

Listen Your Way to Success

Meaningful and lasting success often eludes sales people, managers, parents (really everyone). There are a myriad number of reasons why this happens, but one that sticks out with a flashing red light is an inability or unwillingness to listen (really listen) to what others are telling you. Too often many of people listen only as a prelude to chime in with their thoughts, paying little attention to what the other person has to say. The impact of this failing shows up in a variety of ways.

Chief among them, especially for sales professionals are:

- **Success rates are low**, whether it is closing rates in sales, building strong relationships with subordinates or impressing your boss.
- **You get lots of chin boogie**, the situation where others tell you what you want to hear, and you fail to get to the heart of the matter.
- **Others disengage** and don't really participate in meaningful conversations.
- **Prospects delay or don't buy**, leaving you hanging and wondering why.
- **You don't get repeat or cross sales**, making your job a lot harder.
- **Clients don't refer you to others**, throwing a monkey wrench in your endless chain prospecting process.

Make it Work for You

Number one on the hit parade of pointers in listening your way to success include really zooming in on what they say about what they want and need. This is critical in sales, supervision, interacting with your kids, pretty much with everybody.

Another is finding ways to make the solution fit them. And working to describe the solution as a great way to give them what they want to see happen.

Why it Matters

A full discussion of what the other person wants and needs offers numerous benefits. Consider this starter list:

- **Map the sale** – When you give someone a chance to describe what matters to them, they will provide you the turn-by-turn directions to making the sale.
- **Find out their objections** – If you can shut up long enough and pay attention, they will communicate out loud what the sticking points will be. A smart sales person will answer those objections before they come up and derail the sale.
- **Feelings and facts** – By asking probing questions and then buttoning your lip, you can decipher what the pertinent facts are. More importantly, you will know their feelings which are the keys to the sale.
- **DBM** – Given enough time and with the right, open-ended questions, the prospect will tell you their dominant buying motive (DBM). The sale becomes far easier with that in hand.

8 Secrets to Making it Work

The secrets to making listening work for you are pretty simple. Used deliberately and regularly will make your success rates more consistent and far more predictable.

1. **Take a breath** – Our natural tendency often is to talk a lot, A little silence isn't a bad thing. Often the smarter approach is to ask a question or make an observation, then shut up. It is amazing what a prospect will share when we introduce a little dead air to the conversation.
2. **Use open-ended questions** – Broad inquiries are better than yes-no or multiple-choice questions.
3. **Avoid the interrogation** – Your intent should be to have a friendly conversation. The result will be far more effective when it flows more naturally.
4. **Talk a little, listen a lot** – No one learned anything when they were talking. Our rule is to talk no more than one-third of the time and listen two-thirds.
5. **Dig deeper** – The best interviewers (and best sales people) avoid settling for the first answer they hear. They have learned to probe deeper - and what they find out often is a difference-maker.
6. **Let them describe what they want** – Facts matter, but feelings mean so much more. When prospects' feelings are heard and the solution is directly linked to them, they buy at a much higher rate.
7. **Link solutions to their DBM** – When you know their needs, you are able to tie the solution directly to what they said they wanted to see happen.
8. **Use their words** – When you describe a product or service solution in ways that solve their fully-expressed needs success rates soar. When you describe it in their words you complete the loop.

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Not a one-size-fits-all or cookie-cutter approach. We help clients challenge conventional wisdom to achieve order of magnitude improvements.

Our job is to provide the opportunity to out-think the competition and implement the critical solutions for meaningful and lasting impact.

**WE WON'T PROMISE MIRACLES.
WE CAN PROMISE RESULTS.**