

10 TIPS

on HOW TO

BE *a* BETTER CONNECTOR

START WITH THESE TIPS
from **Gayle Cotton, Susan RoAne and Norm Smookler**
to improve listening and
facilitate a culture of good
communication.

TIP 1:

Be an active listener.

"Focus on the speaker, listen for the message beneath the words, become a 'people reader' and assess the impact of body language and tonality," Cotton advises. "Don't make hasty judgments and don't become impatient."

TIP 2:

Adapt your communication style.

"People at all levels like people who communicate similarly to them," Cotton says. "Observe their style — are they direct, expressive or more subdued — and adapt your style to make them feel comfortable."

TIP 3:

Develop rapport.

"If you are dealing with people across borders, you need to know about other cultures and their communication styles," Cotton says. "It can push you out of your comfort zone a bit. Think of former U.S. President George W. Bush holding hands with the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah as a sign of friendship and respect."

TIP 4:

Don't jump to conclusions.

"Leaders are very good at arriving at conclusions but even they can arrive at a conclusion prematurely that may not be

the best one at that time," Cotton says. Ask reflective questions of a fellow YPOer or employee to confirm your understanding.

TIP 5:

Learn to interrupt politely.

When necessary, interrupt and lead the conversation without offending. "For example," Cotton says, "I appreciate the importance of what you're saying, however, because we have limited time, I suggest we move on to xyz."

TIP 6:

Invoke a two-minute rule.

"According to a study of physicians, the most accurate diagnosticians took a full two minutes to get to the root of the problem," Smookler says. "Time yourself to see how well you listen and understand during that time period."

TIP 7:

Don't forget the closer!

Cotton advises ending your conversation with a summary close to avoid miscommunication and to let the person know you've heard what he or she said.

TIP 8:

Stow away all distractions.

"Nothing will make someone feel more important than saying, 'Let me turn my cell off as I don't want us to be disturbed,'" RoAne says.

TIP 9:

Make yourself approachable.

"Lean into a conversation and extend your hand," RoAne says. "A CEO I knew wore a Looney Tunes tie so his staff felt comfortable to come over and talk to him."

TIP 10:

Solicit feedback.

Start with a few close advisers who will tell you like it is. Test out a 360°-feedback tool to see how you are doing at all levels. Smookler advises. ▲