

2023 TAMIO Annual Conference

Friday, June 9, 2023

Session Handout

Session Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Leadership and Listening:**

## **Exploring the Partnership between City Managers and Public Information Officers**

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### **Part I: Personal Reflection**

**Why does your organization need to invest in listening right now? What events, activities, or situations give evidence to your need to listen more intentionally internally and/or externally?**

**List all of your job functions that require listening. How is listening already built into your role?**

**How does listening support your city manager/administrator/commissioner's current priorities for your organization? How could the work you currently list in the previous question help bolster your leaders' goals?**

## Part II: Organizational Listening\*

### Definition of Listening:

- (1) giving recognition and respect to others
- (2) paying attention
- (3) interpreting what others say in a fair and receptive manner
- (4) understanding others' views,
- (5) trying to understand others' perspectives and feelings;
- (6) giving consideration to what others say;
- (7) offering a response after consideration has been given, even if it does not equate with an agreement with what was said or requested.

### Definition of Organizational Listening:

The creation and implementation of scaled processes and systems that enable decision-makers and policymakers in organizations to actively and effectively assess, acknowledge, understand, consider and appropriately respond to all those who wish to communicate with the organizations or with whom the organization wishes to communicate interpersonally or through delegated, mediated means.

### Architecture of Listening

Culture	Policies	Politics	Structures/Processes	Articulation of Listening
Attitudes and actions of senior leadership	Specific directives about how listening will happen and what happens after listening occurs.	Understand who you are (and are not) listening to.	Who has the job of listening? What are they reporting back to leadership?  Develop processes for listening to large groups.	Share insights from listening efforts with senior leadership and take the appropriate action based on what listeners shared.

\*Definitions taken from *Jim Macnamara (2018) Toward a Theory and Practice of Organizational Listening, International Journal of Listening, 32:1, 1-23, DOI: [10.1080/10904018.2017.1375076](https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2017.1375076)*

### PART III– Assessing Possibilities for Listening

Using the chart below, indicate whether or not you presently use any of these listening strategies. In the last column labeled “potential,” place a check mark if this is a strategy you could find useful for your work.

Listening Approaches	Yes	No	Potential
Counsel senior leadership on ways to cultivate a culture of listening in our organization.			
Develop programs, initiatives, or events designed to help senior leaders listen to internal/external stakeholders at least once a year.			
Collaboratively maintain an inventory of key personnel in various departments who have the role of listening to different internal groups.			
Update stakeholder audit with a specific focus on listening. Annually provide senior leadership with an update on who your organization is and is not listening to with accompanying evidence justifying this assessment.			
Create specific directives for listening in face-to-face and virtual listening events, and what happens with the information heard during these events.			
Design processes for listening in large group settings (e.g., roles, responsibilities, agenda, anticipated goals/outcomes).			
Review and update job descriptions with functions/tasks/responsibilities specifically connected to listening.			
Regularly communicate actions taken based on listening efforts (e.g., annual listening report, standing page on organization website within two clicks of the home page, annual event located in the community).			
Facilitate or partner with an organization to facilitate listening training sessions with senior leadership and other personnel to bolster organizational commitments to listening.			
Monitor social media and internal communication to identify new areas for listening.			
Develop strategies for listening to include in comprehensive communication planning for your department.			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			

## Part IV – Taking Action

Now that we've assessed your listening efforts, think about two actions you can take over the next year to strengthen your organization's listening efforts.

Action Items Needed	Targeted Completion Date	Who Should Be Involved

Additional Notes: