



CH 2 Listening Skills



INTRODUCTION

- Practicing good listening skills is an important part of succeeding in the workplace. Effective listening can help you interpret information accurately, form positive relationships and develop new skills.
- Understanding the types of listening and how to become a better listener can help you form effective communication habits and apply them in your professional life.
- Listening is one of the most important communication skills, yet it's often overlooked or undervalued. Effective listening means hearing what someone is saying, understanding their perspective, and providing a thoughtful and appropriate response. In this blog, we will delve deeper into listening skills, why they are important, and how you can improve them

INTRODUCTION

What are listening skills?

- Listening skills contribute to your ability to accurately receive information when communicating with others. These skills are an important part of effective communication in the workplace.
- Developing good listening habits can help to ensure you understand the information correctly, interpret messages accurately and optimize your conversations and communications for efficiency.

Importance of Listening

Why are listening skills important?

- 1. Builds relationships:** Effective listening is key to building strong and meaningful relationships that are built on mutual respect and understanding.
- 2. Enhances problem solving:** Good listeners take time to actively listen to the situation and gain a deeper understanding of the problem, leading to effective solutions.
- 3. Improves productivity:** Listening empowers employees to assess situations, identify and resolve problems quickly, leading to improved productivity and better performance.
- 4. Increases confidence:** Feeling heard and understood empowers people to feel more confident, share their thoughts and ideas, and be more productive.
- 5. Avoids miscommunication:** Effective listening helps to avoid misunderstandings, which can lead to time and cost wastage.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

- Active listening is a combination of techniques that include careful listening, observation and non-verbal clues. Below are skills that can help you improve your active listening abilities:

1. Limit distraction

- An important part of active listening is limiting distractions so you can gather all the necessary information and details of your speaker's message. Limiting distraction could mean putting your phone away before entering into a conversation, having important conversations in a quiet, private space, or allowing yourself a brief pause to ensure you fully understand your speaker's message before responding.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

3. Reflect

- Reflecting refers to mirroring your speaker's message to convey that you understand their message. Reflecting can help assure speakers of your comprehension and can indicate your engagement in the conversation.

4. Clarify

- An important part of active listening is asking questions when you need clarification. Clarifying aspects of the conversation can indicate you're intently listening and provide you with an opportunity to confirm your understanding. To clarify, you may use specific, simple questions that require a "yes" or "no" as a response, or you may ask more general, open-ended questions that require more elaboration from your speaker.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

5. Summarize

- Restating key themes and summarizing content is an effective skill that can contribute to your ability to practice active listening. In the workplace, summarizing can help both parties confirm they understand the next steps and responsibilities. To summarize, consider offering a brief statement describing your speaker's primary message or key theme.

6. Use body language

- Using body language to demonstrate your level of engagement is another important part of active listening. You can use your body language to indicate your understanding by nodding, making eye contact and responding with appropriate facial expressions. Body language may be especially important for professionals who use therapeutic listening to complete their daily duties.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

7. Share

- Sharing involves expressing your own thoughts, feelings and experiences to relate to your speaker. This active listening technique can help you contribute to the conversation and align expectations for the next steps, deliverables and responsibilities. You can also use sharing to offer suggestions for improvement, build trust and maintain positive workplace relationships.

8. Give your full attention

- Distractions can make it difficult to focus on what a speaker is telling you. In order to become a good listener, limit as many distractions as possible and provide the speaker with your undivided attention. This includes silencing your phone, turning off your computer and avoiding the urge to multitask by checking emails or giving your attention to other tasks.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

9. Pace the conversation

- Being a good listener often includes opening a dialogue and allowing for a conversation to start between you and the speaker. Pace the conversation by determining the goal of the speaker's message and evaluating their body language to decide when it is appropriate for you to respond with your own input. Instead of rushing to fill silences, allow the speaker to finish their thoughts and acknowledge their message accordingly. This will also give you the time to absorb their message and process what they are saying before it is time for you to respond.

Importance of Listening

How to practice active listening skills

10. Ask meaningful questions

- Once it is time to open up a dialogue, the questions you ask should be meaningful and establish your investment in the speaker's message. Ask questions that can help both you and the speaker reflect on what they said as well as elaborate any points that may need extra clarification. The questions might help the speaker remember other things they wanted to say or open up a new line of dialogue worth exploring.

Importance of Listening

Types of Listening

1. Informational listening

- When you want to learn a new concept, you need to use informational listening to comprehend and retain information. This type of listening generally requires you to increase your attention span and apply focus and concentration skills. To learn something new, you must also use critical thinking skills to understand what you're learning within the context of relevant information.
- Some examples of situations using informational listening include:
- Coaching
- Work training
- Self-directed learning at home or work
- Listening to an educational ebook

Importance of Listening

Types of Listening

2. Empathetic listening

- Empathetic listening, also known as empathic listening or therapeutic listening, helps you understand other people's perspectives and visualize yourself in their shoes. Instead of just focusing on the conversation, you use therapeutic listening to relate to a speaker's experiences as if they were your own.
- Though similar, empathetic listening is different from sympathetic listening. With sympathetic listening, you aim to understand a person's feelings and emotions to provide support. Empathetic listening goes a step further by allowing the listener to relate to the speaker's experience as if it were their own.

Importance of Listening

Types of Listening

7. Critical listening

- Analyzing complex information requires critical listening, which goes beyond simply decoding a message using comprehensive listening. As a critical listener, you apply your knowledge and experience to understand the speaker's message within a broader context.
- Critical listening is essential when problem-solving at work. For example, you'd use this type of listening when determining how to handle an unusual and complex client request. You also use critical listening to analyze solutions offered by others so you can decide if you agree or disagree.

Importance of Listening

Problems of Listening

- Listening to unfamiliar dialects can present several challenges. These include difficulty understanding pronunciation variations, unfamiliar vocabulary, and different grammatical structures. Cultural context also plays a significant role, as slang or idiomatic expressions specific to a dialect may be confusing to outsiders.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Pronunciation:

- Different dialects often have unique pronunciations for the same words. For example, the pronunciation of "water" can vary significantly between American and British English.

Vocabulary:

- Dialects may use different words for the same concept. For instance, "soda" in some American English dialects is "pop" in certain Canadian English dialects.

Importance of Listening

Grammar:

- Grammatical rules can also differ between dialects. Some British English dialects might have different subject-verb agreement rules than American English dialects.

Cultural Context:

- Cultural context is crucial for understanding. Slang, idioms, and even the way speakers use nonverbal cues can be specific to a dialect and may be misinterpreted by those unfamiliar with the culture.

Speed and Fluency:

- Some speakers of unfamiliar dialects may speak quickly or have a strong accent, making it challenging for listeners to keep up and understand the message. .

Subconscious Bias:

- Individuals may have subconscious biases that affect their perception of intelligibility. Preconceived notions about the speaker or their dialect can influence how well their speech is understood.



Thank You