

Communicating With Your Apprentice

Good communication throughout the apprenticeship is essential for all parties to get the most out of the experience, and to avoid and address problems before they become unmanageable. Here are suggested steps for ensuring good communication throughout the apprenticeship.

Think about your expectations

Often expectations in the workplace are hidden, and don't become obvious until there is a problem. Outlining your expectations from the outset can prevent problems from developing and give your apprentice a fair chance to succeed. Think about what you expect to see in your apprentice – in terms of their work practices, their behaviour, and the values of the workplace.

Plan regular meetings at critical points along the way

Once you've worked out your expectations, think also about the critical points in an apprenticeship, when it might be important to schedule a meeting with your apprentice. This might include:

- the induction period
- the probation period
- completion of the first 6-12 months
- the transition from the second to the third year of an apprenticeship
- signing off on competencies and
- the final sign off by the training organisation and you as the employer.

There may also be periods of major change within the workplace or the apprentice's personal life where you might schedule a meeting to check in.

Understand young people

If you haven't had much experience working with young people, it will be important for you to understand how to work effectively with Generation Y (also known as Millennials). Young people reflect the times in which they've grown up. They are likely to have different expectations of work, work/life balance and employment mobility, and to be assertive, ask questions and want to understand why things are done a certain way.

Thinking about the rationale for company policies, and being ready to answer questions, will go a long way to helping you manage recruits from Generation Y. It will also help to value and acknowledge what young people can bring to a business - they reflect the changing society we live in and can offer fresh ideas, perspectives, training and skills. For more helpful hints on working with Gen Y recruits, go to

<http://www.wpcgroup.org.au/images/stories/pdf/BridgingGap-Employers.pdf>.