

## **Communications Outline**

### **Why communicate?**

- People need to know what they must do and why
- This is especially true during periods of change
- Productivity is increased via more effective work and co-operation
- Good people leave if they are unaware of prospects
- Failure costs money

### **What should be communicated?**

- Lots of things could be – so prioritise!
- Tell people what they must know to do their jobs
- Not just what you think will interest them

### **What affects their job?**

- The task
- Who they report to
- Goals and targets
- Priorities
- Health and safety
- What is changing

### **What affects employment?**

- Pay, bonus, overtime
- Redundancy
- Counselling
- Suggestions
- Union issues
- What is changing

### **The four basic types of communication**

#### **1 - By the manager (face to face)**

- Best person, but needs time and organising
- Makes leaders more effective
- Builds team
- Allows feedback
- Depth of knowledge
- Powerful

## 2 - Union or staff representatives

- Easy for managers, but makes reps into leaders!
- Brings strength of feeling from shop floor
- Formal contact improves informal relations

## 3 - Mass communications (notice boards, newsletters etc.)

- Cheap, quick and accurate
- Notice boards cannot be questioned
- Reluctance to ask questions at mass meetings
- Accurate transmission does not guarantee understanding
- General – no allowance for special groups
- Newsletters are typically screened, pruned, and hyped - but good for people news and wellbeing issues. Propaganda does not help!

## 4 - The grapevine

- Often factually accurate
- But negative
- Very effective transmission
- Can be grounded out with straight facts

## **Ten Commandments of good communication**

1. Develop trust (earned not given)
2. Openly communicate
3. Be specific
4. Supply background
5. Be absolutely honest
6. Actively share information and feelings
7. Talk as adult to adult
8. Solicit ideas and feedback
9. Follow through always
10. Remove roadblocks, irritants & frustration

## **Team briefing**

- A cascade process of downwards and upwards communication
- Face to face
- In small teams
- By team leaders
- Relevant to those being briefed • Time to ask and answer questions.

## **How to team brief**

- Regularly
- In small groups – maximum 15
- 1/3 core, 2/3 team issues
- Prepare well
- Venue that is free from interruptions

## **Include**

- Progress and performance
- Policy and plans
- People issues
- Points for action

## **Summary**

- Opportunities to talk face to face with questions is key
- Make it work through managers and supervisors
- Use all three methods
- Be open and honest
- Walk the talk to communicate values
- Consider team briefing as a process