

How do I engage my team more effectively?

Proactive Communication

“ When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen. ”

— ERNEST HEMINGWAY

This quote from Hemingway highlights a crucial challenge to StartUp CEOs. The more you listen the more successful you will be. Shallow listening is often at the root of dysfunctional startup teams. While most Founders turned CEOs understand this concept on a cognitive level, in practice it is often ignored.

Proactive communication is a technique that raises listening from its profile as a passive activity to one that more fully engages two or more individuals who desire to communicate. It deepens relationships and ensures positive connections. Consider the **SHARE Model** of proactive communication. Your team will feel more empowered and you will find that your decision making ability soars because you are exposed to inadvertent thoughts catalyzed by the thinking patterns of the team you worked so hard to build.



SUSPEND

Suspend your own agenda and pay close attention to the agenda, perspective, and viewpoint of the other individual (s) currently speaking



HOLD

Hold judgment about their current communication until a later time



ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge the current communication of the other individual (s) through body language like eye contact and body positioning, as well as appropriate verbal language



RESPOND

Respond with clarifying questions that “test” what you perceive they are saying with what the other individual actually intended to say



ENGAGE

Engage with your own unique, value-added perspective

The **SHARE Model** was designed as an easy reminder for effective communication. The word “share” is defined by the dictionary as “to receive equally.” Both the model and the definition are reminders to us that proactive listening contributes to an equitable relationship. Equity builds trust and trust is the foundation that all StartUp businesses need to build and scale. It all starts with listening.