

Listening

Our communication is made up of three parts:

55% non-verbal

Appearance
Posture
Gestures
Facial Expressions
Touch

38% tone of voice

7% actual words!

LISTEN to comprehend the real meaning

ASK questions to clarify meaning

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening requires that you focus on the other person. You help them communicate better by:

PAC

P = Probe and Paraphrase

A = Acknowledge and Analyze

C = Clarify actions/solutions

Probe and Paraphrase

Show the person that you are interested in what they have to say.

Encourage the speaker with short verbal responses.

Avoid interrupting, making judgements, or changing the subject.

Ask open-ended questions.

Use questions to keep the conversation on track.

Restate what you think you heard.

Your employee, Ellen, says to you: "Mary was absolutely rude to me!"

Response:

Your employee, Andrew, says to you: “There’s no way we can that job done by tomorrow.”

Response:

Acknowledge and Analyze

Acknowledge and analyze problems and issues.
Ensure that you and the speaker are in agreement.
Acknowledge the speaker’s emotions.

Your co-worker, Jon, says to you: “Dave always gives us such a hard time that we won’t ask him to do anything.”

Response:

Clarify and Confirm Actions and Solutions

Good listeners always seek clarification and confirmation of whatever agreements have been reached. This process ensures that each person is “on the same page.” Examples of clarification and confirmation:

- “So we will meet at 3:00 on Wednesday to discuss enhancements to the inventory system.”
- “We’ve agreed to a two week time frame on getting these changes done. That means we’ll have the project completed by April 4.”
- “Let’s make sure we both understand the next steps: you will . . . I will . . .”

Non-Verbal Signals:

Signal	Might mean...
Saying yes, but shaking head no	Saying yes, but thinking no
Listener covers mouth while you’re speaking	May be bored
Bouncing leg	Impatient, not interested
Raising an eyebrow	Questioning, not believing
Nodding head	Approval, encouragement, understanding
Looking away	Distracted, impatient, not very interested
Looking down	Doesn’t understand
Rolling eyes	Annoyed, bored
Leaning forward	Interested, concentrating
Silent	Interested, respectful
Frowning	Lack of understanding, disapproval
Restless	Message too long, uncomfortable
Folded arms	Closed attitude
Pulling on collar	Anger
Cocked head	Considering

Listening Responses:

Non-verbal:

To communicate understanding, interest, and acceptance,

- Look into the speaker's eyes.
- Nod approvingly.
- Lean toward the speaker slightly.

Paraphrase:

- "As I understand it ..."
- "What you're saying is ..."
- "If I could summarize ..."

Reflect the implication:

- "Would that mean that ..."
- "Are you saying that ..."
- "Would that help with ..."

Invite contributions:

- "What happened then?"
- "Can you give me an example?"
- "Tell me more about..."

Reflect feelings:

- "If that happened to me, I'd be upset ..."
- "How did that make you feel?"
- "I suppose that must make you annoyed."
- "That must have been satisfying."

ASKING QUESTIONS . . .

In your job as a manager or supervisor, it is important that you get good information. Miscommunication is common, but it can be avoided.

Focus on the relevant facts

For more information, ask open-ended questions

Ask closed-ended questions to get additional details

Show interest to promote additional conversation

End the conversation

Questions can be productive or draining. They can make the employee feel comfortable opening up and build trust, or cause him/her to become defensive. Think about the following questions:

Why are you behind schedule?
What's the problem with this project?
Why are you slower than the others?
What's your problem?
Who did that?
Why did you do that?
Who made that decision?

Guidelines:

Ask "what" or "how", rather than "why."

Place the focus on the person answering.

What is your opinion?

How do you feel about doing it this way?

Start with broad questions and move to wider applications.

What are you most pleased about, personally, in learning that?

Be an effective listener.

Choose your timing, if possible.

Examples of effective questions include:

What is already working?

What makes it work?

What is the objective?

What are the benefits of achieving this objective?

What can we do to move closer to our objectives?

Adapted from Enlightened Leadership, Oakley and Krug