

Shift Work Requires Smooth Transitions Between Teams



If your company runs around the clock on a twenty four by seven, three sixty five schedule, it could be at risk for communication issues among the teams who cover different shifts. Twenty-four hour operations add an additional dimension of complication to working in teams. Before you run into problems and start hearing things like “Well, we couldn’t because third shift didn’t...” or “Yea, those day shift guys think they’re better than...” take some proactive steps to ensure good communication between your shifts.

The key to your success is having each shift communicate critical issues to the next shift so they can be successful. Too many times companies end up with shift teams working against – rather than with – each other. It’s critical that you consistently communicate how each shift team contributes to the success of the whole. That will help you keep their communication lines open.

Here are four simple tactics you can implement to overcome that challenge.

1. Overlap shifts by thirty minutes. Use that time to have a shift transition meeting to identify key issues and successes that were encountered by the outgoing shift.
2. Place easels around the team work space. Designate what items will be updated on the easel by each shift.
3. Distribute a shift transition email. This email should be in a standard format that’s been communicated to all shift workers so they can quickly read it and get on with their work.
4. Create a ‘communicator’ role on each shift. This role would be responsible for meeting with the previous and following shifts at shift transition time to communicate key issues.

These are four pretty low tech solutions. With today’s technology, there’s no reason to have communication disconnects between shifts. What other suggestions do you have?

Article by: Denise O’Berry – aka the Team Doc – has been working with teams and team leadership in the public, non profit and private sectors for over twenty years. Follow her [@askteamdoc](#).