

We listen to people every day, but how well do we do it? Truly effective communication relies on people listening with the intent to understand each other. Listening skills enable a manager to understand the intentions and feelings of their team, your employees will be more open, positive, and motivated if they feel they are being heard and will strive to do their best for the team.

6 KEY ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

					
PAY ATTENTION	WITHHOLD JUDGMENT	REFLECT	CLARIFY	SUMMARISE	SHARE

Listening Skills Exercise: Summarise, Summarise, Summarise!

For at least one week, at the end of every conversation in which information is exchanged, conclude with a summary statement. In conversations that result in agreements about future obligations or activities, summarizing will not only ensure accurate follow-through, it will feel perfectly natural. In conversations that do not include agreements, if summarizing feels awkward just explain that you are doing it as an exercise.

ACTIVE LISTENING



Removing all distractions

Effective listening involves being able to focus in on speech sounds while disregarding other noise. An active listener will not be distracted.



Listening to speaker's signs and sounds

Paired with hearing, attending is the other half of the receiving stage in the listening process. The listener fully concentrate, understand, respond and then remember what is being said.



Feeding back that you have understood

Nonverbal cues which show understanding such as nodding, eye contact and leaning forward. Brief verbal affirmations like "I see..", "I know...", "sure", "or I understand".

Here are 10 tips to help you develop effective listening skills.

1. Be attentive, but relaxed – be present and pay attention
2. Face the person speaking and maintain eye contact.
3. Send the nonverbal message that you are listening
4. Avoid early evaluation – Listen without judging
5. Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
6. Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions."
Interrupting sends a variety of messages. It says:
 - "I'm more important than you are."
 - "What I have to say is more interesting, accurate or relevant."
 - "I don't really care what you think."
 - "I don't have time for your opinion."
 - "This isn't a conversation, it's a contest, and I'm going to win."
7. Listen (and observe) for feelings
8. Ask clarifying questions – wait for the speaker to pause to
9. Pay attention to what isn't said—to nonverbal cues.
10. Summarise – Give the speaker feedback.