

Active Listening Skill Tips for Interviews

During a job interview, a potential employer asks, "Can you take on more than one project at a time?" If you respond, "Yes," you may want to rethink that answer. According to Dynamic Listening: Interview Skills, a computer based training module from Mindleaders in Columbus, Ohio, you should avoid one-word or one-sentence answers.

Be specific. And speak money-language. Here's a preferred answer to the question above, "In general, depending upon the type and length of projects, I believe in efficiently handling more than one project at a time. This could save a company as much as 30%." Let's check out the definition of "active listening skills" and learn more to help with your next interview?

Active Listening Skills

Just as everyday "speaking" is not the same as public speaking; "listening" is not the same as active listening. Active listening means two things: analysis and response to the message being communicated.

An active listener maintains eye contact and good posture with a slight lean towards the speaker. During the interview, the listener nods, smiles and takes notes. Be ware, however, that a daydreamer or pseudolistener, can adopt these behaviors. So a listener's physical response does not necessarily mean good listening skills are at work.

Nonverbal communication, more than just the nod or smile, is important. Gestures, appearance, timing, voice responses, facial expressions, spatial distance - all affect how the speaker (or interview) interprets the listener. So a person preparing for a job or work project interview should consider the cultural climate and norms of society of the interviewer. In short, perceived active listening based on nonverbal signals can vary from culture to culture.

Especially in this age of such great cultural diversity, be courteous of others regardless of cultural, sexual or societal backgrounds. If you are a woman and get to a door before a man, open it. If your interviewer doesn't speak English very well and looks puzzled at your words, go back and explain yourself again in different words and re-establish a good communication exchange.

Note: a major part of active listening is paraphrasing. It's not the same as summarizing. A summary is a shortened version of the original message, focusing on the main point. To paraphrase means to re-state the message in your own words.

Active listeners take notes by paraphrasing or restating what the speaker said in their own words, and summarizing main points. A good listener is not the same thing as a silent listener. Good listeners ask questions, even something like, "Is this an accurate paraphrase of you have said?" to let the speaker know that you understand the message being communicated.

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