

# Tool #1: Communications

## Getting your messages across

Whether you're managing production, or working with distributors, clear and effective communication ensures that everyone is on the same page, working towards the same goals. Simply put, good communication helps people do their jobs better and makes workplaces more satisfied and productive.

Good communications helps you maximise the impact of your policies and processes (see our website or the Employment NZ website for more information). Whether it's something compliance related that protects you as an employer, or some guidance that will improve an employee's work experience, people need to know what you expect of them so they can act accordingly.

Employees want their employers to listen to them, and most importantly to take action. Two out of three employees feel their voice is not listened to in some way by their manager or employer, which may have a negative impact on turnover <sup>6</sup>.

The costs of bad communication are:

- People make avoidable mistakes, and need to re-do jobs – wasting their time (and your money)
- Delays occur and deadlines are missed
- Managers can't lead their teams well, when they don't understand what is expected of them and their teams
- A lack of buy-in or understanding around change
- People are afraid to ask for feedback, which stunts personal and professional growth.

## What should I keep in mind when thinking about communicating with employees?

1. **Clarity:** Make sure your messages are clear and easy to understand. Avoid using complicated words or industry jargon.
2. **Consistency:** Keep your communication consistent. This helps avoid confusion and ensures everyone knows what to expect.
3. **Listening:** Communication is a two-way street. Make sure you're not just talking, but also listening to what others have to say. Show that you value your employees' input by asking for their perspective too. Acknowledge their concerns and work together to find a solution.
4. **Respect:** Always communicate with respect. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Try to avoid raising your voice.
5. **Timeliness:** Share information in a timely manner. Don't wait until the last minute to communicate important updates. Make sure your audience has enough time to read and respond if needed.

Remember everyone is at a different stage in their career. What is second nature to experienced farmers, growers, foresters, and fishers may not be for everyone on the team. A task that may seem simple to you might not be for someone else. When the pressure is on, it's easy to forget that. Be thoughtful of others and their skill level and ability.

### Note: Reading and Maths

Everyone is at a different stage in their journey reading, writing and doing sums. Some people are not confident in reading and doing maths. Adjusting your communications to meet the needs of your employees will ensure the best outcome.

<sup>6</sup> UKG (2021) <https://www.ukg.com/blog/workforce-institute/new-research-the-heard-and-the-heard-nots>

## What does good communication look like in reality?

Have a range of formal AND informal communication channels that allow communication from you to employees, and employees to you.

Formal

- Pulse surveys – to check in on wellbeing\*
- Videos
- Scheduled 1:1 meetings
- Exit interviews
- Regular performance check-ins

- All hands staff meetings / Daily / Weekly huddles
- team meetings
- Noticeboard messages

- Unscheduled one on one meetings
- Open Door Policy: Encourage an open-door policy where team members feel comfortable approaching you with their questions or concerns.

InFormal

- Whatsapp / group messages / text chain
- Direct text / message
- Posters

Some questions to ask could include:

**1. How are you feeling at work recently?**

Multi-choice response options: Very Happy, Happy, Neutral, Unhappy, Very Unhappy

**1. Do you feel supported by your team and manager?**

Multi-choice response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

**1. Is there anything we can do to improve your wellbeing at work?**

Open-ended response

These questions can help you gauge overall mood, the level of support employees feel, and gather specific suggestions for improvement.