You Learn—and Earn—When You Really Listen

by Harvey Mackay
Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Carla appeared to be officer material at her company, yet the sales director was the high point of her career.

Frank was number one in the ratings for a while, but he slumped and was let go. He tried smaller stations, but it never worked out. Last I heard, he was driving a cab.

Larry, Carla and Frank were all great talkers, but lousy listeners. When you had a conversation with them, they weren’t paying attention to what you were saying—they were thinking ahead to what they were going to say when it was their turn at bat.

They missed a lot of clues that way.

Larry was a great campaigner. He had a ready smile and a firm handshake, but he was extremely thin-skinned and disdainful of the opinions of others. As long as Larry kept winning, he was the “boy wonder” and his faults were ignored. But once he lost, there were no second chances. The buzz on Larry got loud enough for everyone to hear. Larry’s “a great No. 1

(Continued on page 6)
President's Perspective

by Susan Ellen Bacon

This has been an exciting spring. The corporate training division I now manage for Walsh College in Troy, Michigan, has been in full operation eight months. During this time I have had an opportunity to work with Fortune 500 companies, a Malcolm Baldrige Service Award Winner, and numerous other entities that have their "eyes on the prize."

Retail, manufacturing, service, medical... at first there is no common thread. But there is one issue that all of these businesses have in common. One issue that is discussed, marketed, and posted. One issue that forms the foundation for their success. Each of these clients have listening in their mission, or vision, or objectives, or goals.

As members of ILA, we all know the importance and impact of listening. What is exciting is that corporations are so consistently seeking that which we have to provide. I didn’t have to say "what about listening?" I didn’t hear "nah... we need real skills." What I did have to do is listen.

And then...

What I did get to do is talk about us, ILA... to share our mission. Nope. No one had ever heard of us. (But that was before Barbara Nixon’s web-site success.) While that is significant, what I think is even more significant is the positive reaction. Nope. No one has joined (yet), but everyone was impressed with ILA.

Not one single person asked how big we were. Not one single person asked why we existed. Not one single person said "what do you do?" What people asked is can they learn to listen, can they control barriers, what skills should they work on, and how they can help impact their environment. Everyone believed that improved listening skills was a core component of winning.

It is exiting to talk about a subject that I have a passion for and to discover how eager others are to absorb the information. Members of ILA have long known the impact of listening on educational success, interpersonal relationships, medical support... I believe that most important step we can take as members of ILA is for each of us to work to share what we know about listening.

This is not the work of a single committee (Yes, we do have a great P.R. Committee) it is the work of each of us. And exciting work at that!

Editor's Ink

by Barbara B. Nixon

It's totally amazing to me... ILA has been around for nearly two decades, and we still have little name recognition. Strike that. We had little name recognition.

What a summer for ILA! Not only did the popular web index Yahoo choose our website as a Pick of the Week, but the Wall Street Journal also featured many of our members in article about the importance of listening. The ILA was front page news in one of the most widely read newspapers in the world!

Let's keep this up. We need your help to keep this momentum going.

ILA LISTENING POST
Listening Post Deadlines

The deadline for all Listening Post materials (including articles, ads, and photographs) to appear in the next issue is September 30.

LISTENING POST Advertising

To provide service to ILA members and suppliers, the ILA Listening Post will accept advertising. Acceptance of all advertising will be subject to editorial approval.

1997 Rates

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All ads must be camera ready and pre-paid.

Send materials and ads to:
Barbara B. Nixon, Editor
1729 Charles Street
DePere, WI 54115
b_b_nixon@msn.com
414-337-6451 voice
414-337-1972 fax
Faculty Faulty perceptions of MBA business communication needs

by Andy Wolvin

Oral communication skills have been identified as critical to the workplace. Indeed, the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that employers are looking for communication skills and interpersonal skills before they consider an applicant's technical skills ("Good News for College Grads," 1997). Competency in oral communication ranks first in managers' hiring decisions (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997).

Once an individual is on the job, what communication skills are essential to functioning effectively? In their study of managers, Maes, Weldy & Icenogle (1996) discovered that "following instructions" and "listening skills" ranked first and second respectively in skill importance, and "listening skills" and "following instructions" ranked first and second respectively in skill frequency of use.

Despite evidence that listening and other oral communication skills are central to effectiveness in the workplace, it is interesting to look at research on communication in business and MBA programs. Reinsch and Shelby (1996) asked MBA students about their perceptions of communication needs required to deal with workplace challenges. "Stronger speaking/listening skills" ranked seventh in the MBA student responses. And it gets even worse! In a second study, Reinsch and Shelby's (1997) respondents perceived "listen more effectively" to be 12th on their list of communication needs. Warner (1995) compared responses of business professionals who ranked listening as the most important communication competency to business faculty who ranked it as second in importance to effective organization of presentations. In another study, Plutsky (1996) asked business professors what should be addressed in a Business Communication course. Listening ranked 11th out of 18 topics. Pincus, Rayfield and Ohl (1994) reported their national study of communication ("public relations") strategy (i.e. audience analysis, employee communication, persuasion) and tactical (i.e. management presentations, public speaking, and memo writing) topics that make up a required communication course in MBA programs. Listening was not even mentioned!

It would appear that there is considerable disparity between what communication skills—listening in particular—are important in the workplace and what communication skills—especially listening—are addressed in the MBA curriculum. It is heartening that Indiana University requires their Accounting majors to take a course in listening. But clearly, the traditional message orientation to communication education is ingrained in many programs. The New York Times recently reported on how some of these courses now include a unit on standup comedy (McKenzie 1997).

Meanwhile, a look at the listen-
Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

At the March ILA convention, I offered to give $5.00 for every copy of my newest book (And Then I Was Surprised by What You Said: The Impact of Love and Listening On Community) purchased at the convention to the Carl H. Weaver Memorial Fund.

As a result, $100.00 was raised for the fund, and I handed a check to Larry Barker, who represented the Institute for the Study of Intrapersonal Processes, the organization that is administering the fund. The Weaver Fund is intended to support research that is too expensive to complete without financial assistance. Monies will become available to support research as soon as the minimum of $10,000.00 has been reached. In the event that we are unable to reach that amount within five years, the monies will be integrated with other research funds, and a rotation scheme of some kind will be worked out.

Those of you who would like to contribute, please write your tax-deductible check to: ISIP and send it to P.O. Box 13591 New Orleans, LA 70185-3591.

Please mark your check with the designation "Carl H. Weaver Fund," so there is no confusion as to your intentions. This is a project that all ILA members should get behind. There are a lot of research questions that we all need the answers to and many of them require funding for completion.

Thanks to all of you who have already contributed. Let's make some headway toward this worthy goal.

Sincerely,

Dick Halley

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank those who purchased my non-print listening resources and added $361.72 to the James I. Brown and Ralph G. Nichols Awards' funds. Only five of the original 21 non-print listening resources remain.

If you are interested in purchasing Adbox, CBS Noise Pollution, Listening for Laughs, Newskit, and/or Persuasion Box, please contact me at 707-996-8043, ccoak@vom.com, or 1110 Beasley Way, Sonoma, CA 95476.

All monies from all sales go to the Brown and Nichols Awards' funds.

Appreciatively,

Carolyn Coakley

Nichols & Brown Award Winners

At the 1997 ILA convention, the Institute for the Study of Intrapersonal Processes (ISIP) announced the winners of two prestigious awards. The co-recipients of the Ralph G. Nichols Award are Kelby Halone, Andy Wolvin, and Carolyn Coakley for their paper "Accounts of Listening Across the Life Span." The co-recipients of the James I. Brown Award are Shana Kilsaran, Julie Blackman and Tiffany Winkler from Arizona State University for their paper "Listening Styles and Communication." Congratulations!

Sharing the ILA

by Lisa Darnell
Member-at-Large
Public Relations

Roger Wilson recently spoke to a group of speech teachers from throughout the Virginia Community College System about listening. He had phenomenal turnout at his program, (congratulations, Roger), and he took the opportunity to plug the ILA. Are you doing likewise? If so, please let me know. We would like to continue the tradition of commending members for seizing opportune moment to mention their ILA membership. Also, we may find that by sharing your experiences, you provide suggestions to others who might not have thought about sharing ILA that way.

It is important to talk to others about your membership in the ILA, but remember there are other ways to share the ILA. Give a gift membership to someone you think needs to learn to listen, or to someone you think exemplifies the qualities of an effective listener.

Another option might be to contact Edie "the bag lady" Cole for some great ILA merchandise to give as "atta boy" gifts at your workplace or during your seminars. Wouldn't we all like to work with people who are trying to improve their listening skills? And whether or not your session is about listening, everyone benefits when participants are effective listeners.

Whatever you do to promote effective listening, keep it up.

Whatever you do to share ILA, "atta boy,"—and don't forget to let us know.
Posters, Posters, Everywhere

by Kimberly Batty-Herbert

When I originally came up with the idea to create a new ILA poster for membership recruitment, my intention was to produce more recognition for ILA by truly having posters, posters, everywhere. Unfortunately, up to this point, the only one who is experiencing this vision is Charles Roberts, whose office is still filled with these posters.

I hope each of you who attended the Mobile convention has hung the copies you were given in March, but our work is not finished. Won't you help to reduce Charles bulk, in his office of course, and assist me in alleviating the loading dock image his office is currently experiencing?

For those of you who were unable to attend the 1997 convention, we have a new poster with tear-off postcards for potential members to send in if they desire additional information about ILA. They are visually appealing posters utilizing the same artwork (Rikki Thompson’s photography) as was featured in the previous ILA poster. You can contact Charles Roberts or Diana Schnapp to request copies for display in your area. Colleges and universities are not the only suitable sites for displaying the posters. We need to reach out to potential members in many other areas. Convention centers, large hotels with meeting rooms, mental health facilities, hospitals, public relations agencies, government buildings, and airports are all practical locations; the possible list is endless.

Your involvement in this task does not need to be limited to your own community. Send them to your friends and colleagues in other areas. If you are planning on a trip, whether professional or solely for pleasure, take the ILA with you and hang some posters as you pass through airports, hotels, or convention centers in other cities.

Don’t be selfish: Share the ILA experience.

If You Can Listen... (Continued from page 1)

communicate? Connect? Think? (from his nine-year-old grandson) Appreciate? And, truest of all “Boogie.” I had not heard that Jack did a Boogie Workshop. But I think this answer shows that he is a profound man. Liz Lavallee’s brilliant idea was to flip the sentences around. She said it should be like this: “If you can walk, can you dance? If you can talk, can you sing? If you can hear, can you listen?” I like that a lot because I also felt that listening is a sort of higher order of hearing, just as singing and dancing are a higher, more beautiful forms of talking and walking.

So we all had a sense that there were multiple levels of skill here. In one direction we moved toward the everyday, bread-and-butter levels. In the other direction we rose toward the sacred and beautiful. People started giving us more ideas for the higher levels. Barbara Nixon offered, “If you can listen, you can love,” and Dick Halley gave us, “If you can listen, you can build a loving community.” Lynn Kirk, who teaches at Cambridge College in Springfield, MA, contributed, “If you can listen, you can connect.” Lanette Spranzo Macaruso in Connecticut wrote, “If you can listen, you can learn.” Pretty good, I thought.

Well, it was a wonderful thread. These conversational threads are paths that never end, they just pause to rest. I think the most pleasant and inviting corner for me came when Marsha Berry (from Australia) gave us this: “If you listen, you can understand.” And then, my friend Rhondi Lightmark, gave me this poem which she says is by Kafka.

You do not have to do anything
Remain sitting at your table
and listen
Do not even listen, simply wait
Do not even wait, be quite still
and solitary
The world will freely offer itself
to you to be unmasked
It has no choice
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet...

Ergo: If you can listen, then you might be able to do the next thing, which is nothing.

And, so the answer which I like best to the question: “What do I need listening lessons for?” is this: “So you can better understand, learn, connect and love, and so that eventually the world will roll in ecstasy at your feet.” Is that something that would interest you?

IMPORTANT DATES

September 30, 1997 — Listening Post deadline

March 19-21, 1998 — 19th Annual Convention to be held in Kansas City, MO
Really Listen

(Continued from page 1)

man, by the world’s worst No. 2.*

Customers would tell Carla what they needed from her company, a telecommunications outfit, but it just sailed over her head. She had her own agenda, and there was only one item on it: herself. One time a customer tried to tell her that he was thinking of abolishing a certain department and outsourcing the service.

“How would that affect your proposal for my company, Carla?”

“I’ll get right back to you on that,” she said.

When Carla made her proposal, she made beefing up the equipment at the soon-to-be-abolished department the focal point of her pitch. The customer walked out of the room in the middle of her presentation.

Frank, the radio guy, loved to talk to his boss, the station manager. He’d brag about the number of calls he’d received and the influence he had on local politics. The boss tried to tell Frank that he needed more than one string to his bow if he was going to sustain his ratings.

“Frank, I’ve been at this game a long time, and people get tired of hearing the same message over and over. Try to broaden your base. Get some guests on your show. Talk books. Talk entertainment. Talk sports. Every pitcher needs more than a fast ball.”

Frank didn’t get it. It wasn’t long before the public didn’t, either. If he’d made some changes in his format, he’d probably still be spouting off.

How many companies can you think of that didn’t listen to their customers and just kept on trying to peddle yesterday’s products at today’s prices?

You learn when you listen. You earn when you listen—not just money, but respect.

When your kids or your spouse are sharing their day with you, are you listening? How many times have you heard, “Dad, I told you about it last week!” from an exasperated child? The same child whose full attention you expect when you say, “Listen to me, young man!”

Mackay’s moral: Many people hear, but few actually listen.

Reprinted with permission of Harvey Mackay from the Minneapolis Star Tribune, July 18, 1996. You can reach Harvey Mackay at harvey@mackay.com.

LISTEN TO THIS!

Try the audio Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test (revised) in your classroom or consulting business at a low research price. Help build a database for listening research while measuring your students’/clients’ listening with this proven test.

The Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test (revised) is easy to administer and has central scoring with an improved results report for each student/client. It is available with pretest and posttest forms. Try it, you’ll like it!

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River Falls, WI 54022
(715) 425-9999

Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test (Revised)
From Diana's Desk
by Diana Schnapp
Executive Director

Summer is in full swing, and things have slowed a little after the convention excitement. But there is still a lot of action in the central office.

By now all of you should have received your blue covers and the pages that go inside: your new membership directories! Sorry for the confusion over the blue covers. Did I outsmart the postal service or did they get me? Please DO read the directory carefully, and send me corrections-preferably in legibly printed writing! Thanks to you who have already done so.

Is your membership renewal due? I haven't heard from all the June and July people. Check your last notification or contact me if you have any question about when your membership expires. I am only sending one reminder letter.

A failure to renew and to send us address corrections will result in a loss of newsletters, mailings, and journals for you.

Wow! Website of the week! We are receiving a lot of contacts from people who are surfing the net. Kudos to Webmaster Barbara Nixon for her work in setting up our site and responding to inquiries.

Let me encourage you to be in touch with your officers. One of our goals this year is better communication. Let the President, First Vice-President, appropriate Members-At-Large know of your ideas and concerns. And please send papers to Charles Roberts for consideration for the journal and items to Barbara Nixon for the Listening Post. Michael Purdy is working on a new edition of the bibliography. Are your publications related to listening included? If not, send them along now. This is your association, and your officers need your input to serve your needs.

Remember to contact me at ILISTENING@aol.com or call or FAX. I work in the office every weekday beginning at 9:00 AM. If I am not in, the answering machine will take your message.

What questions would you like for me to answer in the next Listening Post?

“I Want to Know”

If there is something you would like to know about ILA or Listening in general, write your question below, and we will try to find an answer for you.

My question is

Send questions to Diana Schnapp, Executive Director, or e-mail ILISTENING@aol.com.

Success Comes To Those Who Make It Happen, Not Those Who Let It Happen
by Kimberly Batty-Herbert

The title of this article is an old adage from an unknown source, but I feel it aptly describes the reason the Listening Swap Shops have been so well received over the last several years. These convention sessions cannot succeed without the many individuals who make it happen. Success in the past has been a direct consequence of many ILAers getting involved and submitting their original ideas to Bob Bohlken and myself. I know that my listening and other communication courses have continued to benefit from the insightful suggestions and activities shared by so many of you over the years and I would like to thank each of you who have participated.

Bob and I would like to see this session continue, however, we need your help. The time has come for us to start combing through our piles of debris and files of forgotten listening activities to locate your addition to the 1998 Swap Shop in Kansas City.

I know each of you has a favorite listening exercise, activity, training tip, lesson plan, etc., which would lend itself nicely to our growing collection of ideas. Do not miss out on being part of the 1998 Swap Shop booklet and receiving your free copy. When sending in your activity, be sure to include your name, address, institution/business name, activity title, objectives, description and instructions to utilize the activity. Submit your ideas to one of the following addresses:

Kimberly Batty-Herbert
Clovis Community College 417 Schepps Blvd.
Clovis NM 88101 - OR: Bob Bohlken
NW Missouri State University
Wills Hall 134 Maryville MO 64468
Who's Who in Listening

by Lisa Darnell
Member-at-Large
Public Relations

The ILA is bringing back its popular Who's Who in Listening Training, Speaking & Consulting Handbook. The handbook, originally published in the 80s, will be sent to all who contact the Executive Director of ILA for suggestions of trainers, speakers, consultants, etc.

If you are interested in becoming a Who’s Who listing, please fill out the appropriate form (inserted into this issue of the Listening Post). Then, send the form and a check for $25 to

Diana Schnapp
ILA Executive Director
P.O. Box 25324
Overland Park, KS 66225

or

Lisa Darnell
University of North Alabama
UNA, Box 5189
Florence, AL 35662

Q: Why do some names appear in bold type in this newsletter?
A: We try to always include ILA members' names in bold.

listening n (1996): the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages
DIRECTORY CHANGES & UPDATES

Please replace the information in your directory with the following changes and updates:

**Susan Bosak**  
9 Lobriaco Lane  
Whitechurch-Stouffville  
Ontario, L4A 7X5  
Canada

**Karen Carrier**  
Phone: 601-296-0959

**Lou Hampton**  
Preferred 202-686-2020  
Alternative phone 207-537-1051  
email: lou@hamptongroup.com

**Hildegunn Otanes** (note name spelling)  
Preferred mailing address:  
Hxgskolen i Vestfold  
Avdeling for Ifrerutdanning  
Boks 2243, 3103 TXNBERG  
Norway  
email: hildegunn.otnes@hive.no  
Add Norway to the green pages and add her name.

**Lydia Comty**  
Alternative address:  
The Listening Connection  
Box 672  
Erickson, Manitoba  
Canada ROJ OPO  
email: jcomty@techplus.com

**Edie Cole**  
Omit email address: incorrect

**Hannah Merker**  
Telephone: deaf relay 800-421-1220  
and ask for 516-676-6457 and VCO  
FAX: 516-674-8076

**David Barkan**  
Preferred telephone: 415-488-1045  
Alternative Phone: 415-488-0323

**Prof. Eri Sato-Shiozawa**  
Correction of name spelling  
New address is:  
4-23-6 301 Higashi-cho  
Koganei-shi, Tokyo  
Japan 184
Roger Wilson
Omit "Business Office-Fishburn Hall" from Address

Add to Hall of Fame List
Michael Purdy
Alice Ridge

Interest Group Revisions:
Change Barnett Helzberg Primary Interest Area from Business to College/University
Change Roger Wilson Primary Interest Area to College/University

Committee Additions:
Program Planning
  Dean Thomlison
  Melissa Bealle
  Frances Grant

  Curriculum Assessment:
    Dean Thomlison
    Melissa Bealle
    Daniel Fasko, Jr.
    Sara Lundsteen

  Site Selection
    Melissa Bealle
    Mary Louise Shannon

  Research
    Daniel Fasko, Jr.
    Sara Lundsteen

  International Outreach
    Sara Lundsteen

  Awards
    Frances Grant
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**ILA Service**

| Year Joined ILA |
| Offices Held |
| Papers Presented |
| Other ILA Service |

**Areas of Specialization**

- [ ] Speaking
- [ ] Consulting
- [ ] Testing
- [ ] Training
- [ ] Teaching (Circle one or more: Elementary, Secondary, College, Adult)

| Other Involvement in the Field of Listening |