



### **Communication Problems – The Challenge:**

*“I am having communication problems within my team. They keep heading off in directions that are inappropriate.”*

In my years of work with the life sciences, I have found that working in teams is not something that most of you feel comes naturally. Many of you would prefer to “skip all this communication stuff and just get on with my work”. Don’t despair! Communicating well in teams is a learned skill, and with a little refresher, you’ll remember the skills that you need to be successful.

1. Make sure that you are clear as to what you really want. When you give direction or delegate, are you perfectly clear in your own mind as to what you are asking for? Writing it down often helps you to clarify it for yourself.
2. Know the Myers – Briggs personality types of your team members. By knowing whether your “listeners” are sensing types or intuitive types, you can better know how to communicate with them.
3. Ask the group where the communication is breaking down. Chart the flow of communication, and get agreement as to where the “fault line” rears its head and how to avoid the crack.
4. Always “check for understanding” at the end of a session. You do this by asking specific questions about the discussion that just took place and gaining agreement in everyone’s interpretation.
5. Write down what was agreed to by the group. You can refer to your notes if people start to go off in different directions again.

### **Communication Problems Tip:**

It is not the responsibility of the listener to understand. It is the responsibility of the speaker to be understood.