

Scoring the Effective Listening Questionnaire

Scoring and Personal Reflections on the Effective Listening Questionnaire

Questions 1-3: Giving people your full attention

Insert your score on each of the following items:

1. ___ Do you try to tune out distractions while you are listening to a colleague?
2. ___ Do you try to give your full attention to your colleagues during a conversation?
3. ___ Do you keep an open mind and not pre-judge your colleagues or their subject?

Reflect on your answers to the first three questions as they will give you an indication to what degree you are actually paying attention to your colleagues when they are speaking to you. Very often, people try to multi-task during a collegial conversation, especially if they are sitting at their desk, rather than stopping what they are doing and giving their full attention to the person who is speaking to them.

The first step to effective listening is giving people your full attention as this demonstrates that you respect them and that you are interested in what they have to say. Another key aspect of effective listening is to try to listen with an open mind and not pre-judge the direction that the conversation will take or its outcome.

Questions 4-7: Listening for understanding strategies

Insert your score on each of the following items:

4. ___ Do you encourage your colleagues to amplify or clarify their ideas?
5. ___ Do you try not to interrupt your colleagues while they are speaking?
6. ___ At appropriate times, do you summarize what was said, then ask if that is what your colleague meant?
7. ___ Do you try to understand the reasons and feelings behind what your colleague has said?

The above four questions focus on the degree to which you use different listening strategies to understand what your colleague is trying to communicate to you. Asking your colleague to provide more details about a particular topic, especially if it is a new or complex one, can often help you understand more fully what the person is trying to share with you. Quite simply, when listening for understanding, it is important to listen much more than you talk - so try not to interrupt your colleague even if you have a burning desire to do so!

Finally, in emotional or stressful situations, it is important to consider why the person is upset about a given situation. Taking the time to clarify the situation from the other person's perspective can often be a useful strategy, especially before attempting a response. Using active listening strategies can certainly enhance your understanding, which is the central purpose of effective listening.

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Questions 8-10 - Responding appropriately and effectively:

Insert your score on each of the following items:

8. ___ Do you wait until you understand the meaning of the message that your colleague is trying to convey before trying to develop your response?
9. ___ Do you select appropriate times in the conversation to respond?
10. ___ Are you able to wait patiently to tell your own story during a conversation?

Your responses to the final three questions will indicate the degree to which you are able to actually listen for understanding before making a response. Interrupting a colleague or trying to respond prematurely during a conversation, especially one that is very important to the other person, can often limit communication and may lead to misunderstandings. Clearly, knowing when and how to respond depends on the nature of the conversation; but being aware of the importance of not interrupting your colleagues and trying to wait until you actually understand what they are trying to share with you can certainly lead to more positive and productive conversations.

After reflecting on each of the above key aspects of effective listening, you may want to take a few minutes to list your strengths and potential areas for improvement.

Based on the results of your reflections, you may choose to go on to another topic or take some time to consider the ideas on learning to listen that are included in the document entitled: **Learning to Listen for Understanding.**