

108 - Compelling Speaker Tips for Podcasters and Youtubers with John Henny

John Henny 0:00

By spending some time and working on your voice, just making sure that you're able to communicate as efficiently and truthfully as possible. It really does pay dividends. It really does captivate the listener.

SEO Leverage Podcast Intro Music 0:21

Welcome to the SEO Leverage Podcast, where we talk about search, marketing and conversion.

Gert Mellak 0:31

Welcome back to SEOLeverage.com podcast episode 108. My name is Gert Mellak, your host on this show. And today we are going to go a little bit away from SEO. But we are going to help YouTubers podcasters coaches in particular, and everybody who is using their voice knowingly or not knowingly to become better performance and really captivate their audience. And I'm very much looking forward to this episode, I've brought on the expert in voice training, John Henny to this podcast. Welcome to the show, John.

John Henny 1:07

I'm glad to be here. Thank you.

Gert Mellak 1:09

It's such an honor to have you here. You're very famous in your industry in music, invoice training, voice teaching, you have been doing this for 30 years. When I read your biography you've worked with so many big names, everybody would recognize here. And I'm so fascinated, because I think we share one thing here in particular, and this is third, in my case, I've been working so much in digital marketing, that I at some point, I think I was able to become a better SEO just because I have so many skills around the SEO field, accumulated over time, that I can now employ them and become a better SEO consultant. And I feel this is something that really resonated with me when I read about your biography, and we have been knowing each other for a while, where you have garnered so much experience, over the years around the voice, voice training have worked with literally 1000s of people, helping them improve their voice. So I find it fascinating that you are now bringing this in to the speaker's world with your compelling speakers program. So really, really congrats on that one. I think this is fascinating. And I think this definitely puts you in a unique position.

John Henny 2:18

Yeah, I'm actually really excited when I work with speakers, it's actually really fun for me, because a lot of this is new for them. And even though I work with singers, it's really true that any time you are speaking, you're actually singing. They actually don't know which came first whether we started singing and that kind of turned into speech, or speech gave birth to singing, but they really are one in the same. Obviously singing has more demands. But if you take the ideas, and the tools of a great singing performance, and you utilize those in your speaking voice, you can really transform the way you communicate with people.

Gert Mellak 3:05

If it's really impressive. And I've seen this in my own journey, we have been working together not only in SEO, but also working on my voice. Thankfully, a little bit of turned into a compelling speakers during and in the meantime, it's really interesting. Before we hit record on the show, I listened to Episode One, this is episode 108. Right, I listened to Episode One of this podcast, and everybody listening here, please don't do that. Because there has definitely been a huge difference. I think the last 3040 episodes probably have been recorded after our speaking training. But for me, it's interesting that not only is this something that's noticeable, there's a noticeable difference. But also, it's not that we have been working on this for months. And I was practicing every single day. I went through your program, obviously you had I think what did we have three, four one on one sessions, five maybe. And I obviously did a little bit of homework and details, those practice sessions, but the difference is mind blowing. So it's definitely still on a journey. But just seeing what is possible is really, really fascinating. How is it possible that a monotonous speaker like me, by nature, can turn the sound somewhat engaging after a few sessions?

John Henny 4:21

Well, it really is first is just awareness. And I think it's understanding what it is that the voice is really doing. The voice is not only our primary means of communication, but it's our primary means of emotional connection with others. And as we know, whether you're podcasting, doing YouTube, you're in sales, if you can't connect emotionally with your listener, you're far more persuasive and you're far more compelling. And so, once you understand that, and you begin to go okay, so how do we use our voice to really connect with others, who are the people who are the best at using the voice to connect with other people in an emotional way. And it's not speakers, it's not politicians, it's great singers, great singers can move people to tears. And they use specific tools. In order to do this. Now, they, they accumulate these tools, and they work them so much that they're not consciously thinking about them. And I ultimately don't want you thinking about the mechanics of your voice. But if you work, just some of these aspects to find the music, if you will, in your own voice. And then you can infuse this with emotion and honesty. And really just sing your song and connect with your audience, you're going to notice a profound change. And that's one of the things with you, you really just started to find the melody in your voice. And just really the magic of using your voice in a proper way.

Gert Mellak 6:05

It's really interesting that you say awareness, because this is probably something I noticed, at least once a day, since we were working together, were just start explaining an SEO strategy maybe. And I kind of feel Hey, this is this doesn't sound right. While I'm speaking rather, I can do SEO in my sleep. So I can actually listen to me, but I also now pay attention to my voice. And sometimes then I pause or drink a glass of some coffee or something like this, and just try to start fresh, because there's definitely some awareness happening. I'm listening to myself as analysis sounds too boring. Let's kind of wrap this up a little bit in a different way. It's so interesting to then also see the reaction of people, right? So very often I do like webinars or trainings for some group workshop the other day, for example, and you can just see where people start looking away, they start looking down, they start yawning, they start stretching, stretching everything. And then suddenly you change the tonality of your voice. And suddenly the other kind of they get in a better posture. Again, they might even ask a question that because they just came back. We also focused on getting a lot of people to webinars, getting a lot of views to videos, getting a lot of downloads to our podcast. But at the end of the day, even if you get those views, if you can't maintain them, with your way of presenting with your way of communicating. Actually, what's the point, right?

John Henny 7:30

Yeah, you have to find ways to constantly reengage their attention, right? We all talk about how attention spans seem to be getting shorter and shorter. And we're bombarded with distractions constantly. And attention really is the coin of the realm. I mean, that's what Facebook has built their fortune on, is attention. And there's so many people fighting for attention. And with the voice if what you're saying, you become disconnected from, if you're thinking about something else, if your speech patterns start to become predictable, if you just start to talk in a pattern that people know what you're going to sound like the next sentence, they're going to start to tune away. Well, it's it's a lot of people. Yeah. And what singers know to do is just do tricks of phrasing. They'll hesitate on a note when you're expecting something and then they pull back slightly. You may not notice that they're doing it, but what they're doing is they're setting up expectations and then not delivering on them and that reawakens the listeners interest, and it reawakens their attention and they're doing it constantly. And you learn through your voice that you can vary the tempo, you can vary the intensity and just where you hit accents and even the melody of your voice, you know, just I will have people if they have to, let's say make a presentation in their opening statement. And they're not really feeling it. I have them pretend they're in the world's worst musical. Alright, you don't have to worry about it sounding good, but just sing it, be really over the top with it, right? This is a really cheesy musical. And then they'll sing it through and and then I'll say, good. I want you to keep that flow. I want you to keep that energy. I want you to keep that music in what you're saying. And it works. It's fascinating.

Gert Mellak 9:30

It definitely works for me as well. Specifically, I remember one technique you told me this was also like exaggerating, I think a transcript from our podcast or something like that. And it felt like if this was a door, I have my door always like slightly open. But there's only so much that can get through right and then you do, you had me do those exercises and it felt like yeah, this door is

now wide open. Now I have a little bit more range. I have more possibility to actually use my voice. I have more differences. I can speed up, I can slow down and felt like, it felt like actually liberating in a sense, but definitely this awareness, obstacle needs to be overcome. But this is really like they, they meant to have in mind, let's now open the door to my voice. Because it's usually, as an Austrian native speaker, it's usually quite close.

John Henny 10:19

Yeah, it's interesting, because I think you have a wonderful sounding voice. I mean, it just, it's a really vibrant voice. But what I love is that you've really found your optimal speaking pitch range. And this is something that people miss. And one of the big mistakes I see people make is they associate speaking lower with more authority. And there is some truth in that, right, because they don't want to be talking up here. But what people do is they end up talking too low. And so they start going down here. And once you're speaking too low, your voice doesn't have enough acoustic energy. And so in order to be heard, because people will start to strain you, you will start to squeeze your voice a little more. And then people end up their voices sore, they're constantly clearing their throat, they can't make it through a whole presentation without starting to feel hoarse. And I love when I listened to your voice, you're just you're really in that nice pocket of just the right pitch. I mean, I that's one of the first things I help people find is their optimal speaking pitch. Because once they're there, that's going to give them not only vocal health, but people are going to be able to hear them. So again, kudos to you, because you really worked hard on this.

Gert Mellak 11:39

It definitely will help the way you explain this, I'm going to admit something here. I had no idea somebody could talk so much about the voice before we started working with you. That was just just something given, right. So that the voice is my voice, my voice is my voice. And this is about it. Obviously, there are singers that have a singing voice, and was pretty much my knowledge they can but then I, I remember all kinds of shapes, you pretty much drew for me on how they broke records and this tube and that tube and I I don't remember the terminology anymore. But I do remember how you explain how something is more squeezed and made long and those sounds how they come out. And it was fascinating. So the approach of making something actually understandable for someone who has no idea about it. And actually giving this impression of you can do this, your body is made for this, you just need to kind of unlock a few things here, are definitely was very encouraging. And I also see this a lot in different channels now. So for example, in YouTube, people might not know that you have a really famous YouTube channel in the music industry. John Henny Vocal Studio with more than a hundred thousand, 136,000, I think, was the last time I checked subscribers, which is amazing. So obviously, you know a thing about two about YouTube. What I find fascinating when I read something about YouTube is that, obviously the engagement actually matters. I want you to ask you, how can the voice of a YouTuber actually help them grow their channel?

John Henny 13:07

Yes, so they've done studies. And it's quite fascinating where they had people sit with a partner, and they had to gauge what their emotional state was, as the person was talking. And they first

did it where the person could hear but also see the other person. And then they removed the visual component, they either put up a divider, or they turned out the lights. And when they removed the visual component, the ability of the listener to correctly gauge what the speaker was feeling went up. So even though YouTube obviously has the visual component, and it's important, it is the sound of your voice, it is your voice that is truly connecting with the viewer. So when you just spend some time, understanding how your voice works, how it's going to sound best, and also how to use emotional intention to really focus on what your goal is for the listener or viewer, what you want them to receive from you and just work exercises, to have that in your voice to be able to infuse the vibrations of your voice with that emotional intensity and honesty. You're going to connect with people on a deeper level and they're not going to understand totally why you're more compelling than the other person. They're just going to keep listening to you.

Gert Mellak 14:47

I think that's fascinating and it just opens up so many possibilities. And so many thoughts. I was just thinking about the podcast I have. I had been doing several podcasts in the past, on the past ones in Spanish, now we have SEO Leverage in English, and it was fascinating for me to see how much people connect with me on podcasts. This is now the first one where we also have a video component on most episodes. But the past ones only had audio. And I was speaking in German speaking accent in Spanish, so I didn't have much expectation of how people would actually receive the message, that they had not gone through chum Hainese voice training yet. But even there, this audio component actually came through. So it was fascinating to see this is really people literally hanging on every single word you say, when they just have this audio component, and they kind of really connect with you. I had people reach out to me and say, when we went on a call and say, I feel I know you already right? I've listened to the first 36 episodes. So it was really fascinating to see this. And then obviously, I understand more engagement, in more practical terms really, also then drives a YouTube channel lab. Would you say? That's correct?

John Henny 15:59

Absolutely. Yeah. And even as technology keeps expanding, and we've obviously had some huge shifts in technology in recent months, with AI, a human component doesn't go away, I would argue it becomes even more important as we become daily aged with technology. And you have to remember that the voice is the first thing you hear. I mean, you hear your mother's voice as you're developing. And you just as you come out into the world, you hear voices and even the way that we talk to babies is so instinctual, the baby talk, we're teaching them vowel sounds. And you can see the child moving their lips and getting their little coos and ahhs going. And so the voice again, music and language, they're the same thing. One begot the other. It is how we connect. And by spending some time and working on your voice, just making sure that you're able to communicate as efficiently and truthfully as possible. It really does pay dividends, it really does captivate the listener.

Gert Mellak 17:15

One thing I've found fascinating was that when I started preparing for my calls, with some voice exercises, two minutes, three minutes, I found the conversations went much better. In my theory, the energy is different, right? The energy of the entire conversation from the first sentence is completely different.

John Henny 17:35

It is, well you're talking about vibration, and just the vibration of the voice. I mean, in so many religions, people will sing. People will chant. And this internal vibration changes our energy. I don't care how well you think you sing, because we all sing I really is a voice teacher, when somebody tells me they can't sing. I absolutely disagree with them. And it's only because we've taken what we used to do socially and communally. And now we place people on a pedestal and these people sing and the rest of us don't, we all sing. And I will challenge you, if you are frustrated. If you're feeling depressed, if you're just not in a great mood stressed, go in a room somewhere and sing for a couple of minutes. I don't care how you sound, I promise you, you will walk out in a different state, you cannot be in a bad mood. When you sing. And after you sing it will rejuvenate you. So just even doing these exercises and getting these vibrations going will set you up to have a better conversation.

Gert Mellak 18:48

And it's so impressive what the possibilities are. We've heard a lot of different things and I want to talk about your compelling speaker program. But really recapping a little bit from your tips here from my journey here. It seems to all start with awareness. So hey, there is this voice thing that I'm using every day, I could actually make a better use of it. Right. I love that you mentioned intentionality. We had this a few episodes ago also stressed very much from Stephan Spencer, for example, who very much said that one of the key aspects to whatever he has achieved in his career was actually this intentionality. And this definitely also reminds me of an exercise you did with me where said hey, let's read this phrase with different intentions. And this was a really, really interesting one for me. So you have set an intention and mind you read it, it sounds completely different with a different intention. But really, this is awareness. We have an intention behind it. We really try to get some engagement going by just playing with a voice, doing some singing exercises, just opening up what however it sounds just really opening up this range a little bit more and really then see what is actually happening. I can certainly personally attest to the positive impacts, I'm seeing in my conversations. I know you've got your compelling speaker program, compelling speaker.com, I want you to talk a little bit about what's the best way for somebody listening to this, to actually start using your expertise or your program to become a better speaker.

John Henny 20:21

There's a couple of different ways that people will work with me. Obviously, I work one on one with people like I did with you. I've done master classes and trainings for a number of different groups all over the world. But then, yes, the compelling speaker formula, that's my course, where I've really taken everything and just boiled it down to its essence. And I've created a number of courses. But on this one, I really wanted it to be super concise, and really give people results quickly. So the whole focus is in the minimum amount of time to give you the maximum

result. And yet it starts with awareness. When we say singing exercises, I do utilize exercises that I will utilize with singers. But for speakers, I use them in a different way. I'm not trying to push your range up to high seas and these big high notes. Although as an added side benefit, your singing will get better if you are singing, but it's really to just begin to free up the voice and allow you just start feeling it. And even just resonance. That's one of the key areas that I don't think people are aware of is what resonance does. And just very quickly, your vocal cords, they buzz like a trumpet players lips. So they're just make this little tiny clacking sound, but it's the journey through your throat and then through your mouth, that enhances the voice that gives us vowels that gives us a bright voice, adult voice. And when you learn to utilize your vocal tract properly, and it's not that hard to do, but once you become aware of what resonance feels like, that is really the magic sauce. That's what makes your voice sound better. That's what makes your voice carry through a room, people will associate a voice with lots of resonance as more authoritative. So you're not having to try and talk too low. And when people say they have a bad sounding voice, I'm telling you, you don't. You just need to use it in the right way. So those are the different ways that I work with people. But I'm very, very excited about the course and people being able to do this self study.

Gert Mellak 22:43

Yeah, that's amazing. I think you'd really good because the courses is probably the easiest start to do the exercises when you're alone at home. It might feel a little bit funny at the beginning, it did for me. But I can certainly say this. Yeah, I've been through the course as well. I like how practical it is and you have your kind of context, which I think is interesting always to know what I'm actually doing not just exercise, but what is actually happening in my body with. I remember you asking me where do you feel this sound? And this was an interesting one. I didn't know I could feel sound in certain parts of my head. But I can. So this was a lot of awareness there as well. And then definitely, it's a journey. I can personally also only recommend everybody to give this a go check out compelling speaker.com. Right, head over there. Check this out. John handy. Is there anything I should have asked you? You know, I don't know what I don't know. Is there anything that you think our listeners should know about voice training, about how you approach this that we haven't been talking about, before let you go?

John Henry 23:46

I think the main thing is just become more aware of your voice. When you're speaking today, pay attention where you feel the vibration start really connecting with the experience of making sound. I mean, it's actually quite fascinating that we can take these two little pieces of soft tissue whose main job it is, to stop objects from going down into your lungs. And we're able to use them in such a way that we have language and music and all of this expression and the wide range of sounds that we can make and just know that your voice is capable of so much and I want you to just reconnect with making sound. I'm just fascinated endlessly fascinated with the human voice. It's an instrument like no other. It connects with people like no other. There's no American Idol or version of Guitar Player or piano player. He is the voice and the voice is the most important tool you have, no matter what it is that you're doing. Even in your personal relationships, it is the most important tool you have. And I just encourage you to spend a little time refining it, and using it to its utmost.

Gert Mellak 25:11

It's really fascinating to me that there's so much presentation training out there, focusing on body language, focusing on speaking louder, speaking silent, speed and gestures. Not a single speaker presentation training is focusing on a voice. I think you're fulfilling here a huge need in the market. I've definitely been through my fair share of presentation trainings as well. And it was really the first time where we were the voice was actually a thing that might be actually worth focusing on a little bit. So thank you very much, John, for taking the time to come join us today. We are going to put a summary up over at [SEO leverage.com](http://SEOleverage.com) forward slash podcast. This is episode 108. And if you want to get in touch with John Henny, head over to compelling speaker.com, highly endorsed, as you have heard about my own journey here. And if you want to get a before and after listen to this episode one, but only for 30 seconds or so. And then you probably fall asleep. Thank you so much, John, for everything you've been doing for me, and it's really great to work with you and thanks for coming to the show.

John Henny 26:18

Thank you so much Gert.