Info Sheet – Developing team communication rules

Good communication is a prerequisite to high performing happy teams. When developing your own internal communication rules it is useful to follow this process as a team.

Explain that your goal for this session is to take some steps to improve the communication in the team, and you want your team to be involved in the process ask the following questions:

1. What would be the benefits to the team of more effective communication?
2. What are some of the communication strategies or techniques that irritate you? Write a list on flipchart or whiteboard. These could include some of the following:
   * Muttering
   * Saying one thing when I know they mean another
   * Speaking down to me
   * Patronising me
   * People who talk all the time
   * People who say nothing when I know they have lots they want to say
   * Wafflers
   * People who go into too much detail
   * People who interrupt me
   * People who finish my sentences for me
   * People who assume they know what I’m going to say next
   * People who haven’t listened to what I have said and then fob me off with an excuse or any old solution just to get me off their back
   * People who shout at me
   * People who speak so softly I can’t hear them
   * People who go on, and on, and, on, and on

Once this is done, ask the group members to each consider which ones they are guilty of

1. Which of these poor communication strategies do we encounter in our workplace, and what impact are they having?
2. How then, do we turn these poor communication strategies into positive communication strategies and rules for our workplace? What communication rules do we need to set in place to encourage good communication? Write down the rules that the team come up with.
3. What other actions/strategies do we need to put into place to improve the communication in the business? Brainstorm and write an action plan. Define what needs to be done, by who, when.

Below are some of the key foundations for good and positive communication in the workplace or in fact, any team environment such as sports or family. You could use this as an example or foundation for your own communication rules:

* + Communication - You will always speak positively of your team members, your clients and the business in both public and private.
  + You will speak with good purpose using empowering and positive conversation.
  + You will never use or listen to profanity, sarcasm or gossip.
  + You will acknowledge what is being said as true for the speaker at that moment.
  + You will take responsibility for responses to your communication.
  + You will greet and farewell people using their name.
  + You will always apologise for any upsets first and then look for a solution.
  + You will only ever discuss concerns in private with the person involved.
  + Seek first to be understood, then to be understood.
  + You will accept that everybody is different and has different opinions and ideas, and ways of communicating and interpreting and you will adapt your response or approach accordingly (ref DISC and VAK).