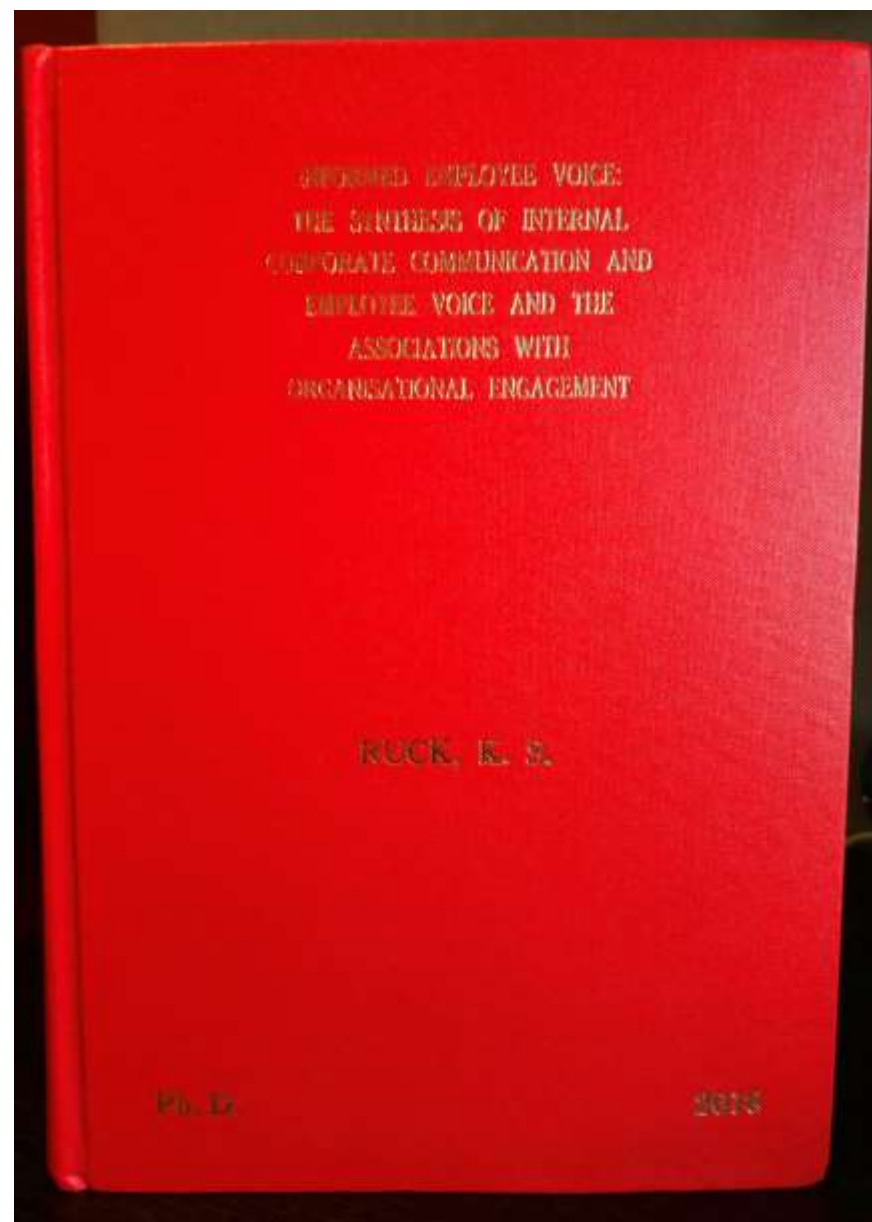


Are you really **listening**?

Unlocking innovation and engagement in the workplace

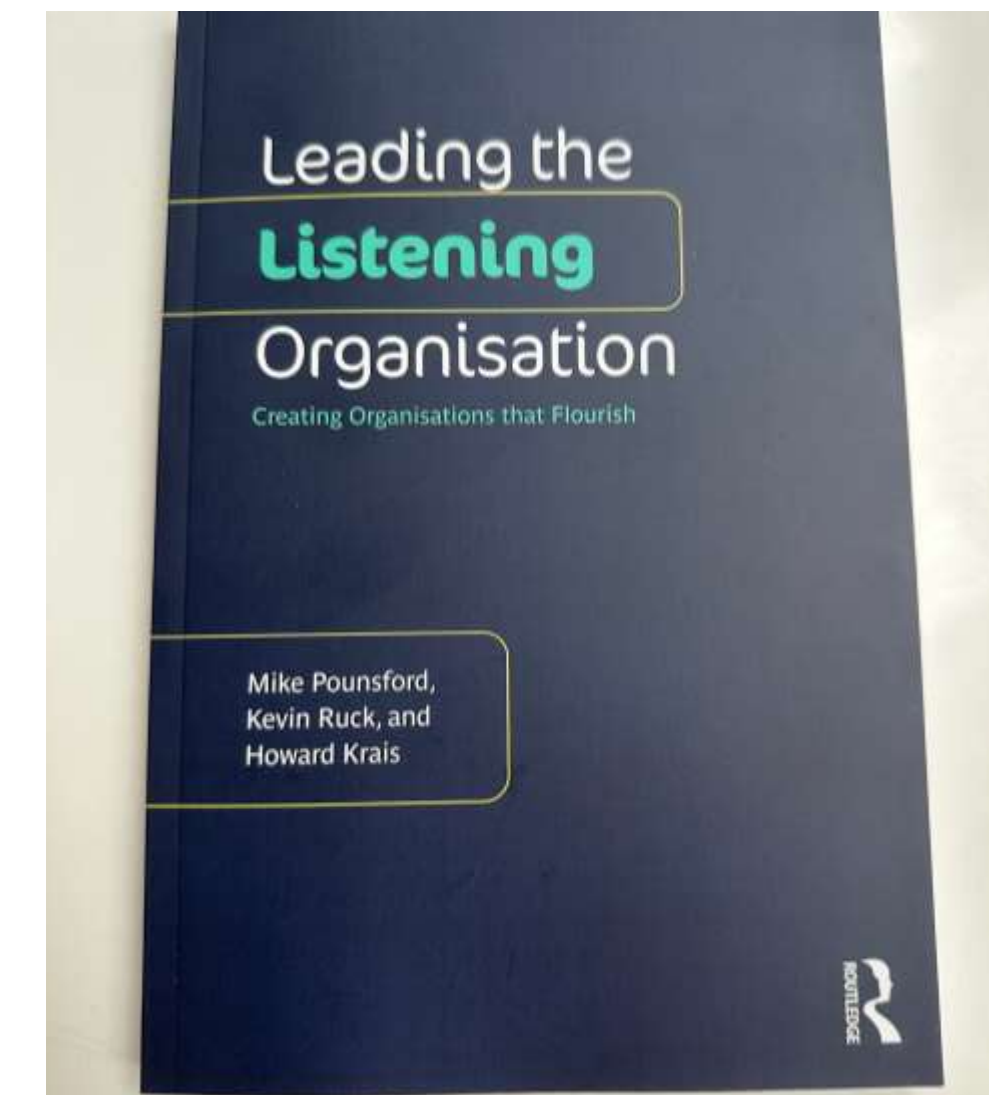
IoD Presentation: Dr Kevin Ruck

Research conducted over fifteen years



2009-2016 PhD completed at University of Central Lancashire
2019-2022 Four reports published
2024 Leading the Listening Organisation book published by Routledge

- Survey with more than 2,000 employees in UK
- Interviews and focus groups with employees
- Two surveys with communication managers (with 140 and 500 respondents respectively)
- Interviews, workshops and focus groups with communication managers



“

Essence of good listening is the
ability to understand the
perspective of others. **And respond
appropriately.**

”

“

By listening to employees on an ongoing basis, leaders **create better places to work**, in which employees are **highly engaged**.

Listening organisations are also **better innovators**.

”

There are two dimensions to leadership listening:

1. Systems and processes for ongoing listening (and responding)
2. Personal listening capabilities

A close-up photograph of a green highlighter marking the word "Leader" in a serif font on a piece of paper. The highlighter is positioned diagonally across the word. The background text is blurred but legible, showing phrases like "to be best in any point of view.", "in command of", "guides, or cont", and "a chief or com".

Leader

“

Leading a listening organisation involves creating an environment in which people feel safe to speak up, leaders at all levels are open, responsive and empathetic, and use multiple methods to recognize, acknowledge, understand, and respond to employees.

Listening is taken as critical to decision-making and performance.

”

Listening spectrum

More reactive, rational,
Business as usual ←————→ More proactive,
Emotional, change

Most listening activity takes place to the left of the Listening Spectrum

Listening style	Passive	Active	Sensitive	Deep
Objective	Monitor environment to identify trends & needs	Understand what's driving opinions to respond to concerns	Build trust & increase resilience	Engage & co-create. Innovate and change
Characteristics of approach	Interpretation of objective listening	Listen for reasons behind opinions	EI. Attention to psychological needs	Collaborate to come up with new insights, ways of working
Approaches & tools	Annual & pulse surveys	Focus groups, representative groups	Line manager conversations, employee support	Big conversations, conferencing, task forces, champions
What's important	Qualitative data, benchmarks, anonymity	Explanations, action plans & response	Confidentiality, empathy, freedom to speak out	Diversity of input, openness, curiosity, equal voice

Leaders who **listen well**:

- Are genuinely interested in what employees have to say and are open to ideas and suggestions
- Appreciate that they don't know everything and don't jump to immediately defensive answers
- Show empathy and compassion for employees
- Take personal responsibility for considering what is said and responding



101 which
to be best in any
point of view.
Leader
in command of
guides, or cont
a chief or com

Leadership Listening model



State of listening

- Not surprisingly, 'big' surveys dominate – but many employees and practitioners are dissatisfied with the time it takes to issue results and take actions
- Low level use of interviews & focus groups – despite high levels of agreement that these are very effective methods
- Low level use of digital listening – despite digital platforms being highly rated for providing feedback and suggestions
- Good basic practice is combination of regular senior leader listening sessions, regular pulse surveys and ongoing analysis of digital forum discussions.



101 which
to be best in any
point of view.
Leader
in command of
guides, or cont
a chief or com

Questions and Discussion

Read the book?

<https://www.routledge.com/Leading-the-Listening-Organisation-Creating-Organisations-that-Flourish/Pounsford-Ruck-Krais/p/book/9781032433769>

Continue the conversation?

kevin.ruck@pracademy.co.uk

