

Quick Tips on Communication

improving TEAM communication:

1. Don't make assumptions.

All too often we assume the way we like to communicate is the way others like to as well. NOT TRUE! Instead of assuming you know, begin by observing how your team members communicate with other people. Do they tend to socialize before getting down to business, or

do they tend to be very direct. Observing will give you clues as to how your team prefers to communicate in a given situation. You can then adapt your management style to meet the needs of each individual member.

2. Confirm your understanding

It is vital to understand why people work the way they do. We know that observing is not enough, so the next logical step is to ask them. How often do we ask our team members how they prefer to work? Hardly ever, in my experience. The next step is to confirm your understanding by asking, "Am I correct, is this how you would like to work." I know what you must be thinking; this takes far too much time, probably time that you don't have. The time you invest now, in talking to your team is well worth the effort. The long-term result will be increased productivity, improved staff morale and you just might get your project in on time and within budget. It is equally important for you as the project manager to let your team know how you like to work. Speak up for your style.

3. Give them what they need to succeed.

Give them what they need to succeed. People thrive in different types of environments. Some excel in a structured environment while others are motivated by recognition and reward. Some may even prefer a more challenging atmosphere. Understanding the environment they excel in will give you additional information on how to maximize your team.

ASSERTIVE communication

BEING ASSERTIVE MEANS YOU:

- talk and think about yourself in a positive way
- feel comfortable expressing and accepting feedback and compliments
- express yourself directly and spontaneously
- ask for what you want
- state honest disagreements with ease
- insist on fair treatment

COMPONENTS OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR:

- eye contact - look directly at the person to whom you are speaking
- body posture - face the person; stand/sit appropriately close; hold your head erect
- gestures - use for accent and emphasis
- facial expression - must agree with message
- voice tone, inflection, volume - use calm, level statements
- content - be honest in expressing your feelings, but take responsibility for those feelings

ADVANTAGES OF BEING ASSERTIVE:

- you maintain awareness, responsibility and control of your needs and feelings
- you reduce the chances of future conflicts and tensions from unknown or uncommunicated needs
- your relationships stay healthy because they're based on openness and honesty

Buffalo State College LEAD Center Publication