

GET THE JOB

Becoming a Better Listener

How Careful Listening Helps Teams Work Better and More Efficiently

Good communication is often linked to speaking clearly, but listening is just as important in the workplace. When employees pay close attention to what others are saying, they are better able to understand instructions, catch concerns early and respond in useful ways.

Researchers have long tied listening to stronger workplace relationships and better teamwork. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, says clear communication can support worker well-being and help reduce stress on the job.

Listening plays a direct role in that process because it helps people feel heard and understood.

BUILDING TRUST

Listening helps build trust between co-workers, managers and customers. When someone speaks without being interrupted and receives a thoughtful response, the exchange is more likely to stay productive. Over time, those moments can strengthen day-to-day working relationships.

It also helps reduce avoidable mistakes. A missed dead-



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line, a wrong order or a repeated task can start with incomplete attention during a meeting or conversation. By listening carefully, employees can ask follow-up questions, confirm details and make sure everyone is working from the same information.

DAILY HABITS

Better listening is often shaped by small habits.

Maintaining eye contact, avoiding distractions and allowing a speaker to finish can make conversations more effective. Taking notes during meetings or repeating key points back in a brief summary can also help confirm understanding.

These habits matter in many settings, from offices and classrooms to job sites and storefronts. In customer-facing roles, listening can help

employees understand what a person needs before offering a solution. In team settings, it can help co-workers identify shared goals and spot problems before they grow.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also notes the value of communication practices that help employees participate fully at work. Careful listening supports that goal by encouraging

respect and helping teams respond to a range of communication styles and needs.

STRONGER COLLABORATION

Listening is closely connected to collaboration. A workplace runs more smoothly when employees feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns. People are more likely to contribute when they believe others will take their input seriously.

Managers can set the tone by giving full attention during conversations, inviting questions and making space for different viewpoints. Co-workers can do the same by pausing before responding and focusing on what is being said instead of planning their next comment. Those steps can lead to clearer discussions and steadier teamwork.

In a busy workday, listening may seem like a simple act, but its impact can be wide-reaching. It supports accuracy, respect and cooperation, qualities that help workplaces stay productive and positive. For employees at any level, becoming a better listener is a practical step that can improve both individual performance and the strength of the team.