

# Fact sheet

## Positive, open, two-way communication – tips for managers

Every day, managers can spend 70-90% of their time communicating with their team and others at work. With job satisfaction, performance and retention all related to a person's immediate supervisor, a manager's approach to communication can have a big impact. When you communicate with someone, what kind of relationships do you indicate you want? Is the communication based on mutual respect, shared goals and values the other person and the relationship?

### Reframe your role

How do you see your role? Does fulfilling this expectation support or hinder positive communication and building good relationships?

	Traditional frame	Reframe
Boss	Has answers Gives orders Assesses others performance	Sets direction Invites input to clarify and improve Creates conditions for continued learning to achieve excellence
Others	Subordinates who must do as told	Contributors with crucial insights and knowledge

### Start with good intentions, make them clear and known

Do you genuinely want to know the answer the other person has or are you simply seeking agreement with your own views? You need to approach communication with humility and genuine interest. When outlining work, do others know what you are trying to achieve and for what purpose? Do others know what you need from them? Do others know the importance of the work and how their input helps?

### Be humble – acknowledge what you don't know

Being humble is acknowledging and sharing that you don't have all the answers and you need your team's knowledge, skills, advice and effort. Understanding that we are all in this together and that we need each other to achieve (reciprocity) is important. Do others know you need their input? Are you modelling that no one is perfect or has all the information and we can learn and grow together?

## Ask good questions and listen actively

Decision-making calls for making judgements and reaching a conclusion. Consider the process you go through.

Do you take time to ask?

- Do I have all the facts?
- Is what I observed/noticed all there is to this situation?
- What might I be missing?
- Who else is involved and what do they think?

Do you pay attention to how you feel?

- What do I feel about this and why?
- Is how I'm feeling clouding how I see things?

Do you check in with others and ask them to share their observations and feelings about the situation before making a judgement and choosing a course of action? How do you make sure you have understood what they have said?

## Acknowledge what has been shared

Simply saying thank you, taking time to listen and asking opinions shows you value others and builds respect and trust. How do you acknowledge effort and input? How often do you thank or praise others?

## Reframe failure through encouraging sharing – about the good and the not so good

How do you help people to feel safe sharing differences of opinion, bad news or constructive feedback? How do you respond to negative news? This is the most important time to practice the skills above and model positive communication.

