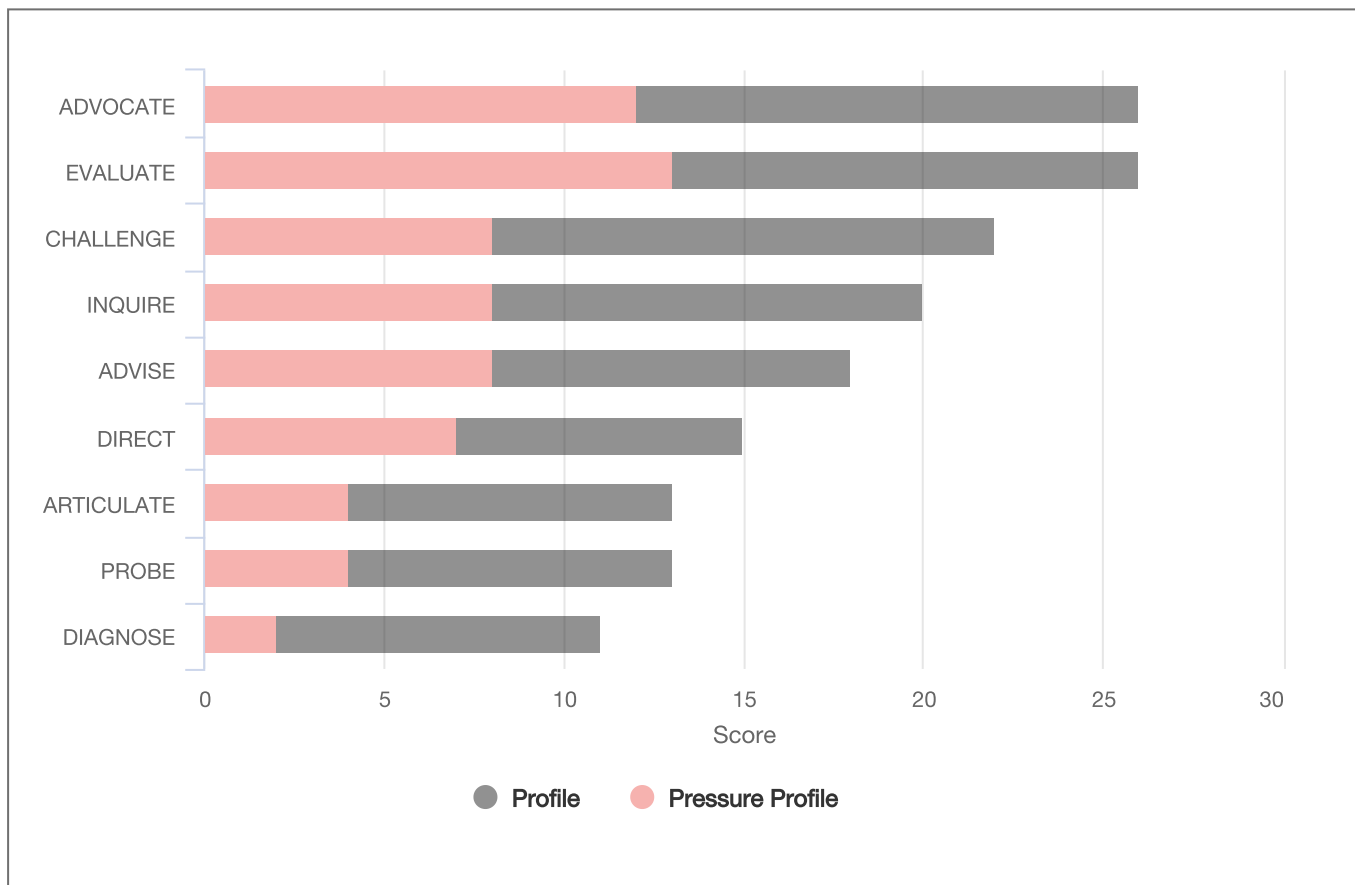
You then need to consider whether you are sufficiently sensitive to the accompanying risks. If, on the other hand, significantly less than half (or indeed none) of the bar is red that suggests that you are already sensitive to the dangers. You might then need to consider whether you might be too sensitive to the dangers and need to develop greater confidence, daring and skill to use that voice in stressful situations.

As always, your profile is simply a means to help you to think about these issues and to start discussing your own experience and the specific demands and pressures of your own role with your VoicePrint consultant.

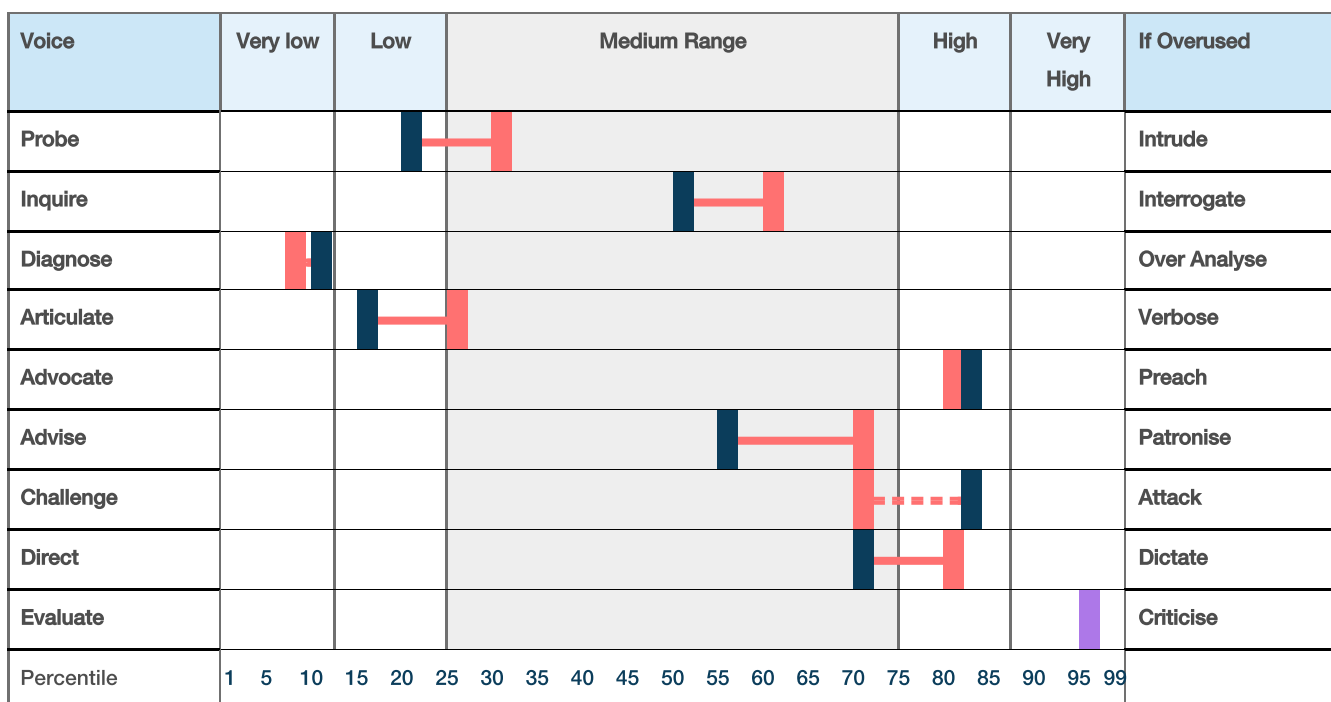
Remember that a positively-intentioned voice can have a negative impact, especially if it is insensitive, unskilful, too forceful or mis-timed. In that case...

- ▲ Articulate can sound Verbose
- ▲ Advocate can sound like Preaching
- ▲ Advise can sound Patronising
- ▲ Challenge can sound like Attacking
- ▲ Direct can sound like Dictating
- ▲ Evaluate can sound like Criticising
- ▲ Probe can sound like Intruding
- ▲ Inquire can sound like Interrogation
- ▲ Diagnose can sound like Over-analysing
- ▲ Challenge can sound like Attacking





The final graphic in this section relates your overall and pressure scores to VoicePrint norms on a percentile scale. This not only shows how your self-perception score compare with what our research has found to be typical, but also clarifies whether, how and to what extent your use of particular voices - and the impact they have - may shift under pressure.



# Highs and lows for you to consider

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Your high-range scores show what you consider to be your distinctive strengths.

It is valuable to understand the nature of a strength, and also to recognise what can happen if it is over-used.

Your profile includes the following voices in the high range:

## Advocate

**The strength:** You argue convincingly for, or against, particular points of view, are likely to sound persuasive, and to be capable of influencing and 'selling' ideas. It is clear where you stand. By developing a position, you can help dialogue by prompting others to think more about how they present their own arguments or counter-arguments.

**The danger, when over-used:** The argument has been made, but is then made again and again. Rather than pausing and allowing the interaction to open up and develop, the speaker presses on. Delivery becomes more impassioned, amplified and excluding. The effect is counterproductive. People often respond to this forcefulness by losing interest or becoming more resistant and opposed to the position being advocated. Preaching can polarise people and increase conflict.

## Direct

**The strength:** You make sure people understand what is required of them by telling them, and by correcting them when they fail to meet these expectations. By stating specific requirements and boundaries and insisting on adherence to them, you can ensure that individuals and teams operate in accordance with the standards that you represent and uphold.

**The danger, when over-used:** It is sometimes necessary and often helpful to set clear expectations and boundaries for people. But it is unhelpful to micro-manage or be forever correcting them. If the directive voice becomes charged with emotion, becoming a vehicle for your own frustration, anger or inflexibility, you will sound like a dictator and create feelings of unfairness and resentment. Clarity, focus and a matter-of-fact tone are important ingredients in being effectively direct.

## Challenge

**The strength:** You are prepared to interrupt in order to point out an assumption or limitation in what others are saying or doing. By promptly calling attention to such matters, you can improve the quality of interaction and dialogue by inviting others to re-think and to be more aware of what and how they are contributing.

**The danger, when over-used:** Poorly timed, clumsily done or simply done too often, challenging can sound like an attempt to seize control rather than to re-focus or improve. It can easily feel like a personal attack, damaging and inhibiting relationships. Persistent challenging may be perceived as an indirect undermining strategy, designed to dominate or subjugate others. Leaders have to challenge but need to take care not to abuse their power in this respect.

## Evaluate

**The strength:** You evaluate ideas, proposals and problems in a direct, balanced and objective way. You highlight potential shortcomings and weaknesses, but you also take care to consider and to weigh up both the pros and the cons. By providing impartial, analytical rigour, you contribute to the thoroughness and quality of thinking, discussion and decision-making.

**The danger, when over-used:** Logical, 'data rational' types can fall into the trap of assuming that logic will speak for itself, underestimating the importance of involving others in order to persuade them and secure agreement and commitment. Continuing focus on objections and shortcomings can easily come across as an indirect way of criticising others, and will produce embarrassment, a sense of humiliation and a corresponding animosity, especially if it happens publicly.

# Highs and lows for you to consider

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Your low-range scores are potential gaps in your repertoire.

It is important to reflect on why you make limited use of these voices, and when they might be appropriate.

Your profile includes the following voices in the low range:

## Articulate

***The danger, when under-used:*** Being an essentially neutral and unthreatening form of assertiveness, Articulate is the safest of the positioning voices. Under-using it often comes from impatience, but can give the impression that you are either out of touch with what is happening, that you are unable or unwilling to make yourself clear, or that you are deliberately choosing to remain silent. People are then likely either to discount you or to be wary and distrustful of your lack of openness

## Probe

***The danger, when under-used:*** Under-use of this voice may reflect an insensitivity to clues, a tendency to accept things too readily at face value, personal reserve or a more general discomfort with uncertainty. Whatever the source, insufficient probing is essentially a failure to persevere with learning in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity. Failing to probe deeply enough may leave available knowledge un-surfaced, important issues unexamined, avoidable problems unnoticed, and potential opportunities unrecognised

## Diagnose

***The danger, when under-used:*** Under-use of this voice represents a failure to invest the attention and energy required to think things through and arrive at reliable understandings. Its absence is most serious when situations and challenges are unfamiliar, complex or open to interpretation. Insufficient diagnosis treats symptoms as if they were causes and fails to recognise implications. This increases the danger of poorly conceived actions and wasted resources, including time, reputation and trust.

## Capturing your answers to some key questions

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You will probably have considered a lot of questions about your VoicePrint profile by the time you reach this point.

The purpose of this page is to give you an opportunity to make a note of your own answers to some of the questions which regularly arise and which people often find most valuable, when exploring the implications of their VoicePrint self-perception profile

1 What are the dominant voice/s in my profile and what purpose do they serve for me?

2 Are any of my voices more internal rather than externally expressed?

3 What are the potential gaps in my repertoire and when might they be important?

4 Does my profile shift under pressure? In what way/s?

5 What do I experience as negative or de-energising pressure?

6 What do I experience as positive or energising pressure?

7 Which voice/s would it be useful for me to strengthen?

8 Which voice/s would it be useful for me to de-emphasise?

9 To which voice/s am I negatively sensitive? What do I do when I hear them?

10 To which voice/s am I positively attuned? Does that bias my listening?

11

In what context do I want to make a better impact? Which voice/s would help with that?

12

What small changes would make the biggest difference for me?

# Developing your VoicePrint

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This report on your VoicePrint profile is intended to give you much to think about, and it usually takes time to identify, extract and absorb all the insights and learnings.

Investing that time will help you to extend your repertoire and effectiveness as a communicator and in your interactions with others, whether as colleague, manager or leader. Having insight into your tendencies - which voices you tend to use, which you may under-use or over-use, and when you do these things - is an essential starting point for developing greater skill and sensitivity in practice.

So where can you go from here to develop further competence in making your voice count?

## Expert interpretation:

Explore your profile thoroughly with an accredited VoicePrint consultant. Talking it through with an expert will help you to bring your profile to life and relate it more closely to your past experience, current circumstances and future ambitions. This will enable you to personalise your profile and get a richer perspective than any written report can provide. The profile itself is only an indicator. Your VoicePrint consultant will help you to uncover further insights and obtain a deeper understanding of what your own particular results and patterns might signify.

## Feedback from others:

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. We also recommend that you use VoicePrint 360 to get systematic feedback on how your way of talking is perceived by a range of other people with whom you interact.

## Reflection:

Use VoicePrint as a lens through which to reflect on your actual dialogues with others (and with yourself). 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 patterns, 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 or context to another.



## Practice:

The most important 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 adapt your use of words, tone, volume and movement from one voice to another. The use of talk is a dynamic skill, the underpinning competence for all interactions. Not surprisingly, therefore, it is best developed through practice in real conversations.

## 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.' Our Accredited Practitioners are trained to identify and provide the coaching and training that will be most useful for you to develop your VoicePrint. Our experience is that close one-to-one support is the single most effective catalyst for acquiring the well-balanced repertoire that will make your voice count.

## My Next Steps

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It's useful to take a few moments to write down what next steps you propose to take.

Research shows that setting specific objectives significantly increases the probability of achieving them and realising the potential benefits to be obtained from any personal development.