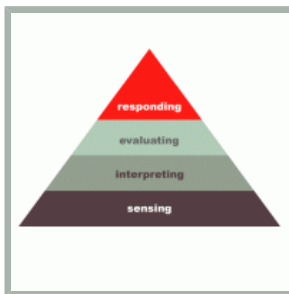


## SIER hierarchy of active listening



### characteristics

author:	Steil, Lyman K., Barker, Larry L. and Watson, Kittie W.
country:	United States
period:	1983
type:	model
role:	consultant, change agent, coach and trainer
activity:	analyse and reflect
topic:	marketing & sales
abstr. level:	individual
perspective:	learning
status:	under review
module:	personal selling
comments:	1

### related models

ADAPT interview framework

### description:

In the early 1980s, the American communication researchers, Steil, Watson & Barker, developed the SIER hierarchy of active listening based on their observation that people recall only about 50% of the message immediately after hearing it and only 25% after two days. Steil, Watson & Barker built upon Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's general model of communication that was first published in 1947. Active listening - necessary to fully internalizing verbal and nonverbal messages of buyers - is a skill that helps sales people be more effective in the sales process.

The SIER model is a hierarchical, four step sequence of listening activities:

#### 1. SENSING

The hierarchy of active listening begins by hearing, seeing and receiving the verbal and nonverbal aspects of the message. Concentration is required in this phase. The buyer should not be interrupted so the message can be delivered in full and adequate detail. The receiver's body language should be positive to help the sender deliver the message.

#### 2. INTERPRETING

After receiving the message, the salesperson must interpret and place it in meaningful context. The buyer's experiences, knowledge and attitudes should be linked to the verbal and non-verbal elements of the message. Interpreting helps insure that the receiver's understanding corresponds to the sender's meaning.

#### 3. EVALUATING

Active listening occurs at the evaluation phase after the interpretation phase. The receiver must sort fact from opinion. The receiver needs to judge the message based on its strengths and weaknesses and how well it is liked or disliked. The evaluation phase consists of both logical and emotional components.

#### 4. RESPONDING

Two-way communication requires the receiver to respond to the sender. The response provides feedback to the sender on how well the message was understood and encourages further interaction between the two parties. Responses can be both verbal and non-verbal. Rephrasing and reflecting the sender's message shows interest and increases understanding. Pruning questions provide additional detail and clarification.

The model is hierarchical. The receiver must use all receptive senses during the sensing phase to improve the quality of the interpretation, evaluation and response phases.

When a misunderstanding occurs, both parties need to restart their analysis at the bottom of the hierarchy.

### assets:



SIER hierarchy of active listening

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### pros:

- The model makes the receiver aware of focusing on the message rather than on the sender.
- Behavioral listening models are cognitive models with an additional response component. SIER is a relatively simple behavioural model. The model has not undergone scientific validation.

### cons:

- The model has not undergone scientific validation.
- The model is based on the assumptions of linear attention and memory perspectives that are disputed by the scientific community. Current working memory research uses a dynamic model of attention and perception.

### references:

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