

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION TIPS

It is important that communication with staff does not only occur around negative instances and that positive achievements are also well communicated. Communication and feedback is the key to a successful working environment. In order to ensure your communication with employees is helping, not hindering, follow these guidelines:

- Include affected employees in goal setting.
- Give frequent and meaningful recognition for a job-well-done.
- Interact with employees on an informal basis.
- Go to staff work areas. Meet them on their own turf.
- Ask for opinions and listen with an open mind. Try to understand their point of view.
- Share non-confidential information with your team; ask for their input and response to issues.
- Offset demoralizing actions and events by emphasizing what went well, and use the experience as a learning opportunity.
- Listen 80% of the time and talk 20%.
- Encourage open and direct communication to short circuit rumors and gossip.
- Get into the “trenches” with staff. Look for opportunities to understand employees’ jobs better.
- Share information with staff, as appropriate, following management meetings.
- Ask staff: “Have I made our vision, mission, and goals clear and understandable?”
- Ask staff: “What can I do to help you with your job, and what am I doing that gets in your way?”
- Ask staff: “What is making our clients/customers the most and/or the least satisfied?”
- Praise in public and give feedback in private.
- Find something to appreciate about each staff member with whom you work.
- Actively make a point of speaking to all employees seen each day.
- Build bridges with people whom you are uncomfortable.
- “Managing by walking around” can help determine if goals and tasks are realistic and on target.
- Find ways to get together with staff informally. This will open lines of communication and build trust.

Actively solicit feedback about your own communication, and communication within the organization.

Ask staff questions like:

- When we talk, are you generally clear about what I am saying?
- Do you think we communicate well around here?
- Have you got any ideas about how we could communicate better?

Assess your own communication knowledge and understanding: Working with your staff, define how you should communicate in the organization. Develop consensus regarding:

- How disagreements should be handled.
- How horizontal communication should work (staff to staff).
- How vertical communication should work (manager to staff, staff to manager).
- What information should be available and when.

Once consensus is reached, support the achievement of these goals through positive reinforcement and coaching.

- Look at the impact of the structure of your organization and how it impacts on communication. Indirect communication (communication that is transferred from person to person) is notorious for causing problems. Look at increasing direct communication where the person with the message to send does it directly with the receiver.
- Learn about, and use active listening techniques. This will set a tone and contribute to a positive communication climate. If you don't know what active listening is, find out. It's important.