



Listener Preference Clues & Tips

"It's important that we avoid viewing listener preferences in ourselves or others as good or bad. Each preference has characteristics that can be both positive and negative when taken to extremes. The key is to be able to adapt our listening behavior to speakers' preferences so we are on the same page as the speaker. The same principle, in reverse, holds when we are in the role of the speaker. By adapting our messages to listeners' preferences, we hold their attention, get faster agreement and buy in, and often build closer relationships."

-Barker & Watson

Clues for listener types:

People oriented: Personal pictures on walls, personal items on desk, makes/holds eye contact, varies vocal inflection, smiles and nods in affirmation frequently

Action oriented: desk organizers, certificates and work related pictures on wall, clean desk, brisk/firm handshake, speaks at a more rapid pace, shows cues of disinterest like doodling, fingerapping

Content oriented: Neat stacks on desk, research and reference books, serious facial expressions, challenging vocal tones, looks up frequently to process information,

Time oriented: one or more clocks observable, has assistant call to remind him/her of meetings, wants to know exactly how much time you need to meet, reminders and pings on their phone, impatient facial expressions

Tips for communicating:

People oriented:

- tell stories, show illustrations
- Use "we" instead of "I"
- Use first names
- Self effacing humor

Action oriented:

- Keep main points to three or less
- Make presentations short and to the point
- Speak at a rapid but controlled pace

Content oriented:

- Provide hard data
- Quote credible sources
- Use graphs and charts

Time oriented:

- Go under time limit whenever possible
- Be ready to cut out unnecessary examples and information
- Be sensitive to nonverbal cues indicating impatience

For more information on Listener Preference Interpretation please check out Larry Barker & Kittie Watson's excellent book, Listen Up.

You can find a longer version of this here:

https://medium.com/@clark_22037/understanding-individual-donor-listening-preferences-8f481ac11f3a