

The sound of intellect: Job seeker's voice reveals intelligence

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A résumé highlighting stellar professional credentials and experience could pique the interest of a prospective employer, but it's your voice that may actually help you land the job.

A new study by University of Chicago Booth School of Business Professor Nicholas Epley and Ph.D. candidate Juliana Schroeder found that when hypothetical employers and professional recruiters listened to or read [job candidates'](#) job qualifications, they rated the [candidates](#) as more competent, thoughtful and intelligent when they heard the pitch

than when they read it—even when the words used were exactly the same. As a result, they liked the candidate more and were more interested in hiring them.

However, the addition of video did not influence evaluations beyond hearing the candidate's voice, the researchers note.

"In addition to communicating the contents of one's mind, like specific thoughts and beliefs, a person's speech conveys their fundamental capacity to think—the capacity for reasoning, thoughtfulness and intellect," says Epley.

Titled "The Sound of Intellect: Speech Reveals a Thoughtful Mind, Increasing a Job Candidate's Appeal," the study will be published in an upcoming issue of *The Journal of Psychological Science*, the highest ranked empirical journal in the field of psychology.

In a series of experiments, the researchers asked a group of Chicago Booth MBA student job candidates to develop a short pitch to the company for which they would most like to work. They created written pitches and spoken pitches (videotaped).

In an initial experiment, a separate group of evaluators judged the spoken pitches by either watching and listening to the video recording, listening to the audio only, or reading a transcript of the pitch.

The evaluators who heard the pitch subsequently rated the candidate as more intelligent, thoughtful and competent than the evaluators who only read a transcript of the pitch; the evaluators who watched the video pitch did not rate any differently than those who heard the pitch. In fact, evaluators who heard the pitch reported liking the candidate more and reported being significantly more likely to hire that person.

In another experiment, the evaluators who listened to trained actors reading job candidates' written pitches out loud believed those candidates were more intelligent and wanted to hire them more than the evaluators who read candidates' own written pitches.

Even professional recruiters (who recruit candidates from Chicago Booth) were more likely to hire the candidates whose pitches they could hear than those whose pitches they read.

Epley concludes: "When conveying intelligence, it's important for one's voice to be heard—literally."

Provided by University of Chicago

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