

## Good Listeners Avoid "Do-Overs"

Excellent listeners make fewer mistakes at work and their work is accomplished faster. Why? They pay close attention to what is said, so they have fewer "Do-Overs."

Lazy listeners may have to re-do a task several times before getting it right. Not only is this a problem with finishing work on time, but it also points out that the person is a poor listener.

### Listening is an active process that some people treat as passive

Focusing on what is said without allowing other thoughts to distract you is called active listening. It takes mental energy because your mind wants to wander.

Assume your boss is explaining something you think you already know. If you become distracted, you'll miss the change he mentions. The next time you're called on to do the task that was discussed, you'll get it wrong because you weren't listening. That does two things: slows the work down because of your "do-over" and makes you look bad because you didn't pay attention.



### Don'ts and Do's for active listening

Apply active listening to your work to avoid Do-Overs and to improve a lazy listener reputation.

#### Listening "DON'Ts"

- Use your computer while a person talks to you
- Think about what you want to say next
- Interrupt while a person is speaking
- Distract yourself by thinking about other work
- Form premature assumptions about the speaker's message
- Start a conversation if you don't have time to listen fully

#### Listening "DO's"

- Stop everything you are doing
- Concentrate on the speaker's words
- Wait to talk until the speaker is finished
- Stop your mind from wandering
- Let the speaker make his or her point
- Suggest a better time to talk

### Examples of good and poor listeners

**Speaker:** *Good morning, Angela, do you have a few minutes to discuss the Rockmont job?*

**Good Listener:** *Can you wait for about one minute? I'll concentrate better if I finish this urgent email first.*

**Poor Listener:** *Sure, go ahead, I have an email to write, too, but I can finish it while I listen to you talk.*

**Speaker:** *Good morning, Angela, do you have a few minutes to discuss the Rockmont job?*

**Good Listener:** *Sure, go ahead. You have my full attention. (Listener concentrates fully)*

**Poor Listener:** *Sure, go head and tell me what you have in mind. (Speaker begins talking and listener forms a quick opinion without listening to the full message.)*

**Action:** Examine the DON'Ts and put a check mark beside each DON'T that you abuse as a listener. Describe one example from the past that showed you were being a poor listener. What were the consequences?

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*Note to instructors:* Listening is one of the hardest of the communication skills to develop because individuals often think listening is the same as hearing. Listening requires mental skill, while hearing is a physical skill. The titles of ten important Listening lessons covered in *Job Ready Career Skills* are given below. These, along with the other communication lessons in *Job Ready Career Skills*, are basic to getting ahead in any career.