

**Up-a-Notch™ Sales Training
System
for Inside Salespeople
By Dave Kahle**

**Improving Your Listening
Proficiency**

Congratulations, you are going to facilitate this training session.

Your job includes these things:

- facilitate the group conversations
- support and encourage each member
- manage the details of the program
- help hold people accountable for doing their assignments

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It's important that each member of the group personally consider the material on the tape and do the exercises in this manual. Instead of "teaching," your job is to help them learn. That means ensuring that each participant completes the exercises, enters into the dialogue, and faithfully keeps to the learning procedures built into the program.

It's really not that difficult. Just follow our directions. As you complete each task, check the line in front of it.

Note: If you have more than eight participants, we recommend you split the group into two small groups with four or five participants in each and hold separate training sessions for each group. The exercises are designed for small groups, usually no more than seven people.

Here's how to do it...

Prepare for the session:

- _____ Make sure you have a working video player and monitor, or as a less desirable option, an audio cassette player.
- _____ Have an easel or white board available.
- _____ Prepare one set of materials for each of the participants.
- ✓ Make sure you have one *participants manual* for each person involved in the training. Order additional manuals from The DaCo Corporation, 1-800-331-1287.

- ✓ Split up the “bubble pads” so that each participant has at least three sheets. Split up the “prescription pads” so that each participant has at least two sheets.
- ✓ Obtain the copies of the “Prescriptions” that were written at the end of the last meeting.
- ✓ Arrange the chairs in a comfortable, semi-circular pattern.

_____ Send a written invitation/reminder to each participant. Remind them to bring something to write with, and to hold their calls.

During the training session:

_____ Begin with a discussion of the progress the participants made on their previous prescriptions. Get last session’s prescriptions then say this:

“At each training session, we will all be making commitments for things we are going to do differently. In some cases, we may reconnect to something we already know we should be doing. In other cases it maybe something we haven’t done before, regardless, making these commitments or writing “prescriptions”, is a part of every session.

A part of every session is following up on the prescriptions we wrote in the previous training session. That is what we are going to do now. I am going to read each prescription and ask you how you are doing on that.

I will go first”

Now, read your prescriptions and explain in detail how well you have done at accomplishing it. If you noticed some positive results, make sure that you describe them and relate these results to the actions you took on your prescription. Remember to give a well thought out, honest, detailed report. The other participants will copy your modeling of how to report.

Then proceed to ask each person to report. Say, “(person’s name), you said you were going to (read the prescription). Tell us what you did.”

When appropriate, also ask, “What result of your actions did you see?”

Be sure to thank everyone who reported, and to positively encourage those who followed through on their prescriptions.

_____ Allow them a few minutes to review the materials. Tell them the pages marked “Notes” at the top are to be completed while the tape is being played, and the pages marked “Exercises” are for after the tape is finished.

Say this:

“Today’s topic is “Improving Your Listening Proficiency.” Take a couple of minutes to look through the materials. Note that the pages marked “Notes” at

the top are to be while the tape is playing, and the pages marked “Exercises” should be completed afterward.”

_____ When everyone is ready, turn on the tape. Continue to view (listen to) the tape until it is finished.

Following the end of the tape:

_____ Immediately after the tape is finished, give everyone a few moments to complete their “Notes.”

Say this:

“Take a couple of minutes now and finish filling in the blanks on the ‘Notes’ exercise.”

The participants may want to discuss the notes or some aspect of the taped presentation. Allow them to do so.

Exercise One: Quiz

- ✓ Tell everyone to listen carefully as you read a short paragraph. Then, read the paragraph below.

“We started this a few years ago as a family business. It’s been a struggle. But we’ve found a new market, and are planning on expanding soon,. With luck, we’ll double the number of employees. Maybe the bank will help us with a loan.”

- ✓ Now, instruct everyone to answer, in writing, each of the questions that follow. For each question, they can answer either “True,” “False,” or “Not enough information given.”

1. *The president and his wife began the business.*
2. *Running the business has been easy.*
3. *The speaker is optimistic about the future.*
4. *The company has never made much money.*
5. *Without additional capital, the business will fold.*
6. *The company needs more space.*

- ✓ Now, read each statement again. This time, have each person share his/her answers to that question and explain why they answered as they did. You then read the correct answer, (below). Then, move unto the next statement and repeat the process.

1. *Answer: Not enough information. Explanation: “We” doesn’t necessarily mean the speaker and his wife. It could be other members of the family. Be careful about making assumptions.*
2. *Answer: False. Explanation: The speaker said, “It’s been a struggle.”*
3. *Answer: True. Explanation: He’s planning on expanding and possibly doubling the number of employees.*
4. *Answer: Not enough information. Explanation: This issue is never mentioned. To answer either True or False is to make an unwarranted assumption.*
5. *Answer: Not enough information. Explanation: The speaker said that “Maybe the bank will help us with a loan.” That was mentioned in context of expanding the business. It could be that the business is very healthy without any additional capital to carry on its regular business.*
6. *Answer: Not enough information. Explanation: While the speaker said, “We’re planning on expanding soon,” That doesn’t necessarily mean space. It could refer to inventory, production equipment, promotion budget, etc.*

Exercise Two: Discussion

- ✓ Read the directions at the top of Exercise Two from the participant’s guide. Then give everyone a few moments to reply in writing.
- ✓ When everyone has finished, ask each person to share their experience. Direct the discussion to the feelings they felt when they were the customer and were not listened to.

Exercise Three: Generating Ideas

- ✓ Give everyone about five minutes to complete three of their yellow bubble pads.
- ✓ Then, once again, ask people to share their ideas. This exercise will help others understand how to record a “good idea,” and will stimulate additional ideas.

Say this:

“Now let’s share some of these ideas. I’d like each person to share at least one. If you hear someone else’s idea and that makes sense to you, feel free to record it as your own on one of your bubble sheets. You can have more than three. (Call on someone or go first yourself) _____, what’s one of your ideas?”

Continue in this way until everyone has had a chance to share at least one idea.

If people are hesitant to share, or if they have no ideas, take a few extra moments to review the content of the tape by going through the “Notes” exercise. Review each major point, and ask people to comment on it.

Say something like this...

“The first point he made was that”

“Does that make sense to you?”

“How could we use that idea in this organization?”

“Any way that you might be able to use that?”

In this way, continue down through the “Notes” exercise, reviewing each point, and encouraging people to find “ideas” and write them down.

____ *Exercise Four: Distilling the Best*

- ✓ Give everyone a few moments to complete it.
- ✓ Ask each person to share his or her ideas.

____ *Exercise Five: Precisely Prescribing*

- ✓ This time, ask each person to make a copy of his or her prescription, writing it on an additional Prescription pad. Ask each to write his/her name on the prescription, and turn it in to you.
- ✓ Mention that at the beginning of the next session, the group will review each of these prescriptions in order to hear what progress each person has made.

Say this:

“At the beginning of the next session, we’ll take a few minutes and find out what progress each person has made on his/her prescriptions. Be prepared to tell us what you did, and what results you saw. We’ll be looking especially for success stories.”

____ Now, confirm the time, date and place for the next session, and close this session.

____ Fill out the evaluation form (next page) and fax it to 616-451-9412.

Congratulations! You have just successfully facilitated this training session.

Evaluation

Please complete this form after the training session and fax it to 616-451-9412.

Program Title: _____

How many people attended: _____ Date of session: _____

Based on your discussion of the progress made on *last month's prescriptions*, which of these occurred? Check one in each column.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| _____ No one acted on their prescriptions. | _____ There were no positive results. |
| _____ A couple of people acted on their prescriptions. | _____ A few people indicates some |
| _____ Most attempted to complete their prescriptions. | positive results. |
| _____ Everyone acted on their prescriptions. | _____ Most reported positive results. |
| _____ Everyone reported positive results. | |

One such result was:

Please place a check in the box for how you believe the majority of the people would respond.

| | Not at all | A little | Some-what | A lot | A great deal |
|---|------------|----------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| How practical & useful was the content? | | | | | |
| How practical & useful were the exercises? | | | | | |
| How easy was the program for you to facilitate? | | | | | |

What was the most valuable thing your people gained?

What one thing would you suggest we change for next time?

Do you have any suggestions for topics that we should test in the future? Please describe.

Optional: Your Name _____ Phone # _____
Email _____

Improving Your Listening Proficiency

NOTES AND EXERCISES

NOTES

Improve your listening skills and you'll be more effective in all your (relationships), whether its with your children, with your spouse or significant other, your family and friends, or even your boss and co-workers. And, of course, you'll be more (effective) on the job.

Listening is one of those absolutely (essential) (skills) that we all have to some degree, but that we all can improve upon. We're never as (good) at it as we (can) (be).

The first principle of effective listening is that: People need to (feel) valued.

The second principle of listening is: The things people choose to talk about are often the things that are the (most) (important) to them.

The third principle of constructive listening is that: What is (not) being (said) is often as important as what (is) being said.

It's this: There are two objectives for effective listening. The first is to (understand) the customer. The second is to (convey) to the customer the (perception) that you are listening. You can do one without the other. You can listen well, but not (convey) to the customer the sense that you are listening. Or, you can convey the (impression) that you are listening without one word he/she says sinking in. If you are going to be really (good) at this, you are also going to (convey) to that customer the (impression) that you are listening.

Here are several tips and techniques to help you listen better:

1. Start by (focusing) on the customer.

Before every conversation, take a deep breath, tell yourself to focus on the customer, and then put a (question) or two in your (mind). “What are the details of this customer’s situation?” is a good question. Another is “How does this customer feel about his/her relationship with our company?”

You don’t ask these questions out (loud) to the (customer), rather, you (plant) them in your (mind) as a (technique) to keep yourself focused on the customer.

2. (Interact) with the customer.

When you force yourself to (interact) with the customer, you force yourself to (focus) on what the customer is (saying), and you (communicate) to the customer the (perception) that you are listening and absorb what they are saying.

You fulfill both of the (objectives)—you (understand) the customer and you (convey) the idea that you are listening.

3. (Translate) the customer’s comments.

Summarize what the customer has said, and (translate) it into a few words and repeat it back to them. (Paraphrase) it, give it (back), and ask if you have (understood) them. When you paraphrase the customer’s comments and give them back to the customer you accomplish both objectives again. You have to (listen) and (understand) or you wouldn’t be able to translate it back to the customer. So, it’s

a check on your understanding of the customer's comments. It also tells the customer that you have (listened). So, again, you get a double benefit from this technique.

4. Respond (appropriately).

Responding appropriately means (dealing) with the (content) of the customer's conversation. It's a way of telling the customer that you have (listened) to what they said. And, it's the ultimate purpose of the (conversation).

Six rules for things NOT to do.

1. Don't do (too) much of the talking.
2. Don't (interrupt) when others are talking.
3. Don't start to (argue) or take exception before the person has finished.
4. Don't (digress) with a personal story all the time.
5. Don't finish (sentences) for people.
6. Don't wait (impatiently) for someone to finish so you can respond.

The benefits of good listening skills include better (communication), more effective (information) (gathering) and decision-making, as well as improved (relationships) with customers, prospects, co-workers, friends and significant others.

It's worth the (effort).

| | True | False | Not enough Information |
|----|------|-------|------------------------|
| 1. | True | False | Not enough Information |
| 2. | True | False | Not enough Information |
| 3. | True | False | Not enough Information |
| 4. | True | False | Not enough Information |
| 5. | True | False | Not enough Information |
| 6. | True | False | Not enough Information |

EXERCISE TWO: LISTENING EXERCISE

Recall some negative experience you've had when you were the buyer and the vendor did not listen well to you.

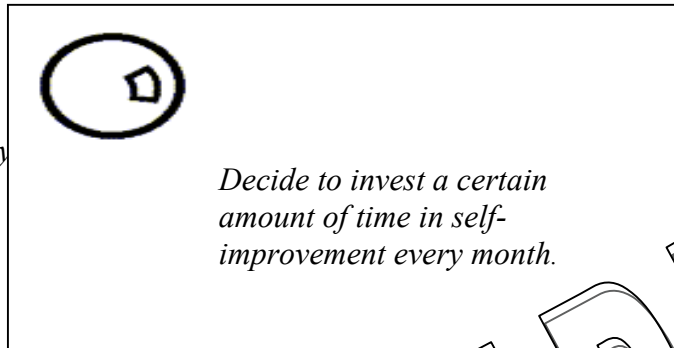
Take a moment and sketch out the basics of that situation below.

SAMPLE

EXERCISE THREE: GENERATING IDEAS

Use the bubble pads to write down at least three good ideas you gained from today's session. Remember the four criteria for a "good idea." We've illustrated a couple of samples for you.

that

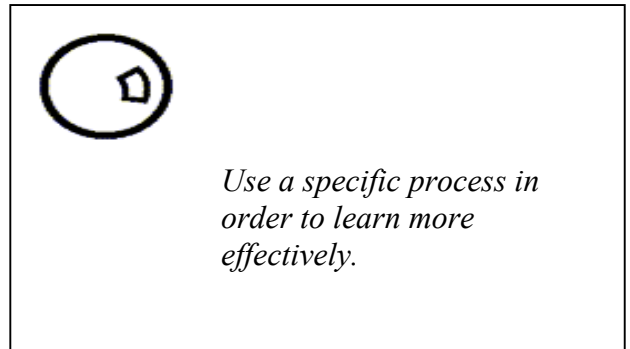


Remember, a good idea is one

- * focuses on the future*
- * focuses on action*
- * focuses on your behavior*
- * is a small step toward one of*

learning goals.

SAMPLE

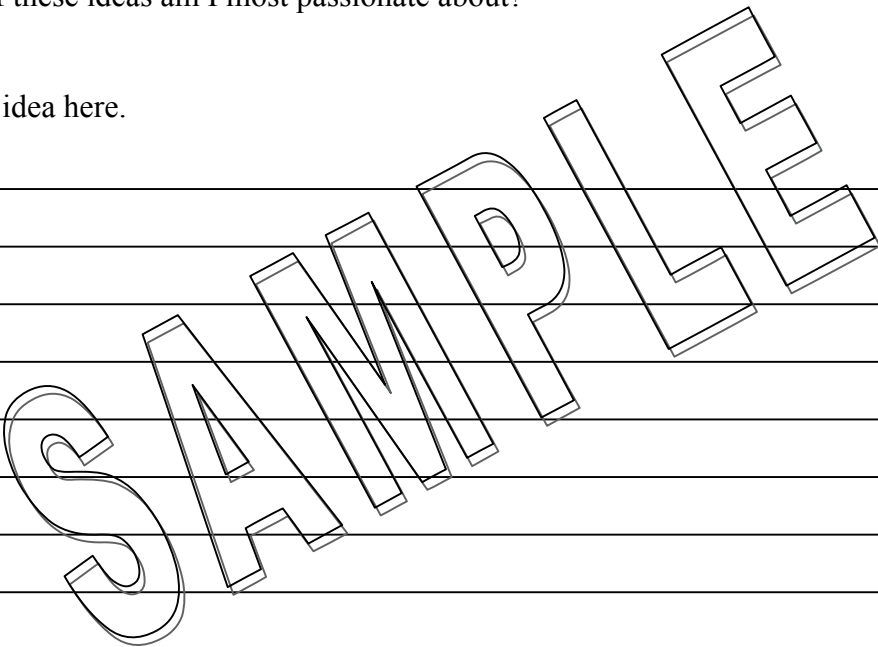


EXERCISE FOUR: DISTILLING THE BEST

Select the one good idea from the previous exercise that you think is the best. To help you make that selection, ask yourself these questions:

1. Which of these ideas could make the fastest impact on my performance?
2. Which of these ideas would make the biggest impact on my performance?
3. Which of these ideas will be easiest to implement?
4. Which of these ideas am I most passionate about?

Rewrite that idea here.



EXERCISE FIVE: PRECISELY PRESCRIBING

Turn the idea from the previous exercise into a Precise Prescription. Write that prescription on the Rx pad. We've done an example for you. Now, take your prescription and post it someplace where it will remind you to do it.

