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**Leadership Development  
Initiative (LDI) Curriculum**

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# Presentation Skills

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## Overview

Leaders must be able to communicate effectively with a wide number of people of disparate backgrounds in many possible scenarios. It is important that Leaders communicate effectively in a manner appropriate to the audience, circumstances, time and medium – all while remaining true to their authentic selves. Though one may be a native English speaker, there are ways to optimize rhythm and musicality when speaking. Understanding the power of vowels in speech to carry the emotion and provide the rhythm, leads to crisp, energized delivery.

There is at least one word in every sentence that is more important than other words. That key word should be emphasized (or 'pointed') by the subtle use of pause and vocal inflection. Embellishing longer vowel sounds helps the speaker find greater emotional connection with key words. Articulation involves flexibility with the tongue, lips and soft palate, and interaction with upper and lower teeth. Practicing tongue twisters will help speakers improve clarity. To enunciate difficult words/phrases more clearly, practice saying difficult multi-syllable words or phrases backwards one syllable at a time.

## Objectives

After this presentation, participants will:

1. Use vowels and consonants intentionally to clarify and enliven oral communication
2. Use long and short vowel-sound patterns to increase clarity in any setting and audience

## Important Teaching Points

- Common problems in speaking accurate English include the following sounds:
  - "D" replacing "Th", as in "the" sounding like "duh" or "then" sounding like "den"
  - Weak final consonants (which are often dropped in everyday informal conversation)
- Practicing singing will help the speaker develop vocal range, power and emotional color, and will lead to improved breath support
- Reading children's bedtime stories help increase vocal range because the speaker must assume different character voices (as well as the main narrator voice). Like reading to a young child, exaggeration of the vocal range may be more compelling to an audience
- Rehearse/practice a major speech to increase vocal range, power and impact
- To discover vocal power and color, practice speaking a speech aloud in front of a mirror, then deliver it to the far side of the room, then project it looking out a window to a distant point

## Resources / References

1. Cameron, Ron. (1999). *Acting Skills for Life* (3rd ed.). Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.
2. Rogers, Bruce. (1999). *You Can Say That Again!* Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press.