

## **The Power of Listening**

Most people struggle with listening. We are more inclined to speak or are busy thinking of what we want to say to really be hearing what the other person is saying. From a human relations perspective listening is important because it makes people feel appreciated and validated. From a business perspective listening is important because it is how we gain the information we need to make critical business decisions.

Listening leads to the quintessential win-win situation. Not only does it provide you with understanding, but it also earns you the appreciation of the person communicating with you. Nothing creates an atmosphere of respect and trust better than listening.

### **Why Listen?**

In addition to the good will we earn and the information we obtain when we listen, there are solid business reasons to learn to listen.

Listening ignites the imagination and gets the creative process going. Most ideas come from something we saw or heard. If we are not listening, we are reducing the influx of stimuli by 50%, and most likely reducing the potential for new ideas by a similar percentage. When we listen we are the recipients of other people's views, and with those views – by understanding those views – we are able to formulate products and services that are more likely to find their place in the market.

Finally, the relationships you built and the loyalty you earn by listening should not be underestimated. In business, loyalty is one of the key drivers of profitability because it leads to stable and sustained sales while lowering marketing and sales costs by creating positive buzz.

Listening is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

### **How to Listen**

Being a good listener isn't easy. We all have things on our minds and time constraints to consider. Tudog understands the pressures dragging you away from being a good listener, and so we offer 4 hints to help you be a better one. They are:

#### *1. Repeat Yourself*

One way to make sure you heard the other person correctly is by repeating to them what you understood and asking them if you got it right. This not only gives the person the chance to correct any misunderstandings on the spot, it also demonstrates how well you were listening and how much you care about understanding his/her point.

#### *2. Take Notes*

Taking notes is a good policy because it provides you with a written record of what was said and gives you the mechanism through which to pay attention. When you are taking notes you are careful not to miss anything said, and you are careful to make certain you

understand what was said. The speaker is appreciative because he sees the note-taking as an indication of your interest.

### *3. Ask Questions*

Nothing proves you are listening more than asking relevant questions. By asking a question you not only indicate an interest, but also a desire to attain an even deeper understanding. This makes the person speaking feel engaged and respected.

### *4. Pay Attention*

Paying attention is much more than listening. Paying attention helps us sustain listening because it keeps us focused and prevents our thoughts from drifting. People can tell when you are paying attention through your posture, your body language, the extent to which you interact, and by your facial and verbal expressions. People appreciate when you pay attention because it shows you have a genuine interest in what they are saying.

## **Leveraging Listening**

As already established, listening leads to information, and information is used as the foundation upon which we make our decisions. Leveraging listening is all about improving our processes and products, service and market presence. By listening to customers, competitors, critics and fans we can learn about how our company and our products are being viewed, and we can make adjustments to maximize and meet our potential.

Listening isn't always convenient. We have all met the person that says more than is necessary and uses far too many words to say it. But in all that babble may be brilliance, which you will most likely miss if you have tuned the person out. We can demonstrate our concern, commitment, and respect by listening. We can also improve our operations and profitability. All in all, a proposition worth listening to.