



Can you hear me now? Is poor voice quality letting you down?

spectralink 

The human voice

In an increasingly digital world where it is easy to overlook the critical importance of the most traditional form of communication: the human voice!

Unlike text messages, the human voice is able to carry a much wider semantic charge, enabling people to express nuances through tone, context, and empathy that might otherwise be lost. We've all wondered how to interpret the tone of a text message or an emoji at some point, however human voice interactions do not carry the same ambiguity, clearly expressing urgency, emotion, and additional contextual input. This additional depth of meaning is sometimes of critical importance: "Come and pick me up" can mean "I'd like a lift", or "I am in danger." Only the human voice can really express the difference.

In any work environment, voice plays a critical role in ensuring that messages are delivered with the correct urgency and contextual import. Voice ensures that the communication is received at the very moment it is given, because the other person picks up the phone and responds immediately, confirming they are paying attention or that they are safe, for example. At the same time, the human voice is an important messenger for your business' branding, providing a human element that customers can empathize with, and helping them feel "heard."

THE HUMAN VOICE:



The relative highness or lowness of a tone as perceived by the ear, which depends on the number of vibrations per second produced by the vocal cords is key to helping understand whether the situation is an **emergency**.*



A variation in the pitch of the voice while speaking helps read additional context such as **urgency or irritation**.*



The change in the form of a word (in English, usually the addition of endings) to mark such distinctions as tense, person, number, gender, mood, voice, and case are easy to mishear but key to **interpreting** any message.

* Britannica

Did you know?

The human voice is a powerful tool. Scientists have been studying its effects on the human brain for years and have found, among other things, that:

- Even in the womb the voice is a powerful way of creating a special bond between mother and unborn baby
- Voice is key to maintaining healthy personal and business relationships
- Even just hearing the voice of a loved one reduces blood cortisol levels
- Voice triggers trust, a key element in any work environment!



Loud and clear

We spend so much of our waking lives at work that it seems almost needless to point out why communicating at a deeper, clearer level should be a priority on the job.

However, there are plenty of other practical reasons why voice communications need to be given special consideration in the workplace, especially in support of the activities of frontline workers that rely on their devices to stay connected with the rest of the team. Empowering workers with clear voice communications can help your business reap benefits on many different fronts.



Safety

First and foremost, voice communications are key to ensuring the safety of workers. In isolated environments such as night shifts or in large, distributed manufacturing and logistics developments, workers may find they need to call for help. While handsets should be provided with man-down buttons and fall-sensors, it is also important to enable workers to speak to emergency services and receive critical help over their handset.



Efficiency

Clear voice communications are also a key enabler for productivity and efficiency. For example, doctors providing prescriptions and IV dosages, nurses calling the pharmacy for the availability of a specific drug, even cleaning staff that needs to be alerted to help clear a spillage or a biohazard - all these workers need to be able to receive directions clearly without the risk of

mishearing or struggling to piece together a communication that is jittery and full of interferences. In stressful, fast-paced environments, voice communications are often urgent: the caller uses voice to ensure the other party receives the information and has the chance to ask any questions immediately; the quality of these conversations is a key enabler.



Productivity

When a sales assistant on the shop floor calls their colleague in the back to find out if a specific item is available, they need immediate answers. Voice communication ensures that the information is relayed to the customer in real-time, helping the sales assistant close the sale and provide an exceptional customer experience. Similarly, accommodating rapid shift changes or integrating new tasks into a management schedule can be carried out quickly when workers are able to interact via voice.



Voice of discontent

Unfortunately, far too many businesses are plagued by poor voice quality.

Instead of enabling workers to connect faster and more clearly, inadequate voice connections play the opposite role of causing confusion, error, and annoyance. Poor voice quality can cause seconds of lost audio, delayed rings, and missed calls, irritating roaming issues, gaps in audio traffic, choppy sound quality, and dropped calls. As a result, people are not reachable when they should be. And often once the connection is made, it is relayed in a disorderly fashion or with gaps, making it extremely difficult to interpret.

This is because the majority of today's device vendors have not made voice communications a priority and thus do not specialize in Voice over Wi-Fi or DECT. As a result, their customers have to put up with their mobile devices using unreliable radio connections to certain frequencies to determine access points, which results in interrupted calls.

Danger hurtling down the line

While it's annoying to strain your ears and try and reconstruct the conversation that a choppy line has compromised, the effects of poor voice communications on your business can be much more damaging.

Less productive

Inadequate voice quality can reduce productivity in any industry. Take retail: poor call quality between shop assistants and stock room staff results in delays and can cause shoppers to lose interest in their purchase, go to a competitor, or choose to shop online. The same applies to busy hotels where the misunderstandings caused by poor voice communications may mean a hotel room is not ready on time, or a conference room is not equipped for an event. Bad experiences like these can significantly damage your bottom line.

Dangerous Misunderstandings

In addition to impacting productivity and efficiency, a bad line can have serious consequences. For example, in a healthcare environment, it is critical that information comes across crystal clear. When information is misheard or misinterpreted, clinicians risk making decisions that are detrimental to patient outcomes.

Similarly, emergencies can escalate quickly in noisy manufacturing environments where industrial machinery is operating. Clear voice connections mitigate operational risks, prevent serious accidents, and help workers get immediate backup where and when they need it.

Dialling it up

To provide crystal clear communications throughout the enterprise and ensure the safety and productivity of all workers, it is necessary to choose a provider that is part of a network of leading-edge Wi-Fi access point (AP) vendors committed to delivering top-class WLAN deployments.

Wi-Fi products need to provide high-quality voice performance and roam to better APs as quickly as possible when needed to ensure their networks can handle the demands of enterprise-grade voice traffic.

Devices also need to be optimized to deliver exceptional voice quality, seamless AP handoffs, efficient bandwidth management, and robust network security. This requires customizing market-leading chipsets and microphones as well as device roaming and scanning capabilities.

Most of all, however, voice needs to be prioritized over data to ensure that this key element, which needs to be delivered smoothly to avoid misinterpretation, is delivered in a timely and clear way to support workers in their day-to-day.



About Spectralink

As an award winner in mobile technology, Spectralink has been transforming the way our customers work and communicate for 30+ years. Through our determination to do extraordinary things, we enable mobile workforces and empower our customers and partners to explore what's next, what's possible. With our enterprise grade, best-in-class mobile solutions, we are with our customers wherever they work, however they need us. Our people, commitment to innovation and our passion are our foundation for success.

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