

## Correcting Your Verbal Pauses

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There is much truth to the cliché, "it's not what you say, but how you say it." And that is very important in the sales profession, where not only your words, but also your actions while you say them can convince a prospect to become a client.

In the mortgage field, where a person trusts you to help them with an important financial transaction, projecting your knowledge and confidence will keep them in your office.

Using words like um, ah, uh, you know and like, among others, distracts from that image. Behavioral coach Sharon Sayler says those words, which she calls verbal pauses, divert and muddle your message.

Her suggestions to eliminate the use of verbal pauses:

- Keep breathing. Maintain low natural breathing.
- Fill the silence with a gesture and/or smile.
- Use shorter sentences.
- Eliminate the reasons for audible pauses, which include lack of familiarity with the topic, discomfort with silence, nervousness, habit or shallow breathing.
- Practice beforehand. Record yourself and listen for your favorite verbal pause fillers.

"The ums, ahs, uhs and you knows are warning signs that you need to breathe. When you run out of oxygen and your brain starts feeding unintelligible words to your mouth, stop talking and start breathing," Sayler said.