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## Giving Instructions Clearly

Whether you call it orientation, indoctrination, development, or training, a program for ensuring adequate instruction of team members is vital to reach the organization's goals. The more expert you become in giving instructions, the more everyone benefits. Team members understand exactly what you want and comply conscientiously and cheerfully. Here are suggestions for giving orders and instructions effectively:

- Preparation – Before you begin, be sure you know exactly what you want to communicate. If you need to ask for information or conduct a discussion or brainstorming session before reaching a decision about what orders to give, separate that session from the actual giving of instructions or orders. Any apparent indecision or confusion on your part creates doubt and lack of confidence.
- Consideration – Check on the team member's time and workload before directing any change in procedure or priority. Be sure you have the right employee for the job. Along with instructions, assign a priority to the job.
- Presentation – Give instructions in a logical sequence and in clear, concise language geared to the team member's intelligence and education. Check to see that your instructions were understood, and explain again any part that seems unclear. If the order has several parts, or if it's to be a permanent procedure, follow oral instructions with a written message.
- Attitudes – "Ask" rather than "tell," but make it clear you expect compliance with your request. Accomplish this by using language and a tone of voice that are authoritative, but not authoritarian. Be considerate of team member needs and desires, but never apologize for giving an order. You represent the organization, so make it clear that you support the organization and its goals. Give individuals an opportunity to ask questions or express opinions, but do not feel bound by those opinions.
- Follow-up – Check on compliance with your requests and instructions. Amend your instructions when that seems logical. Express appreciation when your requests and instructions are carried out well.

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