

# The 'art' of listening

Being able to listen constructively is an art, but one that can be learnt by simply following these guidelines:

## A good listener....

- makes friendly eye contact
- pays attention to the words, expressions, and body language of the speaker
- uses positive body language to express your continued concentration
- uses verbal phrases such as "I see" or "Go on" to encourage dialogue
- does not interrupt, permitting speaker to hold the floor
- asks brief questions and paraphrases speaker's statements to test for understanding
- puts aside other work to give the person your complete attention
- treats each question or situation like it is the first time you have heard it
- summarizes the discussion to bring the conversation to closure.

## .... and the benefits? You will be better placed to:

- avoid the tendency to judge
- check your listening for accuracy
- avoid making assumptions
- understand the other person's point of view
- get the other person to be more specific
- clarify the message