

Additional Information from The
PAR Group, Inc.

The Finest Listening Skills in the World

"I listen fine. It's the others
who have a problem."

- Famous Last Words



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A PRELUDE TO PROFIT:

THE FINEST LISTENING SKILLS IN THE WORLD

Making Strategy Work

Every act, each performance in an enterprise has one thing in common. The success of the performance is tied to how well people listen—to each other and to the customer **before**, **during**, and **after** each transaction.

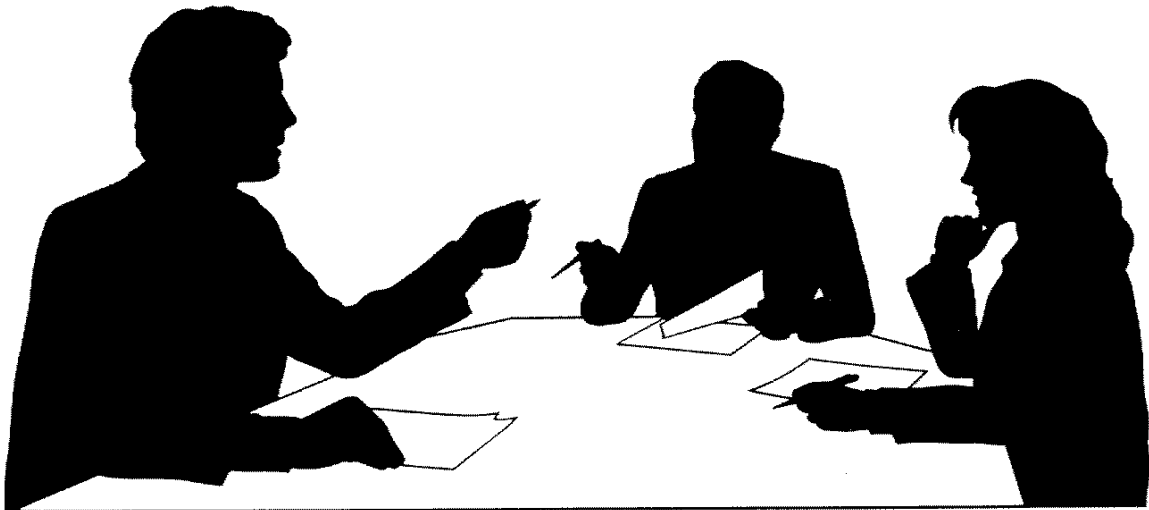
Listening is certainly the most important skill in business.

When everyone listens, they can perform in concert, as a team, profits rally, and a foundation for continued success is established. When the interaction is off-key, the result is chaos and tends to get worse. This undermines the success of most business strategies.

Indeed, listening is the key to teamwork . . . and teamwork is the key to making strategy work.

To help people consistently profit when they do business with each other, the skills of listening and teamwork **have to be linked and taken to a higher level.**

Based on extensive research, we have produced an award-winning program of *advanced* listening **and** teamwork skills. We call it “**LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK.**”



LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK is based on twenty years of research on the finest listening, teamwork, *and individual leadership* skills in the world. It portrays the

skills that are used to accurately assess a situation, determine whether “buy in” or teamwork is occurring, and know what to do about it.

About The PAR Group

The PAR Group, established in 1979, was founded by a team of high performance coaches and business executives. Their mission was to “re-engineer” how **talent** is developed in business enterprises so companies could take their people beyond mere awareness of skills – into measurably higher levels of proficiency. Even to the highest level: mastery.

We wanted our clients to see accountable results: competence and return-on-investment. We believe that we have succeeded because the results are, indeed, measurable.



THE RESEARCH

For more than twenty years we have observed the skills of execution used by bona fide leaders. The overall best performers were people who were consistently superb at the ability to *read their audience* and from that foundation, *build a following*.

In the simplest of words, they listened. They diagnosed others' willingness levels and the logical content of other people's thoughts, needs and wants. They found out precisely what it would take to provide leadership, contribute to teamwork, offer service, solve problems, or advance opportunities. Then, they acted.

We discovered that the exact skills they used were very subtle but obviously effective. When asked, it was difficult for them to describe their skills in crystal clear words. But we found a way to make those skills clear, understandable, and teachable. When those skills were illustrated and *taught back* to the star performers, they verified the skills beyond a doubt. They could prove it; they reproduced the exact skills on purpose. Consciously. Competently. The experience was an "Aha!", a confirmation, even more empowering because it gave them the ability to repeat their own best skills **on purpose**, rather than on occasion or by "accident."

Then we made another discovery with people who were not considered exemplary performers, and it was the most beneficial discovery of all. Namely, almost everyone has used or experienced the same superior listening, teamwork and leadership skills in their finer moments. When people had those skills clarified, illustrated, taught back and coached to them, a wonderful thing happened. They could reproduce the skills on purpose. Consciously. Competently. While addressing real work issues.

Superior listening, teamwork, and leadership skills are enlightening enough. But even better, people enjoyed the *hands-on* learning process. They preferred it to any other process they'd known before for acquiring practical skills.

We now call the process "*Learning From Success*." It involves real work activities instead of schoolroom methods. Believe us, it is a much better way to learn skills! And faster. The remainder of this brochure elaborates on the unique skills themselves that are now contained in **LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK**. You will not find skills like these in *any* other listening, teamwork, or leadership skills program. We hope that we are talented enough to make that point clear when writing *about* the skills. The difference is certainly clearer in the *experience* of learning and using the skills.



Real listening is not merely a matter of concentration (memory) or telling back to people what they have said. That might cause or prove comprehension, but comprehension alone doesn't cause teamwork. The ability to gain commitments and **buy-in** from others causes successful teamwork.

To learn listening at a higher level, listening should be linked to teamwork. The skills must also be linked to the ability to cause “buy-in,” i.e., to successfully serve or obtain a willing “customer” as a consequence of the conversation!

In that light, these are the subtle yet most useful skills of listening used by bona fide leaders and team-players across the world:

Skill #1

Concentration (Yes, it's important. But, it is driven by the desire to cause buy-in, not by memory techniques!)

Skill #2

The ability to read *willingness* (emotional reactions). This tells us whether buy-in or teamwork is occurring or not—and to what degree.

Skill #3

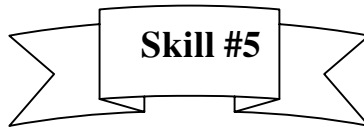
The ability to prove beyond a doubt that you are currently taking people seriously (in kind). This causes situational credibility and respect. Consequently, people “open up” to leaders or co-workers who are skillful at this ability.



Skill #4

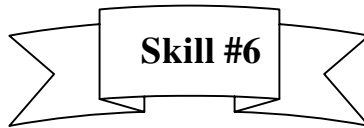
The ability to ask and receive meaningful and honest answers to specific fact-finding questions. Particularly these:

- Clear definitions of *problems, needs, wants and opportunities*. This clarifies what people **have now** compared to what they'd **rather have**.



Skill #5

The ability to get others to focus on work issues instead of personal defensiveness.



Skill #6

The ability to lead the conversation to higher ground: The highest payoff skill in business is the ability to move a conversation to *open-mindedness, then to more positive degrees of interest, and eventually all the way to buy-in*.

Summary

These are powerful abilities, to be sure, not procedures. They are genuine skills. Moreover, they are skills that profit every member and customer of an organization. These are not skills just for presidents and international negotiators. These are skills for every area of line operations and staff support in an enterprise

Let's take another look at the skills in more detail.

AN ELABORATION OF THE TOP SIX SKILLS

Note: Some of the skills on this page have on occasion been called “Emotional Intelligence” (EQ skills).

Skill #1

Concentration

It improves dramatically when the listener begins from a neutral (open-minded) emotional state. Yes, it is driven by emotion, not brain power or technique! We’ve found a way to enable people to *experience* pure open-mindedness . . . and then reproduce it at will. From a neutral point of view, they then concentrate and can prove to themselves how remarkably their attention and memory improves. Key point: *They prove it while on a real task. Once they’ve proven it, they can repeat it.* Skill transfer (acquisition and conscious use) has occurred.

Skill #2

The ability to read others’ emotional state

In practical, everyday terms this is the ability to see another person’s willingness level at the moment. To what degree are they positive, neutral or negative? This is the only way to discern whether or not “buy-in” or teamwork is occurring. We all read these cues every single day. We just don’t have a name for it. It turns out that emotions can be organized and easily recognized by simple behavioral cues. Certain *behavioral* cues are easy to identify when they are taught clearly and simply. These cues tell us when others are reacting with confidence, enthusiasm, interest, open-mindedness, skepticism, opposition, fear, sadness or indifference. In fact, a hierarchy of cues to define “buy-in” can be learned in just several hours. Via the “learning from success” method, people can achieve a high enough level of consciously competent skill that they can **accurately** read another person’s willingness level within ten seconds of interaction! This is a precise and provable competency. It has been taught successfully to children, low-literate adults, teams, managers, and CEOs. In terms of speed or ease, this ability is much faster to acquire and more practical in application than delving into personality theories or trying to peg people into types.

Skill #3

Skills that cause credibility and respect

When you can accurately read another person’s point of view (including his or her degree of willingness), then it is much easier to talk with that person *at his or her point of view*. The ability of successful leaders to “connect” with others in a precise and believable way is due to this skill! They speak *with* their audience’s or customer’s point of view. This is

how audiences or customers *know* that they are being taken seriously. It makes them feel respected and they, in turn, relax and believe in the credibility of the speaker.

This is a situational ability.

For years, this “connecting” ability has been linked to psychological or personality theories. Now, we’ve discovered, there is a much easier explanation. Moreover, that easier way can be linked to skills that everyone has used at least on occasion. Clear and explicit “respect” or “rapport” skills can be described and immediately experienced to prove the point. Furthermore, the experience is consciously repeatable and coachable to high levels of talent. So much, in fact, that one can measure observable increases of respect and rapport within a matter of seconds or minutes of interaction.

Just for fun, imagine trying to get teamwork out of a group of people who don’t take each other seriously. Impossible, isn’t it?

Unfortunately those kinds of moments occur all too often. All it takes is one or two *off key* exchanges to turn an entire project or performance into battle or chaos. That’s how critical respect (or “rapport”) skills really are.

Skill #4

Questions/Diagnostic Skills

Getting at the facts, logic, or rationale behind someone’s point of view is also necessary for executing leadership, teamwork or customer service. There are specific “analytical” questions that make diagnosis occur much more effectively. WHAT questions to ask are specific and crucial to the performance of leadership, teamwork or customer service. HOW those questions get asked is just as critical.

LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK blends What-to and How.

Properly done, you get honest and detailed answers that form a foundation for “buy-in,” teamwork or corrective action.

We discovered that people could execute diagnostic and fact-finding protocols when they were focused on the *skill* involved in asking and acknowledging rather than merely attending to the logical side of the business questions. In plain terms, when the What-to and How are addressed, *customers* help you solve their needs or fix their problems. They become as active and open-minded to your help as you are in giving it. Unique exercises *prove* this to people in the **LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK** program. The skills are immediately applied to *real work* issues, not case studies or role plays. So the results are immediately evident.

Skill #5

Problem isolation

This skill makes all problems or disagreements become an “it,” rather than a “me/you” problem. This lets people work on problems without causing personal conflict whenever there is a difference of opinion.

Skill #6

Leading the conversation to higher ground

This ability links all of the skills in **LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK** and takes them one step further. Taking conversations to *higher levels* of open-mindedness—then to buy-in—is learned as an explicit skill. There is no question whether a person can do it! And most people can.

The outcomes: *Teamwork, Satisfied Customers, and a Business Result* that everyone can accept. The special skills in **LISTENING—THE KEY TO TEAMWORK** produce results: *profit*, not expense.

MORE THAN “LISTENING”

We have many clients who *began* by being primarily interested in “listening” skills. But their needs went beyond just listening.

This particular document was written to emphasize “listening,” but there is more. The same skills are also embedded in more comprehensive programs titled “Leadership and Teamwork,” “Everyone’s A Customer” and “PAR Sales.” You can obtain any part or all of these programs to enhance your investment.

THE CORE PRODUCT

LISTENING -THE KEY TO TEAMWORK

Not Canned:

The program is designed with complete Participant Coaching Kits, Leader’s Kit and skill-coached videotapes and training aids. But, it isn’t *canned*. The materials are structured so that tailoring occurs naturally—at no extra cost. The hands-on nature of the program causes instant tailoring.

All Audiences:

The program illustrates the skills for *all* audiences—from boardroom to shop floor, with internal and external customers. All video scenes are realistic, not contrived. All activities are real, not role-plays.

Modular:

The program is designed with an Introduction and from one to three skill Modules that build upon each other. By the conclusion, a full repertoire of skills is being illustrated, coached and applied to real work issues.

Time requirements are approximately 2½ to 3 hours per module. So you can have a half-day, full-day (or longer) program depending on your preferences.

Applications:

This program has been applied to businesses at all levels, teamwork at all levels, and internal and external customer service. It is an ideal compliment to sales training as well.

In-house:

The program can be implemented in-house by certified coaches. An in-house license for large organizations may be acquired directly from The PAR Group.

Cost-effective:

Our aim is to give you the best listening skills in the world and then some. Nothing is more cost effective than a program that actually works. By producing tangible results, this program usually exceeds expectations considerably.

Try it once. Total quality and complete satisfaction are financially guaranteed.

NEXT STEP

For a hands-on demonstration and guidance through the practical application of this unique program, contact:

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“As a manager, I’ve often noticed that the people who succeed are the people who listen well. The PAR Group’s programs are the first I have seen to take a new and realistic approach that makes sense. After this coached program, people really do listen in a way that makes them personally more effective.”

— This quote is from an executive and former competitor in the training industry.

“I can’t tell you how rewarding it is when people come to me and say, ‘This has taught me how to truly listen.’”

— Esther Powers, Ph.D., National Society
for Performance and Instruction (NSPI)

“Most training and coaching simply attempts to educate people and raise their awareness, but it doesn’t make them more talented. This program does. At first it was unbelievable to me how the man I talked with on Friday wasn’t the same person who started this program a few days ago. Now, I expect that kind of difference from PAR programs.”

— CEO, The Phoenix Consulting Group

“I have seen listening skills taught for years, but I have never seen it done this well. PAR skills create real communicating — not the use of mechanical techniques. I took the skills home and taught my family. Thanks!”

— Field Engineer
Hewlett-Packard Company
