
Keeping Skills Alive

Module 1: **Listening Skills**

Objectives

At the end of your Keeping Skills Alive training session, your staff members should be able to complete the following:

1. Understand which level of listening they most often operate within
2. Identify the physical barriers which are impacting their ability to listen to customers
3. Develop strategies to deal with those barriers that are within the team's control

Agenda 45 minutes

Use the following agenda to conduct your training session:

- | | | |
|------|---|------------|
| I. | Introduction of Session | 10 minutes |
| II. | Activity | |
| | • Identification of Barriers to Listening | 10 minutes |
| III. | Activity | |
| | • Strategies to Deal with Barriers | 20 minutes |
| IV. | Summary | |
| | • Review of Next Steps | 5 minutes |

Materials Needed:

- Markers
- Flip Chart
- Masking Tape
- Master Strategies List
- Stickers (i.e. Stars)

Handouts:

Copies of handouts for each participant

- Levels of Listening
- Barriers Identification Worksheet
- Strategies Worksheet

MANAGER MEETING GUIDE

PART I. INTRODUCTION OF SESSION

TIMING: 10 minutes

KICKOFF STATEMENT:

[This is provided as a guide only and is not meant to imply that you need to follow a script.]

In a continued effort to use the information and new skills we acquired in the Phase II: **Positive Presentation** training session you attended, let's spend some time examining how well we listen to our customers.

SAY:

In our business, listening is critical if we are going to be successful with customers over the phone. Unlike face-to-face service environments, we do not get to see the physical clues that customers are using which may indicate that they are confused, angry, or quiet because they are taking notes. This lack of visual support makes improving our listening skill critical.

A number of studies suggest that there are five possible levels at which we listen:

HANDOUT 1

[Distribute Levels of Listening handout to everyone to read along.]

Level 1

Not hearing anything. Responding incorrectly and/or incompletely. Minimum involvement in communication exchanges.

Level 2

Listening but not hearing some things. Responding incorrectly. Deeper meanings are not heard. Superficial involvement in communication exchanges.

Level 3

Hearing most things. Responding correctly to all that is heard. Adequate involvement in communication exchanges. Known as passive listening.

Level 4

Hearing everything that is said and fully responding.

Level 5

Hearing everything said and not said. Responding as a result of correct interpretation of verbal and non-verbal language. Wholly involved in the communication exchanges. Known as active listening.

AGENDA/ PURPOSE

Review agenda and purpose for session. This is a critical step for involvement. It provides participants with the required framework of understanding for the work they are going to be doing over next 30 – 45 minutes.

SAY:

One of the factors that may be holding us back from listening at Level 4 is noise and distractions within our work environment. The reality is that physical distractions occur around us all the time.

As a group, we need to identify what those barriers are and develop strategies to either eliminate those barriers completely, and if we cannot do that, develop personal strategies for how we are going to minimize their impact on us.

PART II BARRIERS TO LISTENING

TIMING: 10 minutes to complete

Directions

Step 1:

To do that, we are going to work in two groups. Each of you (or each group) needs to generate a list of the physical barriers that you notice distracts you from your calls.

Sample responses to share or look for

- *Interruptions from coworkers*
- *Things being put onto your desk while you are on the phone*
- *Loud conversations around you*
- *Someone's phone has ringer set on loudest volume.*
- *People using speaker phone to listen to voicemail at a high volume*

[Option 1]

1. If you have enough team members, divide into two groups.

[Option 2]

1. If team is small, conduct this first as an individual activity.

STEP 2:

Once lists have been completed, solicit responses from individuals to develop a master list on a flip chart for everyone to see.

Ask group if there is anything else that they feel should be added to the list.

TRANSITION:

Referring to list.

Okay. So now that we know what we have to deal with on a daily basis, let's get tactical and develop strategies to deal with these barriers.

PART III STRATEGIES TO MANAGE BARRIERS

Timing: 20 Minutes

Say:

Clearly not all of these barriers are within our control. Let's spend some time identifying which barriers can we take care of.

Directions:

Step 1:

Identify as a group which barriers you can manage. Place a sticker of a star or symbol beside those barriers you can address.

Step 2:

[Option 1]

Divide "starred" barriers between participants and have them work in pairs to generate possible solutions. Allow only 5 minutes for the brainstorming piece so that you have 15 minutes to process all responses and agree as a team on actions.

[Option 2]

Conduct a single discussion to address each of the “starred” barriers. You facilitate the discussion between everyone. Your challenge will be to manage the time tightly and not allow group to get sidetracked by just one barrier.

Go through each “starred” barriers and have group develop strategies to manage that distraction. Have group identify which barriers they can collectively develop strategies for,

Sample responses to look for:

- *Putting in-baskets outside of cubicle so that if someone needs to drop something at their desk, they don't get distracted.*
- *Putting a sign on their door that says, I'm on the phone, please do not interrupt.*
- *Message board for co-workers to leave notes about lunch, etc.*

Get agreement from coworkers on those items that they can all institute. It can become your team norms in terms of how to work with each other.

Step 3:

For those items outside of group's direct control, acknowledge what they are and any next steps that may be taken as a way to eventually minimize/remove them.

{Could include items such as a broken fan which is making a clanking noise...}

PART III MEETING CLOSE

Timing: 5 Minutes

Ask: So what are our next steps to make these things happen?

[Get group to come up with specific actions they will all take.]

Ask: What fun thing can we do if someone in our group breaks one of these guidelines a gentle way of reminding him/her that we are trying to listen to our customers?

[Solicit responses and get agreement on how you will manage nonconformity.]

Thank group for their participation!

Handouts To Be Used By Manager

SAMPLE

LEVELS OF LISTENING

Level 1

- ✓ Not hearing anything.
- ✓ Responding incorrectly and/or incompletely.
- ✓ Minimum involvement in communication exchanges.

Level 2

- ✓ Listening but not hearing some things.
- ✓ Responding incorrectly.
- ✓ Deeper meanings are not heard.
- ✓ Superficial involvement in communication exchanges.
- ✓ Known as “Skimming”

Level 3

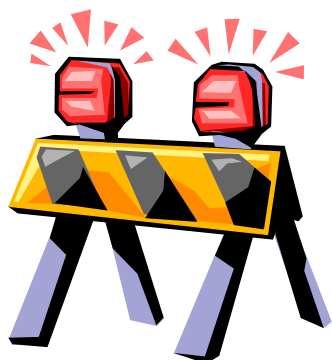
- ✓ Hearing most things.
- ✓ Responding correctly to all that is heard.
- ✓ Adequate involvement in communication exchanges.
- ✓ Known as “*Passive Listening*”

Level 4

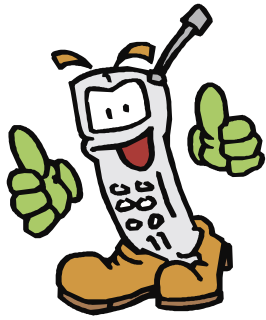
- ✓ Hearing everything that is said and fully responding,
- ✓ Known as “*Parroting*”

Level 5

- ✓ Hearing everything said and not said.
- ✓ Responding as a result of correct interpretation of verbal and non-verbal language.
- ✓ Wholly involved in the communication exchanges.
- ✓ Known as “*Active Listening*”



BARRIERS TO LISTENING WORKSHEET



STRATEGIES WORKSHEET

Original Barrier	Strategy To Manage

TEAM LEADER STRATEGIES MASTER LIST

Original Barrier	Strategy To Manage

Next Steps: