



# Training Tips

Practical Ideas for Maximizing Your Investment In *Listen Up, Leader!*

*Listen Up, Leader!* is a powerful stand-alone development tool, and a high-impact accompaniment to your:

- Supervisor and team leader training
- Leadership development activities
- Organizational change initiatives
- Employee retention strategies
- *and much more!*

The following exercises are designed to enhance participant learning when the handbook is used in a classroom or small group setting.

## Jump Start With Pre-Reading

Have participants read *Listen Up, Leader!* prior to your session. Ask them to highlight 2-3 concepts or ideas that have particular significance for them.

Use a portion of the session time to discuss their findings and explore how that information can be used to benefit them and the organization.

## Communicate For Results

Here's an exercise to demonstrate the importance of clear instructions, two-way communication, and performance feedback in achieving consistent results:

Give everyone a sheet of paper. Ask them to close their eyes and follow your instructions exactly. Inform them that they cannot ask questions during the exercise.

With eyes closed, have participants do the following:  
a) fold their sheet of paper in half; b) tear off the upper right-hand corner; c) fold the paper in half again; d) tear off the lower left-hand corner; e) fold the paper in half again; f) tear off the lower right-hand corner.

After all steps have been completed, instruct participants to open their eyes, unfold their papers, and compare results. (Chances are, not all the papers will look the same.)

Process the exercise with these questions:

1. If everyone heard the same instructions, why aren't all results the same?
2. What could we have done to produce more consistent results?
3. What's the key learning for leaders?

## Opposites Detract

Focusing on what NOT to do can help reinforce what leaders *should* do. Try this exercise:

Randomly assign chapters of *Listen Up, Leader!* to table groups and ask them to . . .

1. Identify/describe what behaviors opposite to those suggested in their chapter would look like, and
2. List the various impacts they feel the opposite behaviors would have on people within the organization.

Have participants present their results to the entire group. Conclude by discussing the importance of "paying attention" (to the messages of the handbook), "improving," and "guiding."

## Relating To "Best" Leaders

Here's an exercise to show the validity of the *Listen Up, Leader!* content to high-quality leadership:

Ask participants to write down the name of the best leader they have personally experienced . . . someone, at work or away from the job, who has positively affected them.

Next, tell participants to reflect on their selected leader for a few moments – recalling the specific behaviors the leader regularly exhibited.

Then, instruct them to scan *Listen Up, Leader!* and select 3-5 ideas/content points that best describe their leader behaviorally.

Process the exercise by asking participants to share their results with the entire group.

Close by asking: "What can we conclude from this exercise?"

## One Picture's Worth ...

In small table groups, instruct participants to create a motivational poster (flip chart sheet) that "sells" a key idea presented in *Listen Up, Leader!* Inform them that creativity and total group participation are important – artistic quality doesn't matter.

After presenting their posters to the entire group, have the "artists" sign their work. Collect the posters and display them at future leadership development events.

## Listen Up: On Recognition

One of the messages of *Listen Up, Leader!* is the importance of positive reinforcement. Here's an exercise to recognize the talents represented in a team or group:

First, give each participant a stack of 3x5 index cards. The number of cards in the stack should be one less than the number of people in the session. For instance, if there are eight people in the meeting, each participant will receive seven blank 3x5 cards.

Once the cards are distributed, write "One strength I admire about \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_" on a flip chart. Instruct participants to rewrite and complete the sentence for each person in the room (on separate cards) and then place the cards face down in front of them.

When all cards have been completed, collect and shuffle. "Deal" out the cards, face down, equally among the participants.

Then, go around the room with each participant turning over a card, reading it aloud, and giving it to the person named. Instruct the person named to say nothing more than "thank you."

Continue the process until all cards have been read and distributed. At the end of the exercise, all participants will have the cards complementing them personally.

Close by discussing the exercise:

- How did it feel to receive recognition?
- How did it feel to give recognition?
- After hearing all this, how do you feel about your co-workers in this room?
- What are the implications of this exercise to leadership?

## In Search of Obstacles

Regardless of our beliefs and good intentions, we all face obstacles and miss opportunities to provide high-quality leadership. This exercise will help pinpoint some of those "restraining forces" and help develop strategies to overcome them:

Randomly assign sections of *Listen Up, Leader!* to individuals or table groups. Instruct participants to identify as many real-world obstacles as possible that can prevent the ideas on their assigned pages from occurring. Then, ask participants to identify . . .

- A. What they consider to be the three most common and significant obstacles to good leadership existing within your organization.
- B. Ways their top three obstacles might be overcome.

Have participants present their findings to the entire group. Close with a discussion about how these lists might be used to enhance overall leadership at work.

## "The Match Game"

Ask table group groups to complete the following sentence: "I do my most effective work for leaders who ..." Each group member must contribute one response – all responses are listed on a flip chart sheet.

Then, have the table groups go through *Listen Up, Leader!* and identify concepts/suggestions/behaviors that match, link with, or support the items on their flip chart.

Consider making this exercise a contest: Encourage the groups to find as many matches as possible within a certain time frame. Offer a prize for the group with the most.

Conclude with a total group discussion of the significance of (and key learning from) the exercise.

## Away From The Job

Show the relevance of *Listen Up, Leader!* concepts to "generic" leadership with this exercise:

Ask table groups to select one non-work related leadership role performed by someone in the group (e.g., soccer coach, parent, church involvement, etc.).

Then, instruct the groups to review *Listen Up, Leader!* and identify as many handbook content pieces as possible that apply to the non-job leadership role.

Have the tables present their results to the entire group. Discuss the experience, results, and key learning. Make the point that good leadership is good leadership - regardless of who, what, where, or when.

## "What Else Can We Do?"

Looking for other ways to use *Listen Up, Leader!* Distribute the books to a small focus group of leaders AND employees. Ask them to brainstorm how the book can be used to enhance leadership in your organization.

Like information on our other  
**WALK THE TALK® products and services?**

Call Today **888.822.WALK** (9255)  
or visit us at  
**www.walkthetalk.com**



The WALK THE TALK® Company  
2925 LBJ Freeway, Suite 201  
Dallas, TX 75234  
972.243.8863 • Fax 972.243.0815  
Values Based Business Solutions