

## Listening Skills: How to Recognize & Repeat Them

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"I listen fine. It's the others who have a problem."

### - Famous Last Words

You probably understand the importance of listening and communication skills in your business. After all, people must listen to each other to work as a team, improve performance and conduct business successfully. To effectively coach listening skills in your work force, it's important to review the elements of effective listening.

#### **What Successful People Do**

The overall best performers are people who are consistently able to read their audience and from that foundation, build a following. In the simplest of words, they listen. They diagnose people's inclinations and the logical content of their thoughts, needs and wants. They find out precisely what it would take to provide leadership, contribute to teamwork, offer service, solve problems, or advance opportunities. Then they act on what they've learned.

These are subtle but highly effective skills. We all use these tactics in our most successful moments, yet we find these same skills difficult to define or use consciously. However, there are ways to break these skills down, explain them and coach them in others. With this type of coaching people are able to use these skills more frequently and with greater success.

#### **Some Keys to Effective Listening**

- When beginning a conversation with others, keep in mind that everyone is a customer for your ideas. Their decision about whether to cooperate will influence your results.
- Begin listening to others with a neutral, open mind. This allows you to really concentrate and focus on what others are saying.

- Pay attention to the logical content of what someone is saying but be mindful of how they say it to discover their true feelings about the subject. A person's feelings are key determinants in decision making. If you listen for emotions rather than words, you will notice that you have a deeper understanding of how decisions are made.
- Respond in such a way that you prove you are taking the other person seriously.
- Demonstrate respect for their point of view.