

TEAM BRIEFINGS

1. Top tips for team briefings

- Team briefings provide an opportunity to meet with staff face to face. As such they enable 'complete communication' including, importantly, the use of body language and non-verbal cues
- In surveys, over 70% of staff say they prefer to receive communications in person from their line manager. Other advantages include:
 - the information is believable and trusted
 - a briefing offers a way to ensure that key messages are shared with the whole team
 - it allows for feedback and discussion, making communications a two-way process
- Hold them regularly. Briefings should be scheduled at least twice a term
- Content. Include a mix of local information and core brief (see 3 below). Remember the Four Ps and cover them in your briefing: People, Points for Action, Progress and Policy
- Don't rush. Show staff that this is a process that you value and to which you are giving adequate time
- Style. Add your own personality to the briefing. Staff are buying the person as well as the information
- Involve staff. To be successful, the briefing must go beyond just passing on information that could have as easily been read. It's about involving staff and not just informing them
- Success comes from the top. Take ownership, deliver with feeling and get feedback, including checking that messages are getting through, especially to those staff not directly briefed
- Aim to change. Team briefings should aim for changes in behaviour – eg inspire and motivate staff
- One size doesn't fit all. Different teams will have different logistical needs for their meetings, eg library staff work shifts and may not be able to leave their post to attend. Smaller Divisions will be able to meet together; for larger ones briefings will need to be cascaded first to line managers.
- Cascade effectively. Where required, ensure that there is an effective cascade that reaches all staff and find out how to optimise it for your locality.
- Feedback: manage staff expectations – staff should not expect immediate changes as a result. Most feedback should be handled and actioned locally. Only progress upwards key issues – otherwise a) too many queries to answer and so goes into a 'black hole' and b) encourages culture of dependency

2. How to improve team briefings

- VC to attend a team briefing in each Division by Easter 2011. To enable this, all Divisions submit their team briefing schedule to VC. The VC advises the division in advance of his attendance
- Keep staff interest by varying the type of meeting. There are lots of different types of team meetings and ways to add variety and interest, eg: brainstorming, discussion and debate, breakouts
- Invite guest speakers from other Divisions
- Pass the baton: team members (maybe in pairs) can take a turn at hosting all, or part, of the meeting
- Share briefings: teams from different Divisions can join together and hold a joint meeting
- Share best practice. Learn from other directors about what works and what doesn't and any new ideas

3. Top tips for core briefs (to be delivered as part of a team briefing)

- Content. Select one topic at each SMT meeting – a maximum of one item a month BUT don't force it: if there is nothing important to say then it is better to say nothing
- Agree the topic at the meeting and confirm the decision that has been reached
- Agree the desired outcome, eg to pass on info, get feedback, staff to understand a strategic objective
- Head of Communications to email directors confirming the topic
- Timing. Pass on the topic to staff at the next team briefing
- Delivery. Core briefs are to be delivered in person and not read out or emailed
- Support and endorse the core message regardless of personal viewpoint