

Listening Techniques for Successful Sales

A Hammer Tip for Developing Communication Culture

Extend your effective communication into the customer experience

Much of developing a communication culture is focused on the relationship with your quality employees. Your customers' experience of your company is a natural extension of that relationship. Next to falling short of their sales call goals, not fully listening to clients is the biggest reason that companies don't close enough business. So-called Active Listening takes practice, but it is a key ingredient to fully understanding and meeting client needs. Here are three simple steps your people can take to ensure that they have their ears on.

Step 1: Become Audience-centric

Too many sales people focus on their script: the things they need to say that they think will close the sale. It is far more effective and efficient to align yourself with the person you are speaking to and have a conversation rather than delivering a monologue. Engage the client by establishing and then addressing their needs. Most importantly, speak as a listener: keep your ears open for those little interruptions that signal that the other person has something to say. Remember that if you are the one speaking, you aren't learning anything new.

Step 2: Ask Probing Questions

It isn't unusual to include some close-ended questions in a sales call. However, short and focused open-ended questions are much more revealing. Keep your questions neutral. You are looking for the truth, not a pat on the back. Avoid "why" questions, which can bring up feelings of defensiveness and reword them as "what" and "how" questions which are more instructive.

Step 3: Reinforce with Rephrasing

Many conversations are derailed by simple misunderstanding. Get in the habit of digging deeper and repeating what your client said in your own words to ensure you heard what he meant to express. Some examples are

- "Tell me more about..."
- "Give me an example of..."
- "Let me understand, what I heard was..."

For more information on listening skills, consider our Listening for Profit workshop for your team or contact us about a personalized program at 415-675-5811.



• Star talent walking out the door?

• Great ideas not reaching your ears?

• Succession/promotion issues?

We work with you to develop effective communication strategies that build a strong connection with the people you need to succeed.

We pride ourselves on treating each client as an individual and provide tools and a schedule that suit your unique goals, needs, and environment.

No cost initial assessment.

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Creating Communication Culture for Employers of Choice