

# Communicating Your Plan

*by Essential Skills*

In any workplace setting there will be tasks you need to accomplish to perform your job correctly, like rolling out company-wide changes or releasing information to the public. To accomplish these tasks efficiently and effectively, you have to be able to communicate what needs to be done, when it needs to happen, and who needs to do it. These three questions will help you determine the scope of any project or task you face so you can make a plan to complete it successfully. Once you have such a plan in place, you can use your communication skill to share that information with others to help you reach your goal.

- What needs to be done? *Determine what tasks need to be done to accomplish a goal.*
- When does it need to happen? *Decide the order of tasks and when they need to be completed (by setting deadlines, for example).*
- Who will do it? *Decide who should complete which tasks. This is the last stage before you communicate and execute your plan.*

Almost every job will involve interactions with coworkers nearly every day. The following tips are useful in just about any situation, whether you're discussing an urgent issue at work or informally catching up with someone in the break room:

- Maintain frequent, but not constant, eye contact to keep your listener engaged or to let the speaker know you're paying attention.
- Ask clarifying questions. This is a great way to understand what the other person means. Examples include "Could you expand on that?" or "So you're saying...?"
- Remember your body language. Keeping your body open and turned toward the other person signals that you're paying attention.
- Know your context! Are you speaking with your boss at work or with a coworker at a holiday party? Your language and choice of subject will change dramatically between these two contexts.