

# Do You Really Listen for Sales?

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# **Do You Really Listen for Sales?**

*Written by Debbie Mrazek -- Sales Expert*

For the most part, everyone believes they are a good listener. But are they really? If you are doing 60% of the talking in a sales call, you are talking TOO MUCH. That's a signal that it's time to reel it in a bit and actively listen. So, this poses the question: How can I really become a great listener? Let's break it down.

## **Asking the right questions doesn't equate to being attentive**

Even when salespeople seemingly asking the right questions to their customers, they may not be attentive and listening to the right answers. Pay close attention to the body language of the responder and how that matches to their spoken answers. A specific term called "attitude complexity" involves both speakers understanding what the other is claiming and as a good listener their attitudes become more complex and less extreme, i.e. not one-sided ("The Power of Listening in Helping People Change").

## **Measure your talking time**

If you are doing more than 60% of the talking, it's time to re-evaluate. When you're talking to a potential or existing client

that you're doing a new initiative with, how much time are you actually spending talking? And how much time are they spending talking?

## **Did I actually learn anything new?**

Once you get to the end of the call or meeting, take a look back at your notes and ask yourself: What did I learn new here?

An article found in the Harvard Business Review discusses how being paired with good listeners (vs. distracted listeners) resulted in feelings of being less anxious, more self-aware, and a higher clarity about their attitudes on the discussion ("The Power of Listening in Helping People Change"). As long as you learn *something* new from the conversation—whether it's the customer's needs that you weren't aware of or a new angle for a proposal—it's important to practice being a good listener.

## **Don't fear silence, embrace it**

Salespeople are known to talk a lot and only care about their own objectives. When people talk too much, it shows they are actually AFRAID of silence. The problem with this is that people do not all think and process the same way. Some people need a few moments to process the question and respond appropriately. Bottom line? Do not rush silence.

## **The types of listeners (S-A-L-E):**

**Scavenger Listeners** – They only are thinking about what to say next and pick up a little bit of information.

**Attention Challenge Listeners** – They can't focus on the client because they are too focused on their own presentation.

**Literal Listener** – They hear what you say, but they are only listening to the words (they are blind to the non-verbal cues of the other person).

**Empathetic Listener** – This is what you want to be. They listen first, create rapport, and gain trust with their clients.

## **Anyone can be an excellent listener**

You do not have to command a whole room, have the spotlight on you, to be able to simply listen. This includes asking people relevant questions, taking notes, and sending non-verbal affirmations (a nod, smile, leaning in). A quote that ties this together perfectly is: "Listening resembles a muscle. It requires training, persistence, effort, and most importantly, the intention to become a good listener" ("The Power of Listening in Helping People Change").

We can all be excellent listeners and communicators when we want to be. Always strive to be an empathetic listener to gain trust with your potential clients. It really can be this easy!

Has anyone ever accused you of **not** listening?

\*Moms are exempt when you answer this!!!\*

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