



LISTEN to Improve Leadership Effectiveness

Gallop claims that... Disillusioned and disengaged employees lose incentive to improve performance, products and services. One of the most important ways to build trust and credibility is to listen to and act on what employees have to say. By truly listening to employees, customers, and team members, 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 that employees understand their strengths as well as areas that need improvement.
- 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 it’s challenging 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 talking on the phone.
- Leave noisy environments, if necessary, to aid in effective listening.

This acronym was developed by Larry Barker and Kittie Watson and is downloadable from the Innolect website.