

The Basics and Value of Active Listening

Everyone likes to be heard and understood. Active listening is an integral part of selling and demands concentration, patience and emotional energy. Unfortunately sales opportunities are often lost due to poor listening. This is because one or more communication filters have been blocked making understanding difficult or impossible.

Examples of filters are individual bias, attitude, differing values and perceptions. Research shows that the majority of people function at only 25% of their active listening capacity. In sales this means lost business and an increase in the cost of sales.

The fundamentals of active listening

1. Listen to the information

Hearing is a passive and an automatic process. Conscious effort needs to be made in order to tune into what is being said. This begins the active listening process.

2. Understand the information

Accurately interpreting what the client has said is done by observing their body language, listening to their words, vocal tone and understanding their filters. Take notes if appropriate. The client will see that you really care and are trying to clarify your understanding.

3. Assess the information

Whether you agree or disagree with what has been stated, don't react by jumping to conclusions, because the information could be incomplete or filtered. When you are in doubt ask more questions or paraphrase.

4. Respond to the information

Match verbal and non-verbal feedback in a manner that communicates that you have listened, understood and accurately assessed what the client has said. This will create mutual understanding.

Inappropriate responses are:

- Reacting defensively or aggressively
- Remaining silent and not responding.

Developing active listening skills and applying same on a daily basis can become quite a differentiator between any two salespeople and lay the foundation for a long term client relationship.



For more information or if you want to discuss a sales or sales management issue then contact Kurt Newman on +61 412 252 236 or email kurt@salesconsultants.com.au.



Kurt's expertise is in improving the sales effectiveness of his clients' businesses by generating more sales and in a more profitable manner. He has guided companies to increase sales from 10-56%. Clients range from small to multinational companies and he has completed projects in Australia, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.



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