

5 Tips for Supercharging Your Listening Skills

Whether you are in customer service or sales, we have to be willing to listen to our prospective and current customer's needs. Let me say that again in case you did not hear me the first time.

YOU have to be **WILLING** to **EFFECTIVELY** listen to people's needs.

#1

Paying Attention

Get rid of distractions

If you are in the office, you have buzzing going on all around you from everyone else. If you are working from home, you have the laundry pile building up, the dishes to unload, the dog barking, etc. It is so easy to become distracted. Make sure you allow yourself time away from those distractions to honestly listen for the context in which you are receiving the content.

Don't prep for your rebuttal

This is not the court of law, well for some it may be, but for most reading this article it isn't. If you are preparing a rebuttal, then you aren't actively listening. To make sure I am not mentally preparing, I take notes on what the person is saying so I don't miss anything that needs to be addressed.

#2

Show You're Listening

Whether you are in person these quick tips show you are listening. It is amazing that what you do in person transfers easily remotely without being seen.

- 1.) Nodding with an occasional affirmation which encourages the speaker to continue and that you understand them
- 2.) Smile and use other positive facial expressions
- 3.) Make sure your posture is open and interested

These simple gestures make a difference and the person will appreciate you for the time you take to understand their concerns.

#3 Providing Feedback

As a listener, your role is to understand. Sometimes that is easier said than done, but if you need clarification there is nothing wrong with asking reflective questions such as:

- 1.) What I am hearing is...
- 2.) What do you mean by... when you say...
- 3.) Is this what you mean... when you say...

Summarizing what you heard for feedback is also acceptable. Never assume.

#4 Deferring Judgment

Have you interrupted someone speaking and as soon as you did you knew it was not a good idea? If you haven't, trust me it is a waste of time to interrupt someone because it only annoys them more. Allow them to finish before countering or asking more questions.

#5 Responding Appropriately

Active listening is to respect and acknowledge to gain details and perspective. Being defensive will get you nowhere and quickly.

- 1.) Be sincere and honest in all your responses
- 2.) Deliver your responses respectfully
- 3.) Treat others as you would want to be treated



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