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# TOOLS & TIPS

FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY  
WITH A DIVERSE WORKFORCE



**upskills**  
GROWING WORKFORCE POTENTIAL

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# STARTING OUT

## WHEN SPEAKING TO YOUR TEAM:

- Be **patient**
- Take the time **your workers need**
- Respect other **culture's customs**  
(eg food, different gender customs)
- Show **interest in other cultures**

## BE CHEERFUL



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# GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

## ASK **OPEN QUESTIONS TO CHECK UNDERSTANDING:**

✗ “Do you understand?”

✓ “Can you tell me what you’re going to do?”

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## USE **CLEAR, DIRECT EXPRESSIONS:**

✗ “The bottom line is...”

✓ “The most important thing is...”

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## REPEAT **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### AVOID **DOUBLE NEGATIVES:**

✗ ‘Don’t park your car here unless it’s raining’,

✓ instead use ‘Park your car here if it’s raining’

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## **SHOW AND TELL**

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# MEETINGS

**Minimise noise & other distractions.**  
**Take time to check everyone is present.**  
**Avoid abbreviations.**

**✗** “H & S”

**✓** “Health and Safety”

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**Speak slowly & clearly.**  
**Tell a simple, relevant story.**

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If you want **people to contribute**, allow them time **to prepare & demonstrate** what you expect.



**Keep total numbers of participants lower to maximise participation.**

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**Use open ended questions to elicit feedback.**

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**Consider calling on people by name to contribute (see above).**

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# INDUCTIONS & TRAINING

TALK ABOUT **'YOU'** AND **'WE'** SO THAT IT'S CLEAR WHERE **RESPONSIBILITY LIES**.

ASK **EXTERNAL TRAINING PROVIDERS** TO DEMONSTRATE **HOW THEY TRAIN PEOPLE WITH DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH** – DEVELOP A CHECKLIST OF WHAT A GOOD TRAINING PROVIDER LOOKS LIKE.

**CONSIDER THE PROCESS** – DOES IT ALLOW ENOUGH **OPPORTUNITIES TO CHECK UNDERSTANDING?**



**Use quizzes & 'quick check' sections to reinforce key information.**

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**Create your own video and use pictures as much as possible.**

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**Ensure employees are confident using a computer if your induction is online.**

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# FORMS & DOCUMENTS

USE **PICTURES & COLOUR.**

USE **SIMPLE, CLEAR HEADINGS.**

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- Use **one idea in each sentence.**
  - Talk about **'you'** and **'we'**.
  - **Create space** between **sentences/ paragraphs.**
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WRITE **ABBREVIATIONS IN FULL.**

USE THE **SAME WORD THROUGHOUT**

(eg 'breaks' or 'smoko', not both).

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- Have a **mini-dictionary of important** but **difficult words.**
  - **Signpost** the documents with **section breaks** and **page numbers.**
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**DON'T CRAM** TOO MUCH **TEXT**  
ON ONE **PAGE.**

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# WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Keep your cool.

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Avoid the **blame game**.

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Find out **how the communication breakdown happened**  
– don't assume.

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**Discuss** - how could we do this **differently next time?**



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# IF THE PROBLEMS ARE PERSISTENT & AFFECT A NUMBER OF STAFF:

INVEST IN A **FULLY CONTEXTUALISED WORKPLACE LITERACY AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME.**

For more information about how Upskills can help with this visit [www.upskills.co.nz](http://www.upskills.co.nz)





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# REMEMBER TOM

**An employee, Tom, used a lawyer to sue his company after a commercial accident.**

Tom had signed to confirm understanding of the health and safety rules at his workplace. He was then asked to read out loud what he had signed in court. He could not read a single word.

(From: Effective Communication with a Multi-Language Workforce, [www.workforcecohesion.org](http://www.workforcecohesion.org))



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# NOTES: