**ITWorks – Communication Protocols**

**Work Practices**

ITWorks is in an increasingly competitive business environment. It has demonstrated commitment to delivering of quality service. ITWorks values its employees. It has implemented best communication practices that our employees experience.

**Organisation culture and communication expectations**

It has been the culture that the management has stated:

* Vision, Goals, Roles & Values
* Results, Quality Standards, Timelines, Priorities
* Written lists of agreed actions and outcomes

The management encourages the team to ask questions. Ensure the communication is clear, specific, without any doubts and document outcomes.

**Plan, organise and complete work**

* Identify and interpret work instructions and priorities in consultation with supervisor
* Determine and map out appropriate work plan or daily routine
* Determine, collect, and organise materials, resources and information needed to complete work
* Complete work tasks within designated timelines and in line with quality standards and instructions
* Follow work health and safety policies
* Deal with problems that arise in a practical, timely and appropriate manner and seek assistance when required
* Encourage people to contribute ideas and get involved in decisions
* Seek feedback on work performance and make improvements as required

**Communicate effectively**

* Identify appropriate communication with supervisors, colleagues, and customers
* Use effective verbal communication skills as well as listening and questioning techniques.
* Use effective language communication skills including literacy and numeracy skills, to gather and convey information
* Use effective mode of communication to confirm and negotiate any outcomes to be achieved with appropriate language.

**Work with others**

* Identify work roles of self and others in the workplace
* Contribute to team outcomes in a manner that fulfils own work responsibilities and promotes cooperation and good relationships
* Interact respectfully with clients and colleagues from diverse backgrounds

**Use workplace technology**

* Select appropriate workplace technology to complete work tasks and use according to workplace and manufacturer guidelines and instructions
* Inspect workplace technology to ensure it is working properly and take precautions to reduce risks to technology and self
* Take appropriate action to address or report problems with workplace technology
* Care for workplace technology according to workplace and manufacturer guidelines and instructions

**Solve work problems**

* Identify problems and determine practical or creative solutions within scope of individual responsibility
* Seek assistance from key personnel when required
* Report workplace problems as required using workplace procedures

**Adapt to change**

* Identify, clarify, and accommodate new work requirements or situations
* Identify possible practical or creative options to deal with workplace challenges, and discuss with supervisor

**Communication Conventions and Protocols**

The main purpose of a communication is to present subject content in an organized, concise, and effective manner to an audience.

* Decide what forms of communication work best
* Plan and Prioritise
* Create work schedules
* Complete tasks efficiently
* Be respectful of other people's time.
* Clarify goals and tasks
* Identify work roles of self and others in the workplace
* Be clear about individual task responsibility
* Develop new visions/goals collaboratively
* Contribute to team outcomes in a manner that fulfils own work responsibilities and promotes cooperation and good relationships
* Be committed to resolving problems
* Value and respect each other
* Interact respectfully with customers and colleagues from diverse backgrounds (age, gender, culture, etc.)
* Establish and maintain rapport
* Conduct negotiations
* Encourage members to listen to and consult each other about matters that affect them
* Establish open communication
* Create a safe place to express feelings and ideas
* Be open to feedback
* Provide positive and constructive feedback to members
* Actively participate.
* Be an active listener.
* Take notes.

**Oral Communication**

Oral communication is the use of words to share information with other people. However Effective oral communication skills include more than just talking. Oral communication encompasses both how you deliver messages and how you receive them.

**Characteristics of Oral communication**

* Active listening
* Asking for clarification
* Asking open-ended questions to gain insights
* Recognizing and responding to non-verbal cues
* Speaking clearly and concisely
* Using humour to engage audiences

**Verbal Communications for Team Members**: Open and constant lines of communication are vital to team success, particularly when completing quality- and deadline-critical projects. One of the most important team-building skills, strong verbal communications help to ensure that issues will be spotted and resolved in formative stages, averting costly escalation.

* Conveying messages concisely
* Encouraging reluctant group members to share input
* Explaining a difficult situation without getting angry
* Explaining that you need assistance
* Paraphrasing to show understanding
* Posing probing questions to elicit more detail about specific issues
* Receiving criticism without defensiveness
* Refraining from speaking too often or interrupting others
* Requesting feedback
* Stating your needs, wants, or feelings without criticizing or blaming

**Verbal Communications with Clients:** If a large part of your work involves one-on-one communications, it’s helpful to have a “gift of gab”. Keep in mind, though, that your conversations need to be focused upon identifying and addressing your clients’ needs; using your verbal talents to encourage consultative dialogues will ensure positive client relations.

* Anticipating the concerns of others
* Asking for clarification
* Asking open-ended questions to stimulate dialogue
* Calming an agitated customer by recognizing and responding to their complaints
* Emphasizing benefits of a product, service, or proposal to persuade an individual or group
* Noticing non-verbal cues and responding verbally to verify confusion, defuse anger, etc.

**Email Protocols**

Email is a key Institute communication tool and must be used professionally and responsibly. All business related emails are considered official records of the organisation and must be managed in a manner consistent with records management requirements for the organisation. Staff are responsible for:

* Checking their inbox regularly and responding within a reasonable timeframe (within 24 hours is recommended or an interim response should be issued to acknowledge the email)
* Ensuring the Microsoft 'out of office assistant' is used when away from your desk or work for an extended period time (minimum one full working day)
* Include the original text as part of the response when replying to ensure a meaningful and contextual record is kept
* A complete email signature and disclaimer must be used for all new email correspondence
* Ensuring the email signature is used on all emails, including all internal, external, reply and forward emails.

**Email Etiquette**

Emails must include and reflect the following:

* A relevant and suitable subject line to identify and summarise your correspondence
* Keep your email succinct and relevant, use plain English
* Address it to the person/s you want to respond and cc: any other interested parties if appropriate
* Only use 'reply all' if everyone needs to receive your response
* Do not write in capitals as this is considered to be the equivalent of shouting unless you are using a relevant acronym
* Use correct punctuation, grammar, and spell check
* Ensure recipients' addresses is correct and follow up if you receive an 'error' message
* Do not use email as an excuse to avoid personal contact. Email communication isn't appropriate when sending confusing or emotional messages
* Remember emails are not always private your email may be forwarded to unintended audiences so be always professional
* Be sparing with group responses, use the reply all button only when all people collectively need to see your response
* Do not forward chain emails, abrupt emails or reply to spam
* Avoid the use of bcc (blind carbon copy) as it does not support open and transparent communication.