

Can you hear me now? Why your clients miss 50% of what you say

Less talk, and more listening. Inman contributing writer Rachael Hite shares the real reason your transactions turn topsy turvy — and why it has everything to do with what's lost in translation



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Do you know what is frustrating? Feeling like no one listens to you. Do you know what's worse than that? A study from the University of California reveals that feeling is actually true.

How many times in a transaction do you start to question what you said or didn't say? The reality of the situation is that your clients are just not catching what you're throwing. It's not their fault; life is inherently busy, and you are, too.

Communication skills are essential for finding common ground in difficult market conditions, beginning to understand how your message is heard, and which parts are being missed will help you gain control of a transaction when it starts to swing sideways and swiftly shift it back in place.

When messages are lost in translation, conflict ensues, so working on your active listening skills may actually keep you out of hot water.

Let's break down why we don't hear the majority of what's being said, how we can improve our own listening skills using a technique called looping and learn a strategy for building a lasting conversation with your clients about your brand that they will never forget.

Operator? Are you there?

First off, we all are terrible listeners. Active listening requires practice and self-awareness. The National Library of Medicine found that the "Forgetting Curve" showed that we only retain about 50 percent of what's said in the first hour of a conversation, and then after that, the contents of a conversation can drop down to as little as 10 percent within 24 hours.

Think about it: You have moments to capture what is being said, and if you do not have the benefit of non-verbal communication cues you already are operating at a deficit where you may interpret the message wrong. Then, if you have not written it down to reference or study, you may be completely lost to the importance of the message.

Non-verbal cues

- Posture
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Body space

Verbal cues

- Tone
- Volume
- Speaking too fast or slow

Look how these cues aid us in understanding the message, and then again think about how much can get confused in an email and a text message without these cues.

We have essentially many variables fighting against us when we are engaging in conversation: our memory, our five senses, and our emotional intelligence. All of these variables impact our interactions with our family, friends and clients.

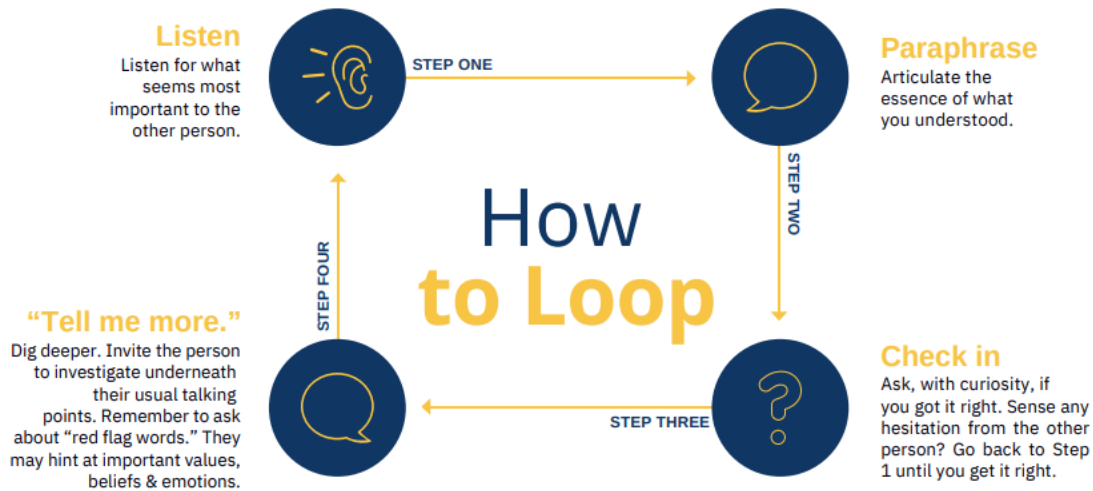
In addition, you have to try and push aside the distractions, the news, your anxiety, intrusive thoughts, push notifications on your smartwatch, your cell phone ringing, your unfinished to-do list, and even a cat jumping in your lap while you Zoom. Trying to stay focused while speaking with someone requires more of a lift than many of us plan for.

Loop to listen and reinforce your message

At a recent conference, I had the pleasure of taking a great class about conflict, and how all kinds of conflict can actually be a positive thing if framed correctly. The best part of the class was learning about how miscommunication can create conflict, and re-engaging communication and verifying information can actually help mitigate conflict.

Think about it: Your worst transactions are usually because somewhere along the line, someone misheard or misunderstood, disregarded or never even heard important information. The result is conflict that needs to be solved, and as agents a core part of your fiduciary duty to your clients is to help your clients navigate conflicts in their transaction so they can complete their contract and reach their real estate goals.

Looping is a method anyone can use to be a better listener and help reduce conflict. In theory, looping looks super easy to understand, but in practice, it takes more discipline than you may initially think. This would be a great exercise at your next team meeting.



The Scoop on Looping

Looping is a communication technique that transforms how we listen and connect with others. Used by conflict mediators and psychologists, looping gets beneath talking points. By proving we are trying to understand one another, looping builds trust, creates clarity, and invokes curiosity—even amidst profound disagreement.

SOURCE: Looping is a technique developed by Gary Friedman and Jack Himmelstein of The Center for Understanding in Conflict.



www.TheGoodConflict.com

3 strategies to help your clients remember your message

Video is powerful because it packs in those additional non-verbal cues that can be very impactful. Video is the secret sauce to solving many of your communication issues with your clients.

Bonus hint: If you use captions in your video, it can increase accessibility for clients as well.

Here are three strategies to help make sure your message is not lost in the shuffle, and that your clients do not forget you.

1. Use short video texts to help reinforce important messages. Using an intelligent message tool, such as SalesMail or BombBomb also uses smart analytics to let you know if your client received the message and how many times they watched the message. You can also use this video text to repeat back to your clients (looping) what you heard them ask and how you are solving it for them. These are very basic

tools, with no fancy bells and whistles, but they get the job done, and the user interface is very effective.

2. Focus at least one-third of your marketing content strategy around creating a video library of terms and information that you regularly explain to clients. This library can be a quick resource that allows you to send links to clients to help provide reinforcement and clarity while saving you time.
3. Send a quick video with an annual CMA, house anniversary congrats or even a happy birthday. For agents who are taking the “agent for life” slogan to heart, using video, direct mail and email newsletters will be an essential part of staying in touch with potential referral sources. The deal doesn’t stop when you get paid; you will have to continue to nurture the relationship or this deal is a one-and-done moment in your pipeline.

Hanging up

Over the past several months, agents have been talking more than they have been listening to consumers. They have been talking about the National Association of Realtors, they have been talking about market conditions, and they have been talking about how they should and will get paid. There has been a great deal of talking about lawyers, the Department of Justice and what they think will happen next.

There has been a missed opportunity to listen to consumers. Consumers are struggling, and what they need from the industry is a professional who is humble enough to listen and smart enough to bring solutions that are fair to all parties. Remember, if you are not listening, you may be missing out on the exact thing that you have been looking for all along.