



Listening



The best sellers listen differently than most. Let's learn about why active listening matters and how most people get it wrong.

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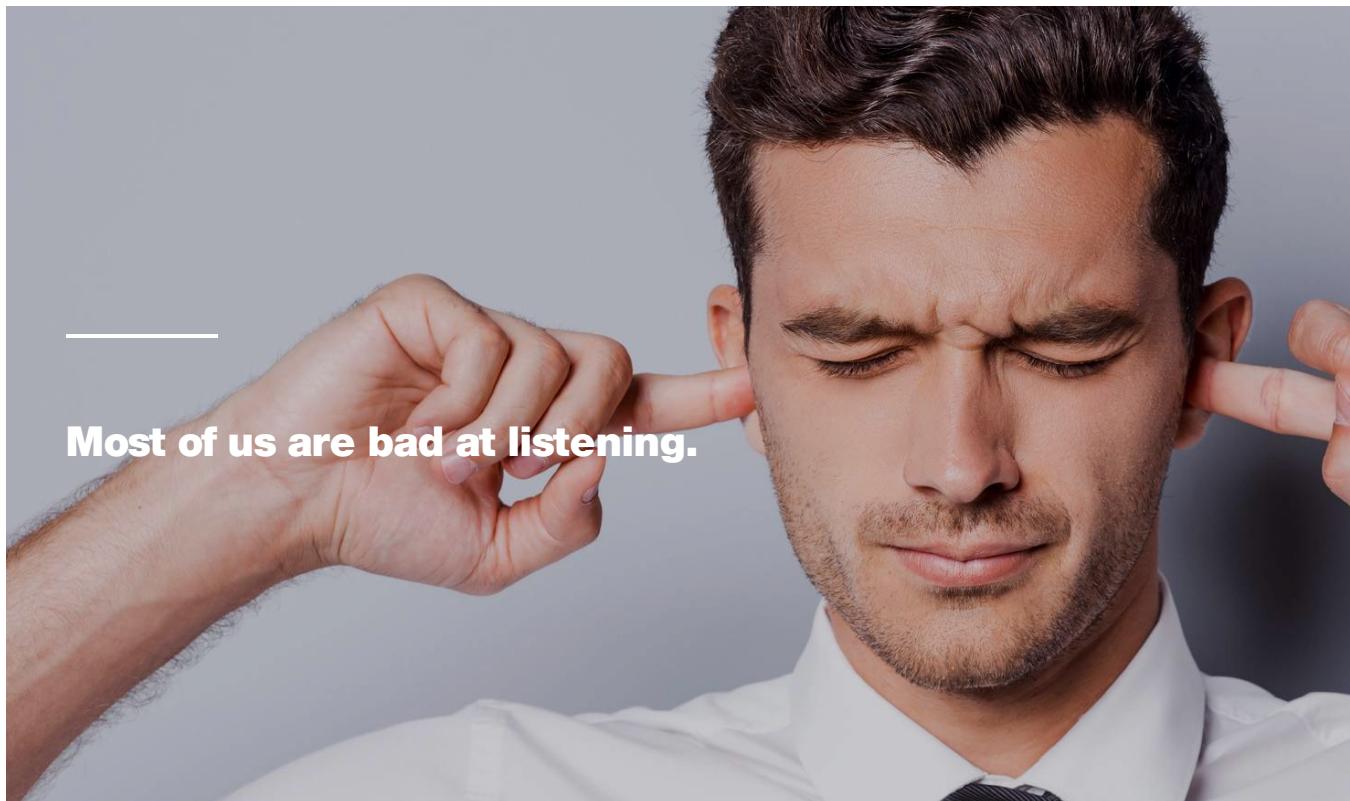
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 SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION



Most of us are bad at listening.

It may sound strange, being bad at something we're doing every waking minute of our lives.

However, the best sellers listen differently than most. They uncover the prospect's priorities sooner.

In this course, you'll learn:

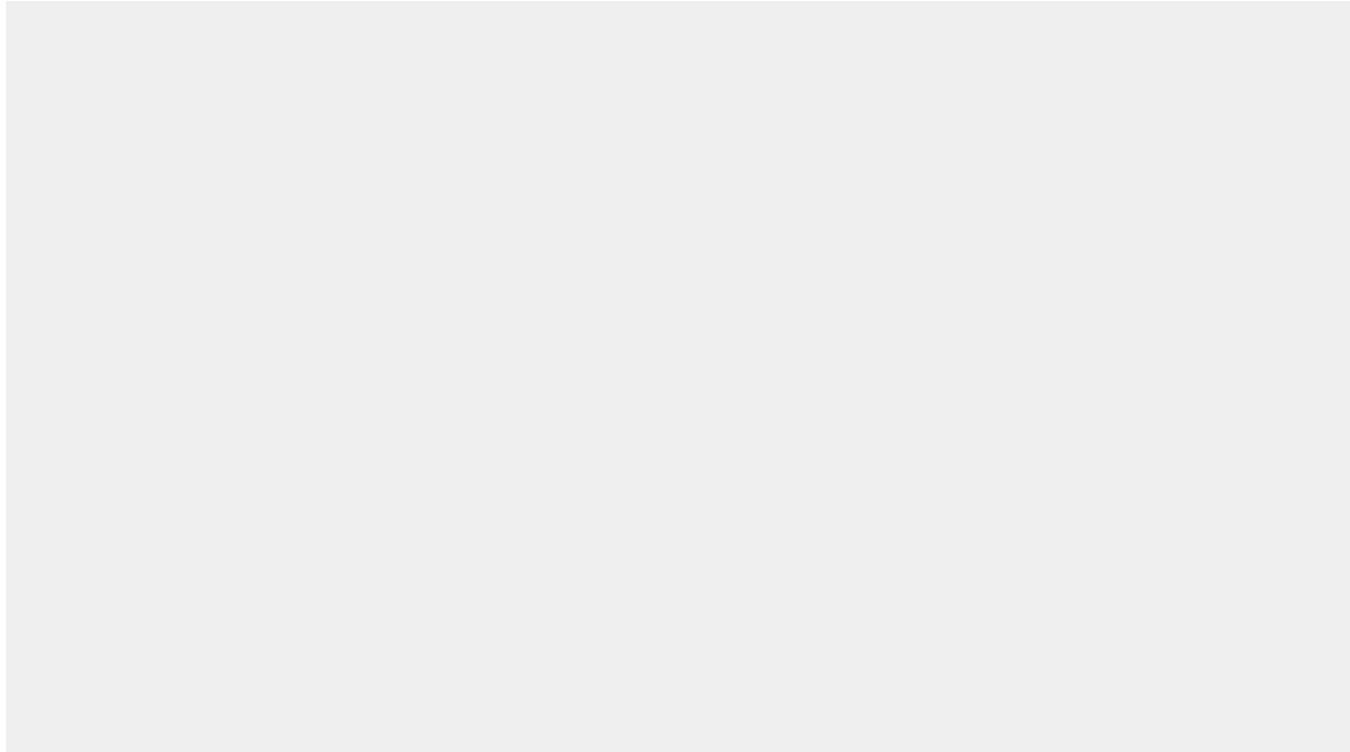
- Why listening matters and how we get it wrong
- A four-step process that will help you actively listen and learn more from your prospect

CONTINUE

WHY LISTENING MATTERS

Selling is listening.

Watch the video below to learn more about the importance of good listening.



How do people get listening, of all things, wrong?

Most sellers get listening wrong in two fundamental ways. Sometimes, these two problems happen simultaneously.

PROBLEM 1

PROBLEM 2

We're trying harder to be understood than we are to understand.

The majority of the time when a prospect is talking, the seller is simply quietly waiting to talk. The seller is formulating responses and points to make and is treating the prospect as background noise.



PROBLEM 1

PROBLEM 2

We pay more attention to our own emotions than to what the prospect is saying.

Remember in Let's Get Neuro when we discussed how the Primitive Brain is the gatekeeper to the Rational Brain? It's at work as we listen. We focus on ourselves and our own reactions, keeping the rational brain out of the conversation. This limits our ability to listen.

As a seller, you can empathize with the following thought track: *Did the prospect just say they didn't like my solution? Does that mean they don't like me? Where did this go wrong? What should I do next?*



These two problems may be happening despite how much a rep allows – or gets – a prospect to talk. They're the main barriers to active listening for sales reps. There is a four-step process that will enable you to become an active listener, but it won't happen overnight. It will take practice to change these habits.

Four Steps to Active Listening

Active Listening is a Process

Remember, simply performing these tasks won't solve anything until you can overcome the two fundamental problems with listening. Seek first to understand, not be understood, and don't let your emotions prohibit you from listening.

RECEIVE

Take in information with an open mind. Remember, each prospect, every word, is valuable to help uncover their priority. Listen for it.

APPRECIATE

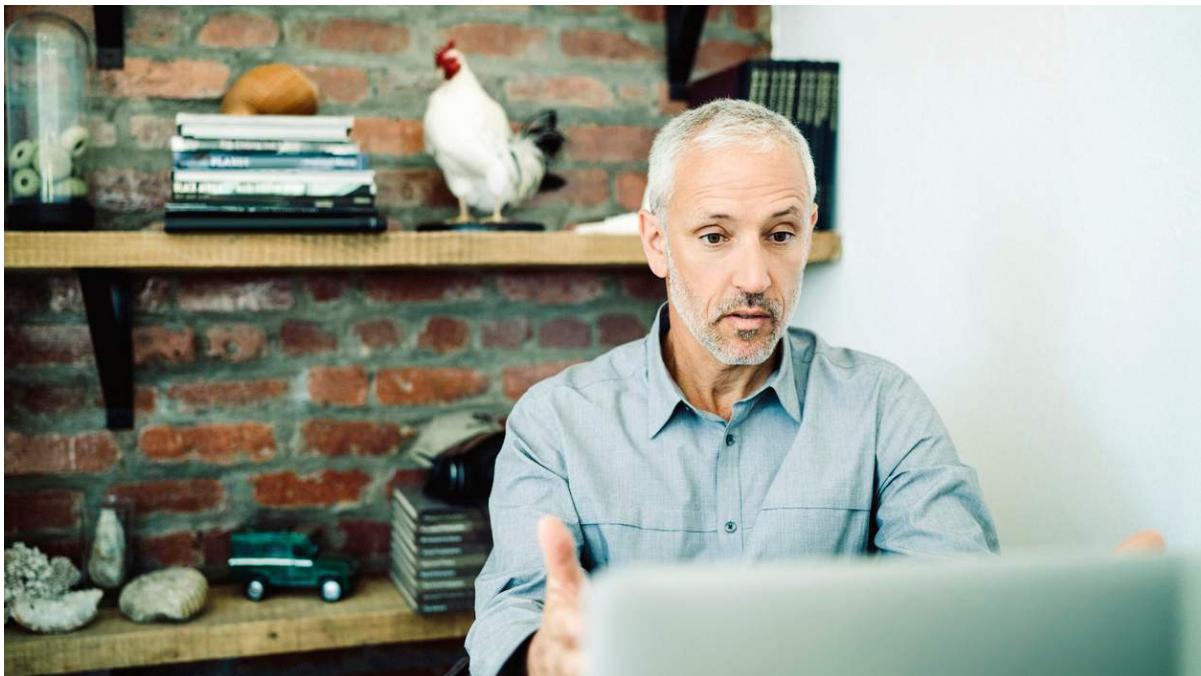


Give active signals that close the feedback loop with your prospect, so they know you're keeping up with the conversation.

SUMMARIZE



Demonstrate that you've really understood what they've said by repeating it back to them.

ASK

Use open-ended questions to continue the conversation. These should be a combination of prepared questions and spontaneous ones.



Complete the content above before moving on.

RECEIVE

Information is a gift, and you, seller, are the recipient.



And like any gift, we must treat the giver with kindness and gratitude. In order to receive information, it's useful to go into the conversation like a blank slate, assuming nothing, expecting nothing. That's not to say you shouldn't prepare. Know your product, know what you need from the conversation, but never assume it's going to go the way you think.

When you feel yourself forming talking points, waiting to talk, or thinking about how you feel, you need to mentally intervene. Think: *I'm about to miss something that could make this sale.* Focus on the prospect's words, really hard. Put yourself in their shoes. Understand their plight.

80/20? Really hard. (But really, really valuable.)

We've all heard that the best sellers only talk about 20% of the time in a conversation. Truth is, very few of us have been in a one-on-one conversation where we've only spoken 20% of the time. It's hard to do!

When you're in person or on camera, use your mental interventions. When on the phone, a physical intervention may help, too. Like covering your mouth for example.



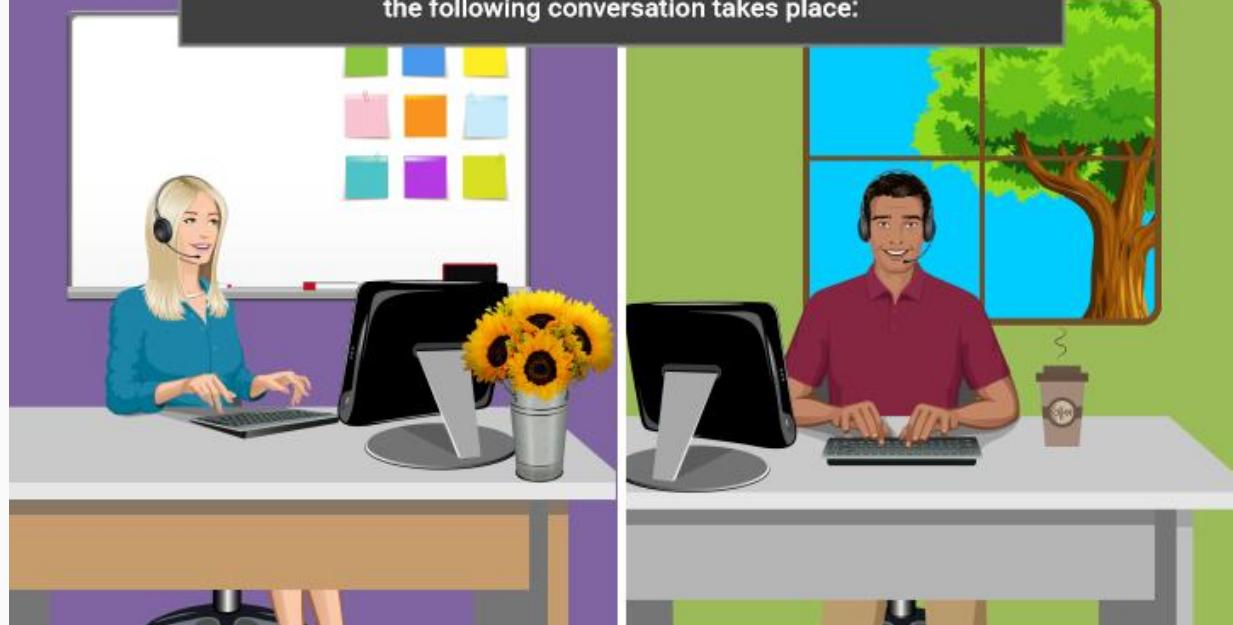
Always approach a conversation as if it's your only job to report it back to someone else later, as accurately as possible.

Prospects love talking about their situations, themselves and the problems they want to overcome. Let them do it and let yourself be amazed by learning it all over again, as if for the first time.

The Wrong Way:

Let's watch what happens when we get this wrong.

Anita is meeting with her prospect, Jared. After settling into the call, the following conversation takes place:





Complete the content above before moving on.

The Right Way:

Anita is meeting with her prospect, Jared. After settling into the call, the following conversation takes place:



Complete the content above before moving on.

APPRECIATE

**A conversation is a two-way street,
even when you're barely talking.**

While your prospect is talking, they need validation that it's making an impact. Without this encouragement, they're likely to shut down.

Think of appreciation as a feedback loop. The prospect's job is to tell you what's going on, what their situation is and eventually reveal their priority to you. Your job is to close the loop for them with cues that continuously tell them that you understand what they're saying, and it's valuable.

You can achieve this through verbal and non-verbal cues.

VERBAL QUEUES

NONVERBAL QUEUES

- "Yes" or "Yeah" or "Uh-huh"
- "That's great."
- "That's tough."
- "I understand."



VERBAL QUEUES

- Eye contact
- Nodding
- Smiling
- Appropriate facial expressions

NONVERBAL QUEUES



Practice, and over time you'll be able to unconsciously provide this positive feedback to your prospect without interrupting your ability to listen.



Complete the content above before moving on.

SUMMARIZE

Often overlooked, summarizing is one of the fastest ways to build trust.

Repeating what the prospect said back to them isn't a waste of time. Quite the opposite, it's the ultimate validation. You really listened, and you understood what they were saying so well, you could fully embody it.

There are three ways to summarize, and none of them are bad. Some are better than others, though.

REPEAT IT VERBATIM

PARAPHRASE IT

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Used lightly, and in short amounts, this is an effective way to ensure your prospect trusts that you heard what they said. Do this too much, though, and you risk coming off as robotic or that you don't really get it, you're just taking good notes.

Difficulty: **EASIEST**

Effectiveness: **GOOD**



REPEAT IT VERBATIM

PARAPHRASE IT

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

This demonstrates a better understanding because you're able to show an ability to use the ideas, not just repeat them. Be careful not to leave out important details that they've mentioned or you risk diminishing their trust that you truly understand.

Difficulty: **MODERATE**

Effectiveness: **BETTER**



REPEAT IT VERBATIM

PARAPHRASE IT

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

This works the best because you are showing that you're able to synthesize what they said into your own mental framework, which shows empathy. That's a fast way to building trust. Don't drift too far from their own language, and be careful with any jargon they didn't use.

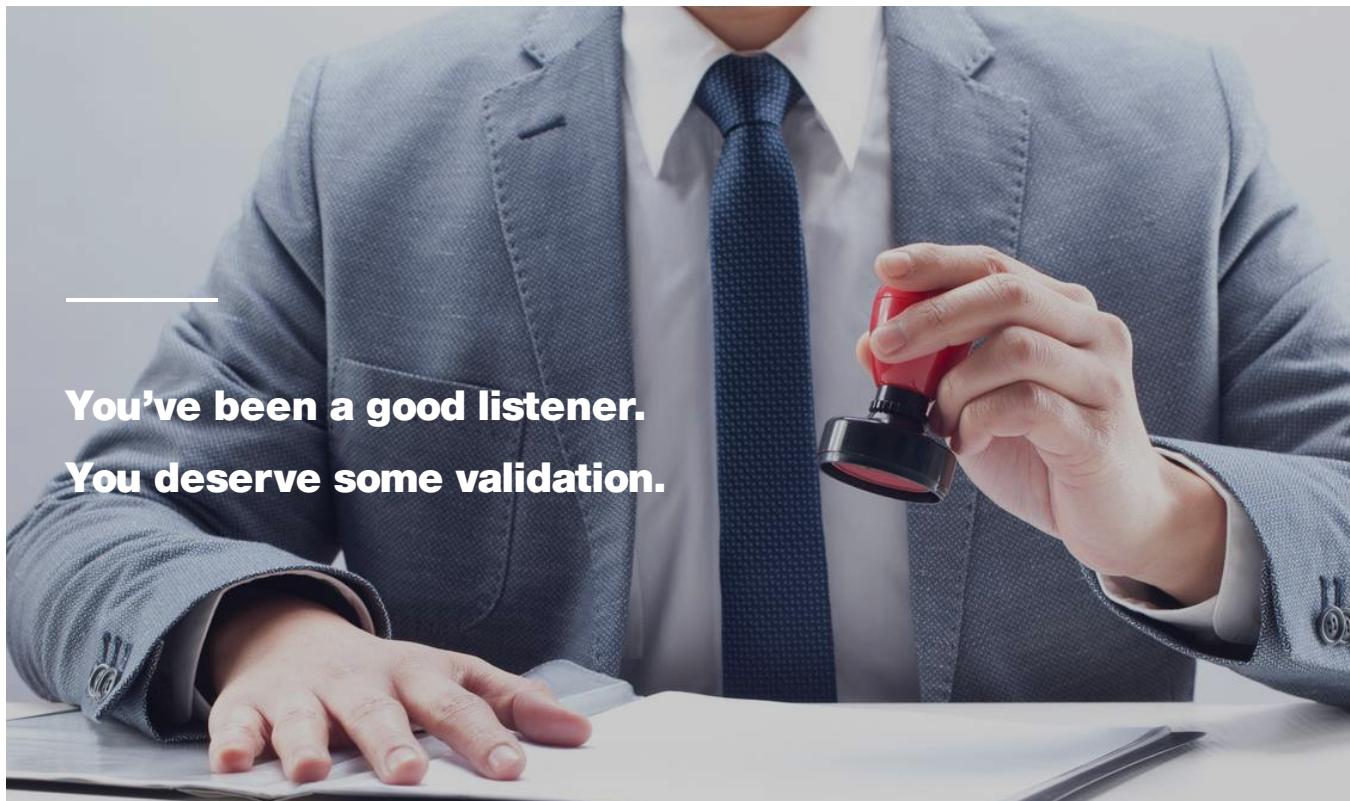
Difficulty: **HARDEST**

Effectiveness: **BEST**



Complete the content above before moving on.

ASK



**You've been a good listener.
You deserve some validation.**

Once you've put what the prospect said into your own words, a great follow-up to start your questions with is a simple check to ensure you've got it right. *"Did I get that right?"* Or *"Have I got it?"* are two good ways to do it, because they put the responsibility on you, not your prospect. This is more effective than *"Does that make sense?"*

If the prospect tells you you didn't fully get it, that's a great outcome! It gives you the opportunity to correct a misconception that could have cost you the sale. Follow up in a way that again puts the "wrongness" of the situation on you, not them.

Ask:

- "What did I miss?"
- "Could you please help me clarify what I got wrong?"
- "What I'm not clear about is X; could you share more about that?"

Don't Ask:

- "Could you explain that better?"
- "Talk me through that again."

Most of the time, your prospect will react to your own words with "Yes, that's it." Occasionally, you'll get an emphatic "That's exactly what I'm saying!" When either of these happen, it's time to move on.

Actively listening leads to better “next topics” that build on themselves and speed up your sale. The only way to do this is through really good questions.

Use questioning techniques to advance the conversation with open-ended questions that follow on from what you heard. It’s okay to bring scripted questions, but ones that reference what you heard and embody their own language will work best from here.

Let's see if you got this. Sort the items below as either 'Open Ended' or 'Dead End' questions ...

Open Ended

What do you think?

Where do we go from here?

Why?

What does success look like
to you?

Dead End

Does that make sense?

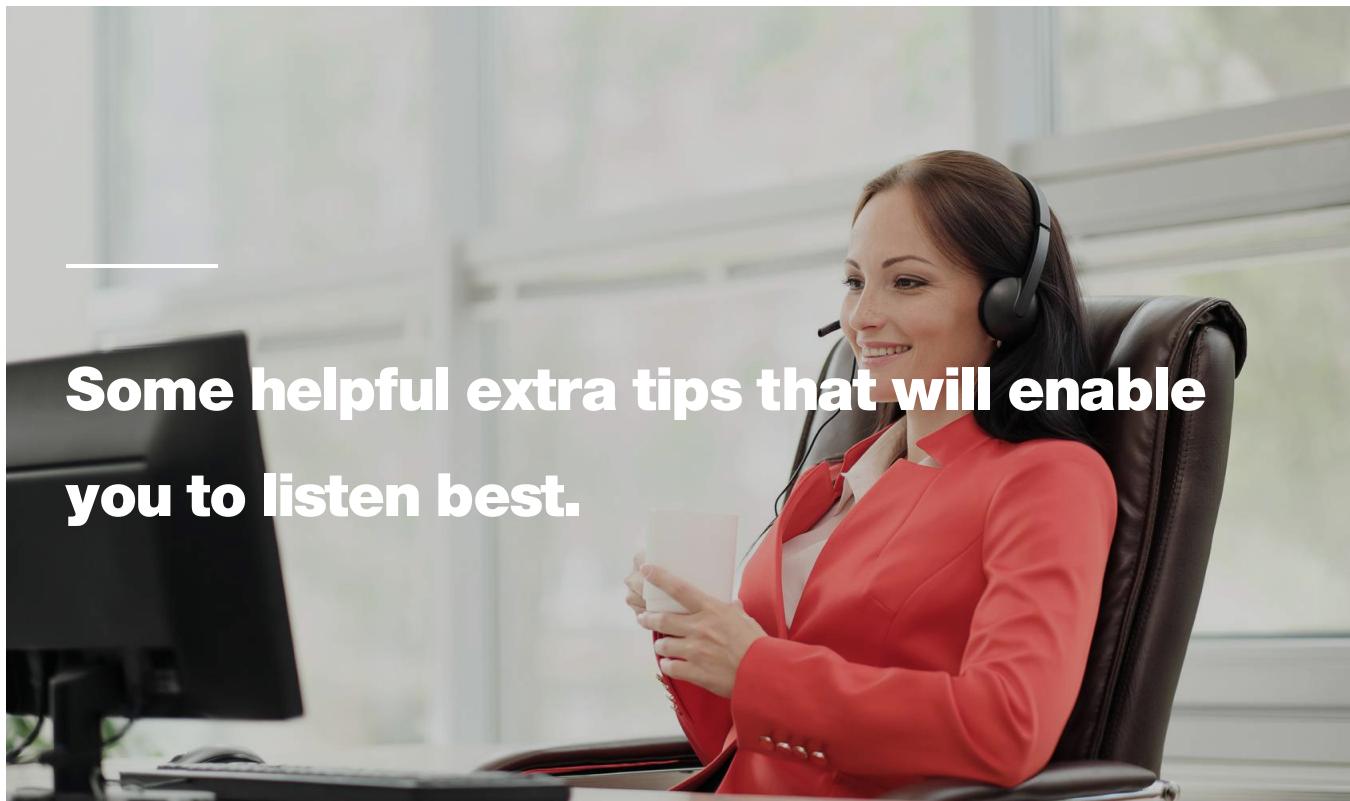
Are we good?

Questions?



Complete the content above before moving on.

TIPS AND TRICKS



**Some helpful extra tips that will enable
you to listen best.**

Watch the video below for some tips and tricks of active listening.



Complete the content above before moving on.

SUMMARY

Congratulations!

You've successfully completed this course.

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