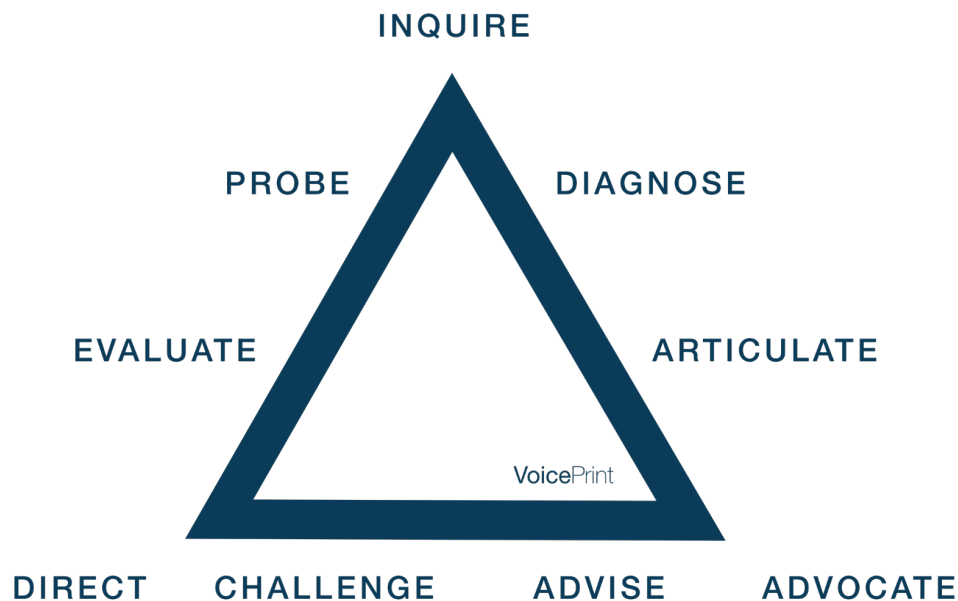


Map 1: The nine voices



The VoicePrint model is based on three cardinal points - Inquiry, Advocacy and Direction. Each of these occupies one of the three most distinctive points in VoicePrint's triangular framework, because these three 'voices' are conceptually the most distinct from one another. Inquiry is the most open and involving of others; Direct is the most fixed and dominating of others; Advocate is the most individual and separate from others. The other voices represent gradations of behaviour between these cardinal points.

Intellectually the VoicePrint framework is rooted in Triarchic Theory, best expounded by organisational theorist Robert W. Keidel in his book *Seeing Organisational Patterns* (1995), which argues that organisational life is dominated by three fundamental forces: the need for cooperation, control and distinctiveness (which he refers to as 'autonomy'). These three requirements are not only pervasive - manifesting in myriad

forms in organisational life - but also in perpetual tension. Leaning in any one of these directions creates some degree of pressure on the other points. Managerial life is therefore a continuous balancing act.

The power of the triangular framework is that it provides a more complete (literally a more three-dimensional) and more realistic representation of reality than can be obtained from the more simplistic binary contrasts, which dominate so much theorising (and so many 2 x 2 matrix models). Many of the earlier models about dialogue - such as the work of Chris Argyris and William Isaacs, for instance - focus primarily (and arguably too much) on the tensions between Advocacy and Inquiry.

The triangular nature of the VoicePrint model is also supported empirically. Statistical analysis of VoicePrint results shows that there are no positive correlations between Inquire, Advocate and Direct. They are entirely distinct from one another. The same triangular pattern pertains, but with some degree of overlap, as would be expected, among the other voices. Thus Advise, Evaluate and Diagnose are very largely distinct from one another, with little overlap between them. Likewise with Probe, Articulate and Challenge. The fact that there is some relationship between voices in different parts of the triangle is evidence of the need for range and balance in practice.