



Active Listening

Active listening is a skill that many find difficult to master. It means fully focusing on what a person is saying, including hearing what they didn't say.

Sure ways to take the “active” out of listening...

- Preparing what you are going to say in your mind while the person is talking.
- Predicting the customer need before they have finished describing it (this is the one where you think you know what they are going to say because you've heard it before).
- Interrupting to finish their sentence.
- Working on another task while the customer is talking to you.
- Jumping right to solutions.

Put the active back in listening by using the A.C.T.I.V.E acronym...



Ask lots of questions after the customer has finished talking.

Clarify your understanding of the problem by using perception checks. “So what I understand is...” Repeat back their problem to ensure you fully understand what they are saying.

Take notes. This keeps your mind focused on what the customer is saying and assists you in repeating back what they have said.

Invide the customer to share in the solution. “What can we do to solve this problem for you?”

Verbalize empathy with their problem or need. Use phrases such as “I understand”, “I can see how that is a problem for you”, “I believe I would feel the same way”.

Expect to be a problem solver. Customers use your service because they have a need. It can be as simple as answering their question – but you need to use active listening to understand first what they are asking. Put on your detective hat and get ready to investigate on their behalf.