



Listen Well!

Listening is an area that we each need to focus on - and no matter how good we think we are we can always improve. I find that for me the trick is my focus. When I am focused on the speaker, I can actively listen, paraphrasing, clarifying, questioning and really staying on their topic, rather than tossing in my own stories and issues.

Our challenge is in staying focused and giving the other person the time, especially when we are notoriously busy and multi-tasking. The power, I believe, is in the moment of decision - when I decide that:

1. I care about you.
2. I want you to feel cared about and respected.
3. I need to learn what you are thinking about and why.



That is when I am willing to stop whatever I am doing at that moment and focus on you. There are rarely things that cannot wait five minutes for you to tell me something that is urgent. When my back is really up against it, I must warn you that I really cannot focus on you now, and it is then incumbent on me to set a time for us to regroup when I will be able to focus on you.

Remember, listening is far more than being quiet and waiting for the other person to stop speaking so that you can have your turn!

Plan Well and Lead Brilliantly

Planning ahead is an absolute necessity when managing multiple projects and people. Leaders who plan poorly cause a massive ripple effect as their last minute issues creep into the lives of those around them. Ultimately relationships, projects and even entire businesses fail as a result. So what does it take to plan ahead?

First, make time for planning. For me, the first thing I do each business day is determine what I want to accomplish that day and

I write it down. Writing it is critically important. It's my reminder when people are barraging me with a million other issues, and it allows me that sense of accomplishment when I can check it off the list.

While the daily effort helps to get us out of our disorganization, it is insufficient to really keeping us focused. To do this, we must occasionally (for me - monthly) reflect on our long term projects, goals and objectives and determine:

Timely Humor

You know you work in corporate America if...

- Your relatives and family describe your job as "working with computers."
- Your supervisor doesn't have the ability to do your job.
- You think lunch is just a meeting you drive to.
- "Communication" is something your workgroup is having problems with.
- Art involves a white board.
- You're already late on the assignment you just got.
- Your boss's favorite lines are "when you get a few minutes," "in your spare time," "when you're freed up," and "I have an opportunity for you."

Trivia Time

George Washington was born on February 11, 1731. In 1752, Great Britain and its American colonies switched calendars from Julian to Gregorian, eliminating eleven days from September of that year; September 2 was followed by September 14.

Since then, history records that Washington was born in 1732, and the anniversary of his birth is celebrated on February 22.



1. Where we are today
2. Where we want to end up by 'x' date
3. How to get from here (1) to there (2)

Once we do that, we must incorporate the activities of point three into our daily to do list, and we must execute those tasks systematically. Once we're doing this consistently, we're ahead of 90% of businessespeople.

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“People do business with people that they know, like and trust.”

Bob Burg
Endless Referrals



But he’s so different from me...

Perhaps the most challenging trait for fast paced leaders is working with others who are paced differently. We're not referring to people who aren't peers with respect to intelligence, rather we mean that the pace or style of their thought processes and communication are different. When a leader expresses frustration, whether verbally or through facial and body gestures, with somebody else's slower or just different processing style, communication can shut down and become uncomfortable for everyone present.

From the fast paced person's perspective, the slower paced style may seem pedantic and boring. It may even feel as if it will take the process off track by interrupting the natural flow of thought and ideas. For the slower paced person, the fast pace may appear to skip important steps, taking on unnecessary risk and leaving people out of the process. The fast pace may feel like pressure and unnecessary rushing.

In reality, it's when the two styles can work together suc-

cessfully that the best, most comprehensive solutions typically come to the fore. Often, it takes a third style, someone that can facilitate the two more extreme styles, to assist the process. It's ideal to structure meetings on important issues accordingly whenever possible. When it happens in unplanned situations, it helps to remind yourself that the diversity of approaches may lead to a better solution. Then accommodate your colleague's style and pace as gracefully as possible, and clearly communicate your appreciation of the differences.

Effective Networking

Think about the people that you choose to hire. Now think about the ones that you would rehire. My bet is that they meet Bob Burg's criteria of being people that:

You know
You like
You trust

This, essentially, is the point of business networking. If people don't know you and cannot find you, they can't hire you. Hence, at the most superficial level, you must get your name out there and raise awareness. This is by far the easiest of the three criteria.

If they know you and can't stand to be near you, they will not hire you. Therefore, the ability to get along with others is a necessity. There are a myriad of sources to learn

how to get along with other people and how to network, yet many people do a very poor job of it.

They arrive at a meeting, talk about themselves and stuff unsolicited sales materials into people's hands. To connect with others well, ask them about their successes and interests. Get them talking about, and show an interest in, positive aspects of their lives, and they'll think you're a wonderful conversationalist. Importantly, don't talk about yourself unless you are asked. Additionally, be careful to give them appropriate personal space. In the U.S., that's 2 to 3 feet away from their face. People that creep in too close make others uncomfortable.

Once they know you and like you, you have a chance for them to

learn to trust you. Trust takes more time. At a business level, trust is based simply on doing what you said you would do when you said you would do it at an appropriate quality standard. It sounds basic, yet pitifully few businesses do it consistently. Before a businessperson will spend money with you, they may want to see you in action a few times. This makes volunteer work with community and professional organizations very important. It is not sufficient to just show up on occasion. Moreover, you must contribute to the greater good and demonstrate your skills, character and dependability.

For more information on this, check out Bob Burg's book, Endless Referrals. It's simple, clear and concise.

“Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right.”

Henry Ford
1863-1947)



Henry Ford

A “nanosecond” is one billionth of a second.