In part one of this series, we reviewed some of the characteristics and knowledge that a foreman has to have in order to be an effective leader. This month we examine the communications requirements that make a foreman effective on the job site.

- **Conduct a daily huddle with your crew** for about 10 minutes before everyone starts working. Discuss such items as production for the day, quality installation, safety etc. Ask for ideas that will help increase productivity.

- **Let your crew know that you are there to help them succeed and do good work.** Express the importance of open communication—if a crew member has a problem or has an idea for improving productivity—let him know that you expect him to tell you about it. Make sure the crew understands that you are there to give them the resources they need to achieve optimum productivity on the job site.

- **Be up front with your crew.** Clearly communicate what you expect of them in the areas of production, quality safety teamwork, utilizing equipment properly, and whatever is important for the job you are on. If they have obstacles to their performance, you want them to communicate those obstacles to you.

- **Make an effort to communicate with the Hispanic people who work for you.** Treat them as key members of the team. Have a bilingual “lead man” if one is available.

- **Learn how to communicate with different personality types.**

- **Do what you say you’re going to do.**

- **Drive-out fear.** Encourage your crew to communicate problems to you—encourage feedback. Explain that there will be no repercussions for negative feedback.

- **Learn how to deal with and communicate effectively with those who lose their temper.**

- **Learn how to communicate effectively to resolve conflict.**

- **Communicate standards and don’t compromise.** Use “straight talk”—deal directly with people and let them know where they stand. Stand your ground without being abusive. Follow up to ensure that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Provide coaching as required.

**About the Author**

Norb Slowikowski is president of Slowikowski & Associates, Inc., Darien, Ill. He is a professional trainer and a management consultant who has been in his own business for 20 years. He conducts a number of training programs on supervisory skills each year for AWCI members.