

## Effective Listening

While hearing is a physical function, effective listening requires a strategic skill-set to overcome barriers and lead to understanding. Functional listening does not always come naturally and requires an intentional effort of commitment, reflection, and reaction.

Many conversations are not planned in advance, so being able to quickly put aside the noise and activities of the day and focus on the words, body language, and perspective of the speaker, creates an atmosphere of approachability and respect.



A listener that ignores or dismisses the perspectives of others, and prematurely offers their opinion, short-circuits the conversation. Be alert that your verbal and non-verbal reactions set the tone for all interpersonal communication.

Ask questions to enhance your understanding and underscore the value of the speaker's core premise, ideas, or opinions. This will drive the conversation deeper to discover insights and logical alternatives, while positioning you with the authority and the right to offer your counsel and direction.

Consider that effective listening creates a valuable atmosphere for learning where you are influenced by the experience, insights and wisdom of your community.

*"In my walks, every man I meet is my superior in some way, and in that I learn from him." Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Listening is one of many soft-skills that is vital for organizational performance. It is critical to evaluate and re-tool the effectiveness of your employee interaction which not only impacts employee engagement and synergy, but ultimately creates a learning organization that is positioned to react to a changing environment.

Effective listening is a skill-set to model, and a norm to set within your community where input and perspectives are encouraged.

Assessments or surveys that capture the interpersonal skills of employees and supervisors are a fundamental resource to measure the employee experience and their impact on organizational performance.