

# 6 tips to improve your active listening

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A recent LinkedIn Sales Report that surveyed 500 Buyers and 500 Sales Managers delivered a startling result: 42% of the surveyed Buyers said that active listening was the most desired trait they wanted to see in salespeople. By contrast, only 26% of Sales Managers saw this as the most important. Overall, Sales Managers rated it as the 7th most valuable trait when recruiting salespeople.

## What exactly is active listening, and how can salespeople and sales managers improve their active listening skills?

Active listening can be defined as making the conscious effort to understand the complete message, rather than just passively hearing what's being said and then assuming you understand.

You may well remember a meeting when you or a colleague did some (or all) of the following:

1. Interrupted the customer or cut them off to make a comment;
2. Finished the customer's sentences for them;
3. Did not answer the customer's questions;
4. Missed key customer concerns by not asking the right follow-up questions;
5. Deployed the irritating habit of saying 'Mmm' and 'Uh ha', which disturbed the customer's talking pattern;
6. Fell into the trap of being distracted by the environment around them, rather than concentrating on the customer.

This is what Buyers find so frustrating: they feel that salespeople simply do not listen to them, and do not make any effort to understand them or their challenges.

## So, how do we become better active listeners? Here are some effective tips to improve your active listening.

Above all, **"Shut Up & Listen"**(SUAL) - there is no active listening without listening!

[Research has suggested](#) that we spend 70% to 80% of our waking hours in some form of communication. Of that time, we spend 46% listening.

Being more effective listeners has immediate benefits. It improves trust between the salesperson and buyer, it enables you to ask pertinent questions to establish their true needs, and it reduces sales cycle times and increases the likelihood of success.

To discover more about how you can develop your active listening and other skills, [let's talk growth](#).