



## Improve Employee Engagement and Leadership Effectiveness: LISTEN

Engaged and satisfied employees are more productive, come to work more regularly, achieve higher sales performance and are less likely to leave for another job. One of the most important ways to engage employees and build trust is to listen to and act on what they say. By listening to employees, customers and team members and leaders at all levels can make a difference in the corporate culture and the bottom line. Apply the following **L.I.S.T.E.N.** suggestions today.

### **L - Lead as an effective listening manager/supervisor.**

- Mentally trace the steps you need to take to rate a “10” as a listening manager.
- Visualize and incorporate positive listening behaviors into your interactions with employees/customers.
- Create a positive mental imprint to help you listen more effectively.

### **I - Identify and avoid common irritating listening habits.**

- Refrain from interrupting employees when they are talking and/or suggesting ideas.
- Eliminate “Yes, but . . .” statements; learn to listen to the whole idea before evaluating or making up your mind.
- Avoid distracting behaviors such as signing papers or taking incoming calls during conversations with employees.

### **S - Support employees by giving appropriate feedback.**

- Time feedback appropriately for the employee, situation and environment.
- Be specific so employees understand their strengths as well as improvement areas.
- Offer comments in a way that reduces defensiveness and increases openness.

### **T - Try different listening tools and strategies.**

- Take notes to remember specific details and technical information.
- Ask open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Summarize what was said to demonstrate that you were listening carefully.

### **E - Eliminate costly listening errors.**

- Never assume that employees start listening when you start talking.
- Tune in to technical or difficult information, even when challenged to stay focused.
- Never assume that your meanings for words are the same as the speaker’s.

### **N - Never let distractions keep you from listening effectively.**

- Close doors and windows to keep out noise.
- Turn away from visual distractions (computers, cell phones, etc.) when with others.
- Leave noisy environments, if necessary, to aid in effective listening.

Adapted from Listen Up!, this acronym was developed by Larry Barker and Kittie Watson and is downloadable from the Innolect website.