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PROMINENCE OF LISTENING EXPERTISE IN COMMUNICATION

DEEPA PATIL ASST. PROFESSOR VPIMSR SANGLI

ABSTRACT

The present paper emphasizes on the significance of listening as one of the important resource of communication. The writer intends to make realize the readers the difference between hearing and listening. Listening is the first step to communication. It needs lots of patience and effective listening in order to comprehend the message received and give an effective response. The writer accentuates the listening skill as a vibrant skill in the corporate sector, where everyone should play the role of an active listener. In addition, the writer has attempted to bring forth the things that hamper one's listening as well as guidelines for effective listening.

KEYWORDS

corporate sector, hearing, listening, response.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's information age communication is a vital means for efficacious business. Communication is considered as the lifeline of every business. Mastering communication is very essential to run an organization or a business successfully. When we speak of communication, it is about mastering the four skills i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening. No skill can be avoided or neglected. Every skill is important in its own way. A good communicator should have proficiency in all the four skills. It is said that members in an organization spend 63% of their time in listening, 22% for speaking, 11% for writing, and 4% for reading.

2. PROMINENCE OF LISTENING IN COMMUNICATION

We undertake courses to improve our speaking; we undergo reading exercises and writing exercises at our academic level but do we undergo any course or exercises to develop our listening activity? The answer would be negative. We forget to realize that every communication begins with a listening activity and that having good listening skills plays a significant role in making any communication successful.

Listening is nothing but an art of hearing and understanding the message of the speaker. When an infant is born it first comes in contact with listening skill. He/she starts to communicate through listening. He/she first plays the role of a listener. He hears to the surrounding voice, interprets, and executes his feelings through nonverbal communication. Thus listening is the first step to communication. Without listening communication becomes a failure. An example may be cited from the *The Jungle Book* a fiction written by Rudyard Kipling. As in the story depicted the character Mogli, though a human being was unable to speak the language of humans because since his infanthood he grew in the midst of the animals in the jungle. He was unable to speak the language spoken by the humans as he was unfamiliar to the speech sounds. But he was able to speak the language of the animals as he was familiar to the language of animals.

So it is proved that listening becomes a vital skill for communication. If you are a good listener, then definitely you can become a good communicator. Listening is a process that involves hearing with attention, comprehending the message, and giving a response. It is the initiative step to learning. Listening needs serious efforts. It is one of the most imperative communication skills which need strenuous efforts to acquire it and have proficiency in it.

3. VARIANCE BETWEEN LISTENING AND HEARING

To go more in deeper with the listening skill, listening should not be confused with hearing. Hearing is a physical activity whereas listening is an intellectual activity. In the process of hearing we hear the speech sounds produced by the speaker whereas in listening the listener pays attention to the words of the speaker comprehends and tries to recall the message of the speaker. Thus hearing to gossips are just to be heard and forgotten whereas hearing to a lecture at academic level, hearing to the superiors by the subordinates in relation to your professional world requires active listening, because here you are really interested in understanding the message transmitted and then you give your response. Thus listening is a careful activity, where we tend to listen, to obtain information, to share our ideas, to convince others with our views, experiences as well as to solve problems.

4. VITAL FEATURES FOR A GOOD LISTENER

Keeping in view the professional world, the writer wishes to put forth some essential features for a good listener. Good listening skills should be developed on the part of the employers as well as the employees.

- 1. To develop human relations: Employers should listen to their employees talk. They should pay attention to what their subordinates are saying which may improve the company's productivity or custom relations.
- 2. To develop interpersonal relation: Subordinates' decisions should be listened to and given a careful thought. Employee relations may be affected due to inefficient listening. The superiors ought to listen to the grievances of their subordinate which have to be listened with sympathy.
- 3. To keep an open door policy: The employers should have a positive attitude toward his employee as well as his message. The employers are supposed to keep an open mind where they will first try to understand what is being said and then evaluate the message.
- 4. To have a calm mind: Having patience in listening on the part of the employer or employees is one of the most vital features in effective listening. Employees should listen to their superiors and pay attention to the instructions given regarding work, organizational policy and job duties, assignment of responsibilities in order to achieve a higher level of success.

Thus listening skills prove to be beneficial that makes the employees learn more, get more knowledge, understand their role and responsibilities. Good listening skills enable a better working environment and builds up a good rapport between the employees and the employers. It helps to improve the relations among its people which is a strong base for any organization to make it successful. It also helps in raising the morale of the employers and the employees, solving problems, acquiring suggestions and ideas as well as it enhances one's thinking.

Keeping in mind the vital role of listening skills, the writer intends to bring to the scene the factors that hamper listening as well as guidelines for effective listening.

5. FACTORS THAT HAMPER GOOD LISTENING

- 1. Diversion in your mind: This can be considered as the greatest hurdle in listening. Such barrier occurs when the listener's mind goes on a joy ride during the act of listening. The listener becomes busy thinking on something else and loses his concentration towards the speaker's message.
- 2. Being self-centered: People like to be heard and dislike listening. They wish other to listen to what they speak, but do not wish to listen to what others want to say. They listen only selective message that is only that part of the message which interests them and ignore the rest of the message.
- 3. Lack of interest in the subject: This also causes a barrier in listening. Sometimes people act as poor listeners and show their rejection to the speaker as well as the subject. But such attitude represents the listener's narrow mindedness. It is said that mostly uninteresting speakers communicate vital information whereas interesting speakers communicate very little information.

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- 4. Tendency to criticize: Some people have the habit of criticizing the speaker with respect to his appearance, subject knowledge, paralanguage or style of communicating. No speaker should be evaluated on his style on communicating as there are such speakers who no matter may not well with presentation skills but they might be having good message to the listeners which would prove beneficial.
- 5. Planning a reply: Most of the listeners become busy involved in planning a reply to the speaker's message. During this process the listener's mind gets engaged in preparing a reply in the form of question or argument and thus misses the speaker's rest of the speech.

Concentrating on the barriers to effective listening, one should take efforts to identify with which of the above mentioned barriers they suffer from. Efforts should be taken to identify the barriers and try to cultivate good listening habits. In order to develop good skills the listener should concentrate on the following guidelines for effective listening which acts as a profile for an effective listener.

6. STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- 1. Put the speaker at ease: A speaker's responsibility is to transmit his message effectively. Similarly it the responsibility of the listener to listen to speaker's words by creating a positive atmosphere while listening. This can be done through listener's nonverbal communication. The listener's body language should depict that you are really interested in the speaker's message. Effective body language can be through keeping eye contact, showing your agreement to speaker's message by nodding your head, etc.
- 2. Have patience: Every speaker needs some time to get acquainted with his/her listeners. Allow the speaker to speak by listening and paying attention to his/ her message. Interrupting or distracting the speaker makes him/her feel nervous and feels that you are not interested in the message.
- 3. Present yourself that you are listening: A speaker should be convinced that he is being listened to. This can be done through the use on non-committal expressions that is the use of the expressions- "I see," "oh,"; by nodding the head: appropriate facial expressions; making eye contact.
- 4. Avoid distractions: While the speaker is speaking
 - a. Do not interrupt while he is communicating his message.
 - b. Do not ask question during his speech.
 - c. Do not criticize with respect to his message.
- 5. Keep an open mind: Do not come to any conclusions or judgment until and unless the speaker completes his speaking. Proper conclusion can be made only when you listen carefully the speaker's message, understand his point of view and then only you can come up to a proper evaluation of the speaker's message.

Thus keeping in mind the above mentioned guidelines for effective listening, one has to cultivate good listening habits which would help them to maintain good interpersonal relations.

7. CONCLUSION

Listening should not be taken for granted. Serious efforts should be made to develop this sensitive skill which will definitely help one to enrich his/her personality. It is a skill which we use throughout our life for various purposes. Listeners should be aware of their roles and follow the profile of an effective listener. There is an intense need to improve the listening skills through conscious efforts.

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