



# Constructive Client Conversations

## Master the Art and Science of Listening to Clients

“How are we going to get all the work done?” seems to be the day's question. The current “curse” of plentiful work conjures nightmares of negative impacts on client delivery, needing to turn down work, or burning out your people.

But there's a secret weapon to avoid those pitfalls: better listening skills. When your project managers and other client-facing consultants do a better job of listening, they will be able to . . .

- ▶ No-go bad pursuits earlier in the BD cycle
- ▶ Eliminate wasted effort writing losing proposals, the biggest time waster in many firms
- ▶ Become the client's “go-to” consultant, effectively sole-sourcing the work to you
- ▶ Avoid costly mistakes and rework arising from misunderstandings
- ▶ Manage projects more efficiently and effectively
- ▶ Reduce change orders
- ▶ Get change orders paid without complaints
- ▶ Get more enjoyment out of work, and
- ▶ Be better leaders, team members, and employees.

Now, a training program specifically for A/E professionals will help do all those things: **Constructive Client Conversations Through Effective Listening.**

We created this program as part of our Seller-Doer Academy core curriculum, but now we're offering an enhanced, stand-alone version that isolates listening and communication skills to produce lasting client relationships. It can be delivered using your choice of methods: virtual, on-site, or hybrid, from a half-day to one full-day. Participants will learn how to:

1. Use all three methods of effective listening: attentive, active, and empathic
2. Prepare more intentionally for client discussions
3. Get to know new prospects without dreading it
4. Hold productive conversations about upcoming pursuits to get a leg up on the competition
5. Nurture relationships with your best clients
6. Ask for honest and open feedback
7. Become a trusted advisor, not just a contractor.

Call Jim Rogers at (859) 321-7547 to learn more.

## How the “Constructive Client Conversations” System Works

Most training programs fail to achieve a return on investment because they merely impart information and do not involve enough practice reps with feedback from an expert to change behavior. We developed our training program based on proven methods for changing listening behavior (see Joan Freitag’s bio below for more).

By contrast, “Constructive Client Conversations” is designed to build observable skills and create lasting behavior change that transfers back to the job ... and into the participants’ lives beyond work. That is, we help build listening habits that stick and help guarantee a

healthy return on your training investment.

We deliver content through a blended approach of self-study, remote learning, and on-site practice, although we can configure the program to your firm’s particular needs. There are group discussions and small group breakouts for activities, which require much time for practice with feedback. Participants even take on the coach role to help others get more practice because coaching helps us master the skills ourselves, to build knowledge and have discussion and practice activities. The vital element of creating listening behavior change is

to practice, practice, practice. Therefore, our workshop has many activities and drills. The number of participants can range from 12-24. Instructors provide individualized, real-time feedback during the workshop as participants practice the various elements of effective listening, such as showing attentiveness, asking effective questions, paraphrasing, and using empathy, diplomacy, and tact.



## Instructor Profiles



**Jim Rogers** helps engineering firms transform their business development capabilities to consistently outsell their competitors. He achieves that through consulting and training.

Jim is collaborating with Joan Freitag on the forthcoming

book *Constructive Client Conversations: The A/E Professionals’ Guide to Building Lasting Client Relationships*. His prior books include *Becoming a Seller-Doer: Succeed at Business Development and Take Command of Your Career* (2022 High Horse Press) and *Win More Work: How to Write Winning A/E/C Proposals* (2014 American Council of Engineering Companies).

Since 2010, he has consulted exclusively with the professional services industry. Before that, he was an organizational change management (OCM) expert for the world’s largest software systems integration firm, Accenture. An OCM consultant’s role is to get organizations to adopt new systems, processes, and best practices to change for the better. In this capacity, he learned the skills he uses today to help engineers, architects, and other AEC professionals become more effective communicators, business developers, and leaders.

Jim is president of the consulting firm Unbridled Revenue in Lexington, Kentucky, and the founder of the Seller-Doer Academy, which helps companies develop their next generation of seller-doers. He has a BA in Economics from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.



**Joan Freitag** has 40 years of experience in management, business development, and marketing in the AEC industry. Part of this experience has included her passion for teaching those performing business development and management to become better listeners and communicators.

To complete her master’s degree thesis at the University of Illinois, she developed and validated a listening training program for consulting engineers. Since 2005, she has conducted listening training at national conferences, including the Society for Marketing Professional Services, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and the Society of American Military Engineers’ Small Business and Joint Engineer Training Conferences.

Joan is semi-retired from Hanson Professional Services, an ENR top 200 design firm. Her most recent position was senior vice president of the federal market, where she provided strategic direction, managed client relationships, developed business, and managed a group of architects, engineers, and scientists whose clients included the DoD, FEMA, and others.

She is a Fellow of the Society of American Military Engineers, served as chair of the National ACEC Federal Agencies and Procurement Advocacy Committee, and is on the board of directors of America’s Watershed Initiative, which strives to improve the Mississippi River watershed.

Call Jim Rogers at (859) 321-7547 to learn more or simply send an email to [jim@sellerdoeracademy.com](mailto:jim@sellerdoeracademy.com).

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