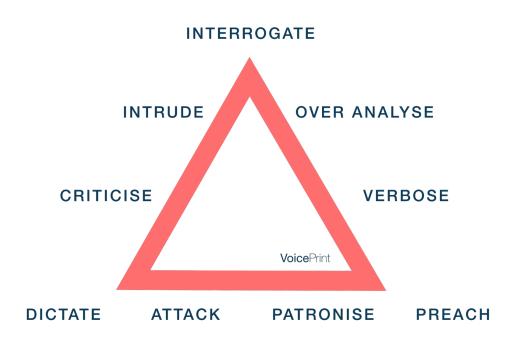


Map 3: The dysfunctional voices



Each of the nine voices is functional - it serves a potentially useful purpose - when it is used well. But each of the voices can become dysfunctional when it is used badly. These dysfunctional forms are described here in terms of how they feel and the negative impact that they tend to have on other people.

Impact can be negative even when intention is positive. Over-using a voice, either by putting too much energy or time into it, is what commonly pushes it across the red line and undermines its usefulness.

Impact is determined by various factors including the clarity of the speaker's intention, the skill and sensitivity with which they use the voice, the appropriateness of that voice both in the overall context of the interaction that is taking place and also in relation to how the interaction is developing from one moment to the next. How a voice lands is

also influenced by the individual sensitivities of the listeners. We all have idiosyncrasies in terms of which voices either engage our attention or alienate us. It is useful to know (and then to monitor and manage) our own sensitivities and those of the people with whom we need to interact.

VoicePrint research reveals that the most common response to perceiving a voice negatively is some form of unspoken withdrawal from the interaction, such as turning attention elsewhere or discounting the speaker and what they are saying. This seems to happen about 80% of the time when a voice is heard negatively. The other most common response is some form of retaliatory push-back, such as a contradiction or counter argument. Reflex responses like this compromise engagement, collaboration and the quality of many conversations and discussions. Responding to a negative perception - either by assuming that the speaker's intention was positive or by exploring it further to understand it - is a comparatively rare but mature and valuable alternative.