



SIX SKILLS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

1

Focus on the Speaker

- Make a conscious effort to hear customers and understand what they're saying.
- Reduce external distractions by blocking out noise and other disruptions around you.
- Reduce internal distractions by not letting your mind wander, keeping your attention focused on the speaker, and recognizing when your attention has strayed.

2

Be a Listener, Not a Speaker

- Don't assume that you know what customers want; let them tell you.
- Think like a listener, not a speaker. Don't plan how you will respond to a customer while she is still speaking.

3

Avoid Interrupting Without a Good Reason

Allow the speaker to give you the entire message before responding. However, it's acceptable to interrupt if

- You're having difficulty hearing the customer.
- You need to clarify information that you don't understand.
- The customer takes the conversation in an unproductive direction.

4

Don't Take Negative Comments Personally

- Avoid becoming defensive or combative, as this will only make the situation worse.
- Focus on resolving issues and not on disputing negative comments.
- Be calm and rational, not emotional. If necessary, take a minute to calm down.

5

Listen to the Whole Message

- Listen for both verbal and nonverbal signals.
- Ask yourself if nonverbal signals match the customer's words, but be careful not to misinterpret them.

6

Listen Critically

- Evaluate the messages you hear to determine if they are accurate, honest, logical, and reliable.
- If something in a customer's message seems unclear or inconsistent, ask questions to clarify.
- Without being judgmental, help customers realize when they make an error.
- To help recall important information, take notes on the customer's main points and supporting comments.