

# In the winery story, the body speaks before words do

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*In winery hospitality, staff spend most of their preparation time on what to say – but research shows that words account for only 7% of what a visitor actually perceives. The rest comes through voice, rhythm, pauses, and body language. Three practical tools – deliberate pausing, physical proximity, and rhythm variation – can transform every visit without changing a single word of the script.*

Most people who work in wine hospitality spend 90% of their energy preparing what to say. Almost no one asks, however, **how to say things.**

Research on communication is fairly clear: verbal content – the words you choose – accounts for roughly 7% of what the listener perceives and retains. The remaining 93% comes

through the voice, rhythm, pauses, gestures, gaze, and posture.

Put it plainly: you can have the most refined brand story in the industry, but if you deliver it with a vacant stare and the flat voice of someone reading off a sheet, you've already lost.

Those who work in a winery's hospitality know perfectly well what they need to say. They've repeated it hundreds of times. Yet in too many cases, every visit resembles a technical execution. A script delivered with precision, but without conviction. Without that quality of presence that makes the visitor feel: **this person is here for me and here with me.**

This dynamic has a very specific cause. When you're too focused on what to say, the body stops participating. You stop smiling. The rhythm flattens out. Pauses disappear. And the person in front of you, even unconsciously, picks up on it. They can't explain it, but they sense something is missing.

What's missing is the paraverbal. The tone of voice. The sudden acceleration when you reach the most exciting part of the story. The strategic whisper, the one where you lower your voice to signal you're about to share something rare.

**The body doesn't lie. And the visitor knows it.**

There's a useful thought experiment. Think about the last story that truly captivated you. A podcast, a storyteller at a dinner table, a child recounting their school day with that unstoppable energy. What did that narrative have that the last three corporate presentations you attended were missing?

It probably wasn't content that was lacking, but intention. Intention doesn't come through words. It comes through the body. And the body, when we're too focused on the text, gets

pushed aside as a secondary variable.

The result is paradoxical: the more we prepare on content, the more we risk appearing distant. The expertise shows, but the connection is absent.

## **Three tools that change the experience, without changing the content**

The first is the pause. Not the pause because you've forgotten what comes next, but the deliberate pause – the one you create before a revelation. Try staying silent for three seconds before telling the most meaningful episode in your winery's history. Three seconds seem like nothing. In a presentation, they're an eternity. **And that eternity tells the listener: what I'm about to say matters.**

The second is physical distance. Do you move closer to people when you want to share something personal? Do you step back, instead, when you want to build anticipation? Physical proximity is a narrative tool that almost no one uses consciously, yet it creates atmosphere instantly.

The third is variation in rhythm. A monotonous story, even with excellent content, puts people to sleep. A story that accelerates in moments of tension, slows down in moments of emotion, and stops in crucial moments, keeps people awake. You don't need to be an actor. You need to be present.

Those who visit a winery take home an emotion, not a manual. And emotions don't come from content. They come from the way someone looks at you while telling you something they love. From the tone with which they lower their voice on a detail they want you to remember. From the pause they take before telling you something true.

Those things aren't memorized. They're trained. And to train them, you must first stop believing that content alone is

enough.

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## Key points

1. **Verbal content accounts for only 7%** of what a visitor perceives and retains
2. **Excessive focus on what to say causes the body to stop participating**, breaking emotional connection
3. **The deliberate pause before a key moment signals importance** and captures the listener's attention
4. **Physical proximity and rhythm variation are narrative tools almost never used** consciously in wine hospitality
5. **Emotions, not content, are what visitors take home**; they must be trained, not memorized