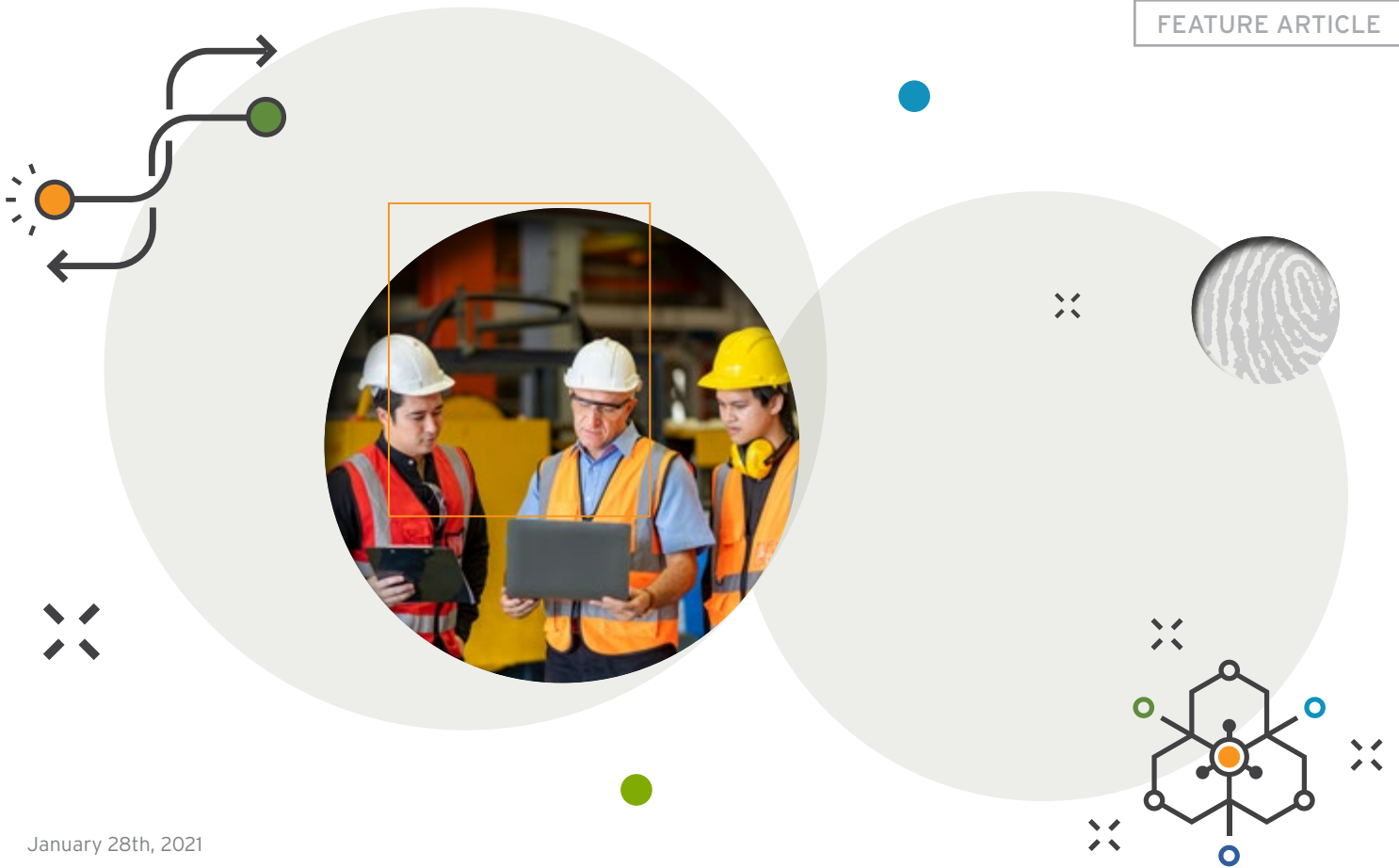




January 28th, 2021

Feature Article

LISTENING.

Written by: David Stevens, Director of Business Development

It's the will, not the skill.

One of the more memorable phrases I often hear within the Clientek walls goes like this: "You've got two ears but only one mouth, so listen twice as much as you speak." This got me thinking, while listening is absolutely critical for successful engagements, unlike our other skills (i.e., coding, software expertise, agile management, etc.) there is no formal training program or guide for its implementation. It is something we must independently master in order to become more effective communicators.

As simple as it may seem, true, unadulterated listening is incredibly difficult to achieve. From hectic environments to utterly 'yawn-worthy' content, providing your full attention can, at times, feel nearly impossible. I have identified four unique elements to take your listening to the next level.

Whether holding an internal discussion or meeting with

a new perspective client, recollection and practice of the following elements will allow you to become a better listener.

- 1. Focus on the dialog.** Successful listening requires some back-and-forth. The best listeners are those who are willing to ask a question, clarify specifics, and challenge assumptions. I am not suggesting you rudely interrupt and control the conversation, but rather push the discussion forward naturally - more so than the occasional head nod or "mhmm".
- 2. Cooperate.** It's not a competition. While good listeners are not afraid to disagree or stand in opposition, it is imperative to avoid stoking an argument. Listening is about finding areas in which your input can provide benefits or growth, not about proving that you're right and they're wrong.
- 3. Support your counterpart.** Look for ways you to make the conversation a positive experience. Acting as a

passive, uninterested participant only encourages the speaker to hurry up and finish. Good listeners convey a sense of confidence in what the speaker is saying. This creates an environment in which both parties feel comfortable and confident in discussing their differences openly.

- 4. Respond.** Good listeners provide feedback. Whether it be constructive or opinionated, people are more likely to accept your response if they believe you are a good listener. Actively responding and clarifying throughout the conversation also allows your brain to hear what was said in a way that you can better understand.

While many of us may look at being a good listener as being someone who sits still, nods their head occasionally, and regurgitates information, instead, good listeners are active participants. Rather than solely absorbing ideas and comments, they support the speaker's energy and assist them in clarifying their message.

Hear what they are saying.

Looking for more insight? Use the button below to contact us.

CONTACT US

