

## Quick Guide: Briefing the Team

As a Team Leader or Manager do you wish you could keep a lid on gossip, reduce misunderstandings or minimise errors? Running regular team briefings, say fortnightly or monthly will help. Passing on management information to everyone means they all receive the same message and you can feed back to management afterwards. Here are the top ten tips to help you brief your team:

- 1. Make the briefing a regular date**, eg 9.00 am on the second Tuesday of each month, and set a specific cut off point. 30 minutes should be sufficient.
- 2. Prepare yourself** and research relevant information. What is happening? What's new? What's changing? How is the team involved? What is their expected contribution? Anticipate reactions and any questions: are you prepared?
- 3. Prepare and circulate a list of topic headings.** Include standing items such as the team's success and progress as well as new information and actions. Aim to end on a 'high'.
- 4. Control the discussion.** Remember this meeting is purely for getting information over and getting reactions. You have a time limit, so do not let it degenerate into a whinge, grievance or even a planning session. These can all be dealt with on another occasion!
- 5. Support the management view** (you are the role model!) keep to the point and keep the momentum going, reminding your team of time constraints if necessary.
- 6. Watch non-verbal reactions**, ask open questions and record responses. You will need to use your up-side-down communication to feed back to management afterwards and relying on your memory is probably not a good idea.
- 7. Deal with any questions honestly.** This will help you check their understanding of the information and actions, and so help disarm the effects of rumour afterwards.
- 8. Feed back to management** any points of concern, special interest or responses they may need.
- 9. Get the replies back to any unanswered questions** to the team as quickly as possible and take any actions you promised them, confirming these briefly at the next briefing.
- 10. Don't forget to praise** the team's achievements and progress!

**Compiled by Des Whitehorn**