



Global Management Consulting Services

Commentaries and Insights from Allawos & Company

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“Are you listening?”

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You may not speak well in business, maybe you speak quickly, or casually, but you still don't speak well – unless you first know how to listen and learn from what you hear. Almost everyone in business is a talker; however, the problem is getting them to listen. The higher up in an organization you go, the worse the problem can become no matter the size of the organization.

Poor listeners generally lose out in two ways. They fail to get the early-warning signals that the talker(s) can and will provide. They fail to satisfy the need of the talker to feel that they are being listened to.

How hard is it to improve one's listening skills? Unlike the art of writing, which can take a while to develop fully; better listening can be developed within a short time once you set your mind to it.

Listening for the purpose as well as the details. Obviously as a good listener you listen for facts, whether you intend to respond to them immediately or to store them in your mind for future reference. Listening for facts are more than just listening to details, it's as important as how they fit into the context of the story or the speech.

Listening for bias. Careful listening requires that you listen for connotations (secondary meaning) as well as for the literal meaning. The words a speaker chooses to transmit information may quickly reveal any biases that he or she feels about that information.

Encouraging the speaker to open up. A good listener isn't merely a sensitive receiver of details and perceiver of biases and purposes. He or she also encourages a speaker to express themselves more freely and more fully, thereby learning as much as possible from the speaker.

Preconceptions. You may have some preconceived opinions or biases regarding the matter being put to you by the speaker. Your opinions may even be more valid than the speaker's (or at least seems to be on the onset). Always hold open the possibility that the speaker has a new slant on the matter or some new information that hasn't yet reached you.

Getting turned off by dryness or dullness. Many people when confronted by a speaker, listen carefully for a minutes or two then if the subject matter seems dry, or the speaker is clumsy, they get turned off. Remind yourself that even the driest presentation can yield some fertile facts or ideas.

Becoming distracted. Because we can think and hence receive information at a much faster rate than the speaker can give it to us, there is always the risk that we'll allow something else to enter into our field of attention and distract us from what the speaker is saying. Work hard to improve your power of concentration.

Posturing. There's a bad habit some students learned in school and carried with them into business. They try hard to look attentive when a teacher addresses them and to impress a teacher with that attentiveness, that they actually fail to hear some of the things being said to them. Their attention is really on themselves and the impression they're creating. This often turns off most people in business.

Fatigue. Listening, like most other activities, consumes energy. Careful listening is actually marked by a faster heartbeat, quickened pulse, even a small rise in body temperature. The lesson is clear; when you've got to be at your listening best do everything you can to avoid entering the situation in state of fatigue or divided interest.

Allawos & Company is there to help you ask and answer the tough questions whether it's finally getting to writing that business plan or updating one, performing badly needed market research, performing strategic company alignment, employee surveys, turning the company around or simply not knowing were to start; calling on the specialists at Allawos & Company can be your first step in moving forward.

About Allawos and Company, LLC

Allawos & Company is a comprehensive global management business-consulting firm, tuned to enable organizations to identify and exploit opportunities through creative engagement built on a foundation of decades of senior management experience.

We are a global management consulting firm specializing in business plans, business development, corporate development, contract negotiations, employee surveys, strategic planning and turnarounds.

We service the aerospace industry to healthcare, semiconductor to farming and most industries in between.

Our comprehensive consulting services improve the client's condition and leaves behind the tools for growth.

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