

Tips for creating a listening culture

1. Effective listening starts with a mindset of curiosity and an openness to new possibilities and approaches.
2. Listening is an ongoing endeavor, not an occasional activity.
3. Listening is most effective when more people are consistently doing it.
4. Listening helps leaders focus on the people they serve and the desired outcomes they seek.
5. Listeners need to ask, "Whose voice are we not hearing from? How will we invite them to share their wisdom?"
6. Listening can be done in more formal settings (structured interviews) as well as in more spontaneous settings.
7. When gathering groups to listen to, note when and where people are already gathering.
8. Gathering feedback can be done in person, via Zoom and social media sites, and through texts and emails.
9. Leaders need to move beyond their comfort zones, and may find themselves pleasantly surprised.

Tips for creating an experimenting culture

1. Experimentation begins with an assumption that there might be a better way to approach or do something.
2. Experimenters recognize that failure is part of the process. They welcome it and learn from it.
3. Buy in is much easier when an experiment is couched as something we'll try or pilot for a short time.
4. To get more buy-in, be willing to share what you're doing, why it matters, and how others can support it.
5. Focus on a series of short-term experiments; seek to learn from each cycle of experimentation.
6. Share your learnings with others along with your next steps.

Learnings about creating a bias for action and reflection

1. Seek to share the workload so that everyone has a personal contribution in the project.
2. Break down tasks into bite-size pieces that are easy to hand off to others.
3. Assign a coordinator who checks in on people's commitments and monitors people's progress.
4. Ask for people's person commitments before, during, and after meetings.
5. Take time at meetings or via Google Docs to share "What's working? What's not? and What if . . ."
6. Review results through the lens of the church's mission and its core values.
7. Align actions with the project's intended outcomes.
8. Be aware of, and possibly let go of, the assumptions you hold when reviewing results.
9. Allow all participants to share their insights and ideas in person or online.

Next steps for congregation who have listened and seek to experiment

1. Write a brief paragraph describing the innovation (s) you will be acting upon within the next 90 days.
2. Provide a rationale for how it reflects the learnings that came from the listening sessions, and why it matters.
3. List a sequence of action steps to be taken to fulfill the innovation you will be creating and evaluating.
4. Provide an anticipated timeline for when each task will be completed.
5. Assign a coordinator for each innovation project who will follow up on each person's commitments.
6. Invite team members to share ways they can support each innovation project.
7. Consider tracking commitments using the Assignment Log or adding items to your Google Doc.

