

How To Stay Genuine in a Real Person Read  
By David Bourgeois

In our industry, we have definitely gravitated toward conversational, believable, sincere delivery.

One of the most common differences in how people read text and how they speak text is that reading becomes task oriented with the goal being reaching the end. So, everyone has a natural tendency to accelerate their pace when they're reading.

I used to do a little experiment with people where I would have them speak for a couple of minutes off of the top of their head, going way back to when I started training in this field. We'd bring the voice talent back in the control room and play their recording back a couple of times, write it down word for word, and ask them to go in and read it at the same pace that they felt that they had said it.

We never, and I did this exercise with many people, had anybody able to read it in any more than half the time it took them to say a couple of minutes of material. It's very interesting.

So, a great technique to fight this is to use what I would call "Reset Points."

Take your pencil and just put little reminder marks in your copy to reset that pace back to a genuine, believable, conversational pace.

You always want to be working off of what I would refer to as your conversational average... your average conversational pace.

As the excitement level increases in the copy you're reading, you're not just going to speed up, you're going to use more variation in the pace. As your perception of the excitement level in the copy lessens, you don't just slow down... you come back closer to that conversational average.

Maintaining that conversational average is difficult. Feel free to mark your copy up, and put reminders at the beginning of the third or fourth line that says something along the lines of, "Hey, settle down back down and get that energy together again."

To the client, to the copy writer, to the person trying to convey that information, the words later in the copy are just as important as the words you started out with.

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