

# The Positioning Voices: Strengths and Dangers

	The danger, when under-used:	The strength, when well-used:	The danger, when over-used:
<b>ARTICULATE</b>	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.	You express yourself clearly and can use this to good effect through summarising and clarifying situations and understandings in a patient, neutral and even-handed way. The judicious atmosphere that this enables you to construct is likely to help interactions and other people by providing a considered and impartial platform of shared understanding on which to build.	Verbosity uses more words, precision or detail than is necessary to be productive. Being verbose strains others' patience and shows a lack of attention to their needs or to the requirements of the conversation. It fails to respect that others also have contributions to make. Verbosity loses impact, because people disengage or stop listening. Important points get lost in the noise of your own making.
<b>ADVOCATE</b>	Under-use of this voice is the most immediate way to appear either unassertive or unsure of yourself. This will reduce your capacity to secure or hold others' attention. You are in danger of holding back and missing the moment when it comes to putting forward your point of view, arguing your case or representing those for whom you are expected to speak.	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 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.

<b>ADVISE</b>	<p>Under-use of this voice may make you appear uninformed, uncommitted, indecisive or even un-cooperative and self-centred. Consider what distinctive knowledge, experience, expertise or insights you have. You can draw on these resources to assist others, when they would appreciate assistance in being shown a way forward. Some people may already expect this from you in your role.</p>	<p>You seek to use your experience and understanding to guide or steer others, recognising the value of a form of influencing that is less forceful than advocacy. You will be seen as involved, informed and helpful, especially if you recognise that it is for the other person to decide whether to accept what you have to offer.</p>	<p>Advising needs to be offered with respect and pitched with careful attention to the receiver's actual needs. Telling people something which they find rather obvious conveys the message that you think the obvious is beyond them. Competent people are quickly irritated, offended and alienated by language or guidance that they find patronising. Offering unsolicited advice can easily be perceived as you indirectly advancing your own agenda.</p>
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