

**Unit 401: Effective communication in business****Handout 10: Business benefits of active listening**

Type of listening	Consequence
Non-listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person wants to talk, so isn't listening</li> <li>Interrupts often</li> <li>Wants to have the last word</li> </ul>
Marginal listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listens superficially</li> <li>Anticipates what to say next</li> <li>Hears the words – but with no interpretation of meaning</li> <li>Listens to specifics, not the whole picture</li> </ul>
Evaluative listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focuses on the words but misses the intent</li> <li>Focuses on content, ignores feelings</li> <li>Seeks to judge, not understand</li> </ul>
Active listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listens to understand the message</li> <li>Listens to understand the point of view of the speaker</li> <li>Gives verbal feedback</li> <li>Gives non-verbal feedback</li> <li>Suspends judgement until the message is complete</li> </ul>

**Active listening skills**

Skill	What does this mean in practice?
Probe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempt to understand</li> <li>Ask open-ended (curiosity) questions</li> <li>Do not ask loaded or rhetorical questions</li> </ul>
Reflect or summarise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect back, in your own words, what the speaker has said to confirm their meaning</li> <li>Be positive</li> <li>Have respect for the speaker</li> </ul>
Observe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch out for non-verbal behaviour</li> </ul>
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do nothing else while listening</li> </ul>
Acknowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge each portion of the message, whether you agree with it or not</li> </ul>
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't interrupt – let the speaker finish</li> </ul>

**Some active listening benefits**

Benefit	What does this mean in practice?
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to avoid misunderstandings</li> <li>Improves accuracy of understanding</li> </ul>
Reduced conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases trust</li> <li>Encourages positive feelings (through being valued)</li> </ul>
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates listeners understanding to the speaker</li> <li>Speaker knows for certain that the message has been received</li> <li>Helps deal with emotions, as well as the facts</li> </ul>
Full (complete) communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All of the components of the message can be understood</li> </ul>
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved business relationships through mutual recognition</li> <li>Easier to overcome disagreements</li> </ul>