



# People, Passion, Performance

January 2008

Lamont Associates Newsletter

[www.lamontassociates.com](http://www.lamontassociates.com)

[info@lamontassociates.com](mailto:info@lamontassociates.com)

## Spotlight on: Listening

What's the difference between hearing and listening? Attention. Listening is not passive: it is active.

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to repeat back what someone has just said, to 'prove' we heard them? We may have heard them, but did we listen to them? Did we really give them our attention? Did we understand their meaning?

We are bombarded by waves of noise all day, so much so that we become immune to much of it. In response, the volume goes up! People shout simply to be heard. To be genuinely heard requires active listening. Those of you who have done one of our courses know that active listening is listening with an open mind, an open heart and our full attention. Active listening comes from a deeper place inside us. It comes from our inner stillness; that point where we are not searching for a response, but we are empty, focusing our attention on the speaker.

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## Open Courses - sign up now!

### *Tools for Success*

This unique and powerful programme is for people who are committed to personal and professional transformation. Understand how the simple Lamont process can lead to immediate and sustainable growth, efficiency, innovation and fulfilment in the workplace. Increase your own performance, so you can work at the highest level of your potential, *and* get the tools to unlock the potential of others.

**Dates:** May 2008 & 22-24 September 2008 (Birmingham)

### *Advanced Practitioner*

The Advanced Practitioner programme provides you with comprehensive training, hands-on experience and extensive one-to-one mentoring. Further your own development and master the tools and techniques necessary to act as an internal facilitator within your company. Learn how to energise teams, develop collaborative leadership and dramatically enhance job satisfaction among your colleagues.

**Dates:** May - November 2008 & January - June 2009

More details on all courses at: [www.lamontassociates.com/individuals.html](http://www.lamontassociates.com/individuals.html)

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*"Knowledge speaks,  
but wisdom listens"*  
Jimi Hendrix

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Lamont Associates, 3 Kinross Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 9EP. Phone: 01344 628329 Web: [www.lamontassociates.com](http://www.lamontassociates.com)

To subscribe and unsubscribe, please email: [info@lamontassociates.com](mailto:info@lamontassociates.com)

### Open Forum

#### *Differences in leadership styles*

Is there a difference between how men and women lead?

This was the question posed by one of our readers after last month's newsletter.

If you know of any research or have an opinion on the subject, we'd like to hear from you.

Email Jennifer at: [jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com](mailto:jennifer.hurley@lamontassociates.com)

## Gossip-busting

*Creating a zero-tolerance culture for gossip and rumour*

It is all too easy to get sloppy in our communication, to not give the best of ourselves. Gossip is a great example: it wastes time, lowers morale and saps energy, leaving everyone involved feeling slightly worse.

Gossip is a subtle form of aggression. It creates a 'them and us' culture that is divisive and undermining. It feeds people's fear, discontentment and resentment. It is neither forward-looking nor inspiring.

It is possible to eradicate gossip in one go. All it takes is a team agreement to a zero tolerance policy on gossip. Even if others aren't on board, by simply stating that you do not want to take part in those conversations you can create an alternative, making colleagues think twice.

When we expect the very best of ourselves and others, we no longer accept sloppiness; we hold ourselves to the highest standards of behaviour. We choose our words carefully, mindful of their impact on our colleagues and on our teams.

## The Hot Seat

*Elliot Seymour, QinetiQ*

"Elliot has a genuine commitment to the people he works with and wants to help them think through whatever issues are affecting them. His selflessness means that he's willing to go the extra mile to sort out problems and ensure people get what they need. He's always positive and good humoured, even when he's under pressure."

*Our thanks to Elliot's colleague for this month's contribution. Write in and nominate your colleague for our February issue: just send us a short paragraph about why you appreciate working with them.*

## Spotlight on: Listening (Continued from page 1)

It's that focus and attention that allows us to hear not just the words, but the meaning of the words. The essence of what is being communicated

World class listening is a powerful business tool. Many of the conversations we have at work are repeats of earlier conversations where we, and others, did not pay attention. Actively listening at work allows us to be more productive, it helps us zoom in on the meaning of the words and conversations: clear understanding is vital for effective action. This single tool saves time, creates a 'can-do' culture and ensures that people feel that their words and work are important and valued.

So, how do we start? World class listening is like any skill, it needs to be practiced. A little and often is always good practice! Make a concrete goal, for example, to listen actively at a particular meeting each day, or in three conversations each day. At the end of the day, take a minute to reflect on the impact that your active listening had, which can be anything from shorter meetings to a gentle sense of satisfaction we get from achieving a goal. The difference active listening makes may be subtle, but it is always there.