

Vox Institute

Training and Research Institute specialised in Speech-communication and Emotion-psychology

Vox Institute was founded in 1988 ([time line](#)), by [Dr. Branka Zei Pollermann](#) linguist and psychologist - author of multidisciplinary [publications](#).

Vox Institute's mission

To conduct research and provide scientifically based training and assessments of *communication skills* and *social/emotional competencies in organisations and individually*. The assessments are scientifically validated and the training methods include state-of-the-art technology.

Vox Institute in numbers

Students > 16'000 since 1988.

Clients: Over 30 Swiss institutions, over 35 multi-national companies and international organisations ([examples](#)).

Vox Institute's **scientific research** covers

- [Emotional factors of job strain](#) and health ([1200 subjects -Swiss state officials](#)),
- Emotional dimensions of resistance to change and change management (in 8 languages in 7 European countries for [Janssen](#)),
- Speech communication in [medical environments](#) (for [Geneva University Hospitals](#), German psychiatrists)
- Charismatic leadership ([United Nations OCHA](#))

Scientific support is provided by [several scientists](#).

Vox Institute's trainings are designed for:

- Directors, managers, HR officers,
- Negotiators, moderators, panellists
- Radio /TV journalists and presenters,
- Teachers, lawyers, medical staff
- Politicians

Vox Institute's training locations

Geneva 17 rues des Maraichers



A small castle 30 km from Geneva in France



Scientific Assessments and Training in Speech Communication

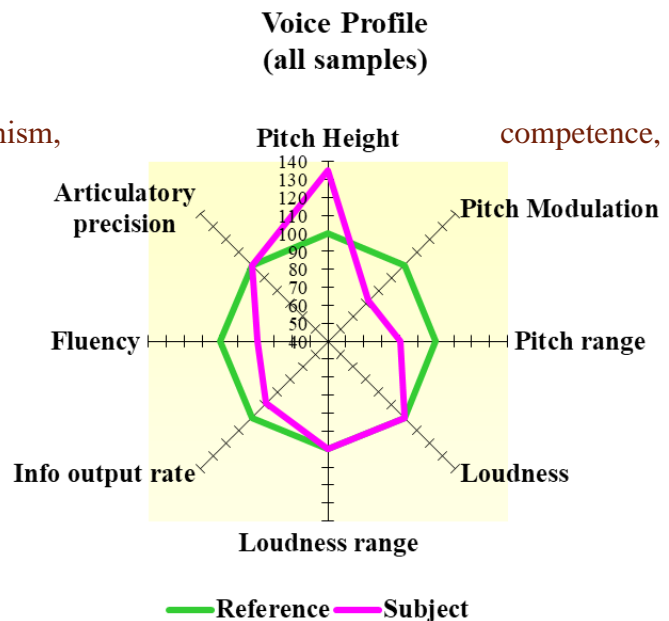
The human voice is a powerful tool for persuasion and leadership. It encodes the speaker's personality, attitudes, style and emotions. We all find it easy to detect when someone is sad, angry, interested or bored by listening to the inflection and timbre of their voice. However, it is often entirely subjective. We have turned this subjective approach into an objective one. Using dedicated software, we are now able to analyse a human voice and detect with precision its acoustic features.

1) **® - Voice Audit:**

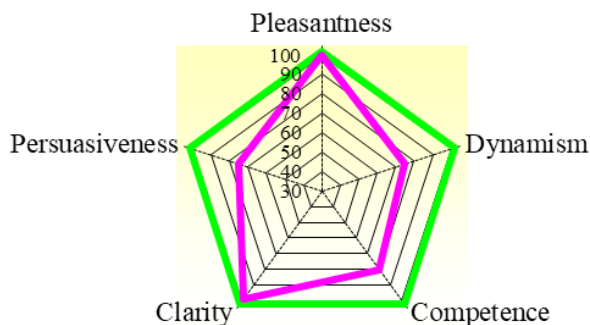
Seven audio samples are acoustically analysed and the results are compared with normative values of a large number of highly effective communicators.

The results include:

- The Vocal Profile (8 features- see graph)
- The Speaker's Image (pleasantness, dynamism, clarity, credibility, persuasiveness),
- Speaking style (friendly, reassuring, aggressive, authoritative etc.),
- Vocal expression of emotions,
- Congruence between the content of discourse and vocal style.



Speaker's Image



Speaker's Image graph shows that this person obtains high scores on pleasantness and clarity but does poorly on dynamism, competence and persuasiveness.

— Reference — Ms Example

2) Charismatic speaking style

Charisma is defined as compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others. Scholars in sociology, psychology, and management reserve the term for a type of leader who uses value-based, and emotion-laden communication style in both verbal and vocal channels of communication. The tool assesses the congruence between verbally and vocally expressed emotions.

Emotion-laden communication style reflects the speaker's emotional state defined by 2 dimensions:

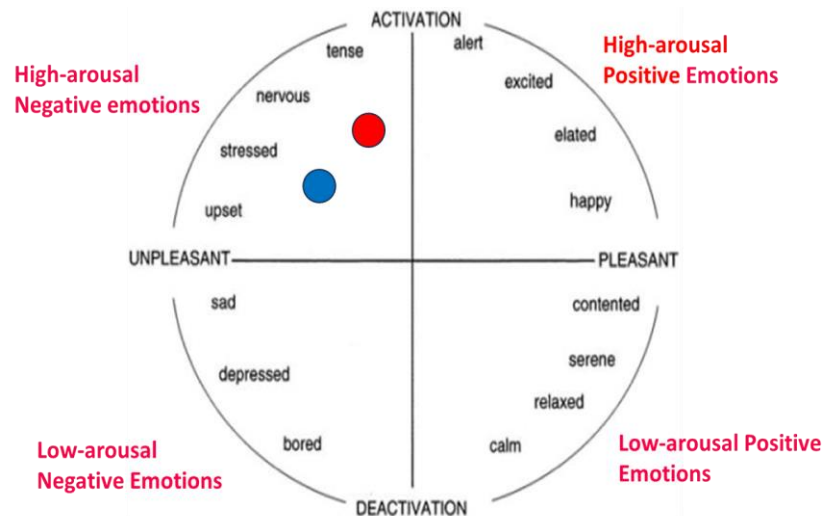
- a) **Pleasantness** (pleasant - unpleasant state)
- b) **Activation** (physiological arousal)

Emotion Wheel represents the relation between valence and arousal.

Red point:
Analysis of the vocabulary
(verbal channel)

Blue point:
Acoustic voice analysis
(vocal channel)

Conclusion:
As both results fall into the same quadrant this is a charismatic leader - his verbal and vocal channel transmit similar emotions.



The red point indicates emotional impact of the speaker’s vocabulary, while the **blue point** indicates the emotional impact of his/her tone of voice.

2) **Audio -Visual Audit:** includes: Voice Audit (as above) + Visual analysis of seven video recordings. P. Ekman’s **FACS** is the method used. The Audit includes:

- Repertory of facial expressions,
- Facial expressions of emotions,
- Congruence between verbal and facial expressions,
- Posture and gestures, Gaze.
- Charismatic leadership-features,



Training

While the details of trainings are fine-tuned to each client’s needs, **the general programme covers:**

1. Three main vocal skills: chunking, emphasis, intonation
2. Vocal style in public speaking and in face-to-face interaction
3. Verbal aspects: vocabulary (semantic networks)
4. Choice of argumentation strategy (blends of rational and emotional strategies).
5. Charismatic leadership (congruence between verbal content and nonverbal behaviour).
6. The Pyramid principle: structure of talks
7. Nonverbal behaviour (facial expressions, gestures, gaze, posture) and their strategic usage in speech communication
8. Most efficient rhetorical figures in speaking and writing. Branka’s article **“Body eloquence”** published at [EPFL Forum](#) – illustrates some aspects of the course. The video **“Strategies for leadership”** shows vocal and emotional dimensions of leadership.

Scientific Assessments and Training in Social/emotional Competencies

Scientists found that the frequency of certain types of emotions acted directly on motivation, efficiency, job satisfaction and health. Emotion work was thus defined as the process necessary to regulate organizationally desired behaviour. Branka's [research](#) (presented at the [Scientific Meeting of American Psychosomatic Society](#)) showed that positive emotional climate can improve health prevent stress and help employees to flourish at the work place.

Two major factors have been identified as determining organizationally desired behaviour:

1. Emotional balance: the proportion of positive vs. negative emotions experienced at work. Negative emotions tend to produce counterproductive behaviour while positive emotions favour organizationally desired behaviour
2. Root causes of emotional reactions.

Next Training

[Affective Determinants of Behaviour and the Strategic Use of Emotions](#)

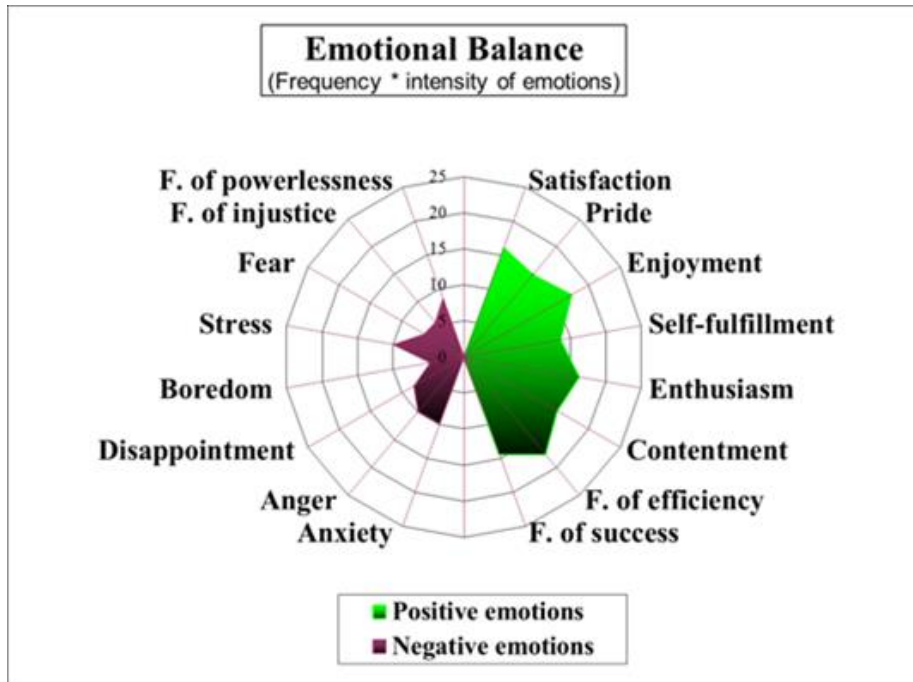
Objectives

1. Master the theory and practice of the interplay between **reason and affect** in guiding human behaviour.
2. Get familiar with methods of **inducing the desired behaviour** by stimulating the appropriate emotional dispositions.
3. Get acquainted with **2 practical tools**

Content:

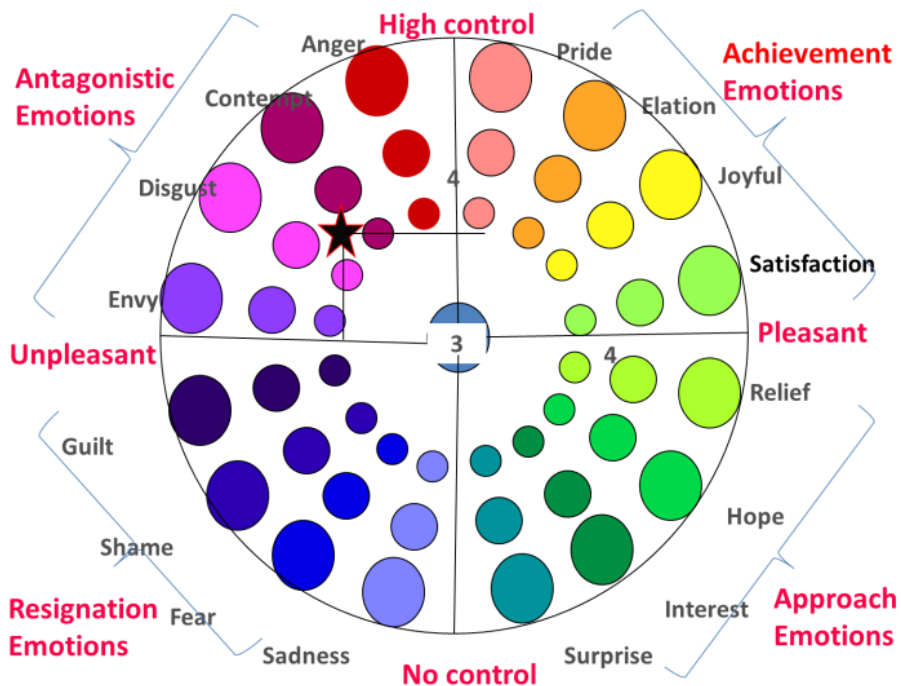
- Affective determinants of human behaviour and the rationality of emotions,
- Emotions in organizations: their role in decision-making and engagement,
- Social/emotional Intelligence and its three basic competences
 - Production of appropriate emotional reactions,
 - Adaptive regulation of one's emotional states,
 - Efficient emotional communication in social interaction.
- Two tools for assessing the affective determinants of behaviour:

Tool #1 Emotional Balance: assesses the proportion of positive vs. negative emotions experienced at work. If the frequency of positive emotions exceeds that of negative emotions, the person is experiencing «emotional balance» which assures normal professional functioning (including good physical health and psychological well-being).



Detailed actions aiming at preventing negative emotions and enhancing positive emotions are presented.

Tool #2: Root-causes of Affective Reactions assesses two major root-causes of emotional reactions (to working conditions) in terms of 4 emotion families and behaviours related to them.



Solutions: Detailed strategies for getting into the desired quadrant are presented.