



January 28th, 2021

Business Insights

ACTIVE LISTENING TAKES WORK

Written by: Jesse LaDousa, Chief Operating Officer

Few skills in business are as important as listening. Good listening creates meaningful relationships, strong partnerships, quality products, and successful projects.

It's often said that a good listener is someone who listens carefully and attentively, taking in and processing the information being relayed to them. Many people that struggle with good listening take the approach of receiving only enough information to form a response. This bypasses the processing of the information all together as you are focused only on the response you plan to deliver; easily leading to interruption. As we like to say at Clientek: "Don't interrupt the end of my sentence with the beginning of yours."

For many of us working at home, this last year has presented a shift in how we work and interact with people. Face to face communication that we once took for granted has been replaced by endless video and/or audio calls each day. While technology has made video conferencing ubiquitous, it still

presents challenges for many of us looking to practice active listening.

Active listening involves three main areas of focus:

1. **Comprehension** - Obtaining a shared meaning between parties.
2. **Retention** - Memory of the information obtained during the listening process.
3. **Response** - Active interaction between the speaker and listener.

When we communicate in person, it is much easier to engage in active listening. We are in front of each other, occupying the same space, and directly engaging in a dialogue. We can practice key components of good, active listening such as not speaking over one another, letting others know your listening by giving them non-verbal facial expressions, and being able to repeat back to them what was

just said.

Communication via video conference is ripe with distractions, making it easy to stop being an active listener. The simple fact that the conference itself is typically presented on a laptop, desktop, tablet, or phone puts a distraction directly in the mix from the onset. How many conference calls have you been on where the other party is clearly browsing the web or typing while you are having the meeting? Would they be doing this if you were face to face having the discussion?

Good listening should build trust, show respect, and provide constructive results. This should be the goal regardless of whether we're in person or on a video conference. Take stock of how you are interacting with others during your next few conference calls. Are you focused on the discussion? Are you providing non-verbal feedback to the speaker to ensure they know you are listening? Are you giving constructive feedback and responses as part of the conversation?

Being a good listener takes work. The results will make you and your relationships better.

CONTACT US

