

Royal Mail Work Time Listening & Learning Manager Toolkit

Engaging and informing our people

Work Time Listening and Learning (WTLL) sessions are a vital part of our operation as they enable all postmen and women to understand the business and enable the business to hear directly from frontline colleagues.

WTLLs are a key touchpoint for engaging with our workforce and providing them with a chance to discuss pertinent workplace issues that affect them, our customers and the business. They are also an opportunity for everyone to have an interactive discussion about matters of local significance such as how we are doing whilst incorporating individual workplace culture. We want to ensure the WTLL sessions are as fully inclusive as possible by embracing as much knowledge and experience through participation of not only the local managers, but also the local CWU Representatives, Workplace Coaches along with Health & Safety representatives.

Our National agreement on WTLL is that we allocate 30 minutes each week to communicating news and information that helps our frontline colleagues to understand their role. This assists us to do things correctly and improves our performance. WTLLs are part of our core Ops Standards and should be delivered every week on an agreed day and time, to ensure all our people, full time and part time, are engaged in WTLL sessions.

This toolkit offers guidance on how sessions should run well, so they can help everyone become more informed, more involved and more engaged. We encourage you to review how WTLLs run in your office and make sure you are making the most of this opportunity for our colleagues to talk, together.

What does a great WTLL session look like?

We want managers to feel positive about briefing their colleagues, be confident about their ability and to make the most of the opportunity.

Effective WTLLs can keep our people safer, keep us compliant and can help improve our performance. They can also help colleagues understand more about their role and learn new ways of working.

We want everyone to leave a WTLL session feeling:

More informed
More engaged
More conscious
More aware

Here is a link to a video that we took at Warrington DO that should serve as an example of good practice for WTLL Briefings

<http://files.linney.com/531492%20Royal%20Mail%20WTLL%20Warrington%202019%20Edit%20Cut%201.mp4?login=svSUd1cH>

How can we bring the content to life?

Sometimes the content of a brief can feel a bit dry and communicating it effectively can be challenging. Simply reading something out doesn't necessarily give us the safety or compliance outcomes we need.

Where possible, the content of WTLL briefs should be engaging and interactive. It should include discussion points, local experiences and examples to help bring a topic to life and make it relevant to your group. It should anticipate any potential questions and direct you to helpful resources and key contacts.

If you have any feedback on how we can improve the content of any brief, please tell us.

Get in touch delivery.comms@royalmail.com

Did you know?

Research has shown that body language plays a major role in how a message is received. If you stare down at a piece of paper when delivering the message, it is not likely to be received in the best way. Tone of voice and facial expression account for over 50% of nonverbal communication. The words themselves account for less than 15%.

How to structure the 30 minutes

1. RMTv Approx. 4-5 minutes

Colleagues watch a short programme with national news and updates. The film is available on Content on Demand on the business screens via the Group intranet.

2. WTLL briefs Approx. 10-15 minutes

Manager/rep/Workplace Coach (WPC) delivers business critical information with a clear call to action. These briefs usually consist of subjects such as: national safety campaigns, roll-out of new initiatives, new ways of working and important updates. A WTLL session will usually contain two or three subjects.

3. Group discussion Approx. 5-10 minutes

The remainder of the time offers a chance for discussion between the manager, union representative and colleagues on subjects specific to the unit. Additionally, it is an

opportunity for employees to ask their manager questions on any other issue or for you to do some recognition or discuss performance.

Remember

30 minutes is a guide – some weeks your sessions might be shorter, other weeks slightly longer. It is important that the time allocated is utilised to its full potential and not leaving anything at a loose end. Feedback on matters raised is as important as the discussion itself.

WTLL FAQs

How do I fit in part-timers and people on leave?

It is essential that all part-time colleagues are involved in weekly WTLL sessions to ensure they receive the same important information as full-time colleagues, specifically to keep them safe in their roles and to improve their knowledge of customer and wider business issues. Managers should review the start-time of their employees to ensure that a dedicated WTLL session is scheduled each week to incorporate all part-time colleagues.

What happens if someone misses a WTLL?

To make sure we remain compliant, anyone who has missed a WTLL must be able to access the content. You can do this by:

- 1.** Arranging other WTLL sessions on another day of the week for missed attendees
- 2.** Having a dedicated weekly session to pick up part-time colleagues
- 3.** Recording attendance at each session to identify who needs to be briefed/updated.
- 4.** Sitting down one-to-one
- 5.** Always displaying copies on the noticeboard

What happens when we are asked to use the session for something else e.g. deployment of an initiative, training, an engagement session?

Sometimes this can happen, please make sure you review the content of the WTLL brief and try and incorporate the information in a further session.

Is WTLL just for managers to run?

No. Often it can be effective for the CWU unit rep to jointly deliver a message or to have the Delivery Line Manager or Workplace Coach run a specific session. The brief will suggest different ways to communicate the material as relevant. Build in time to discuss WTLLs at your weekly resourcing meeting with your CWU rep and agree on any local content that would help colleagues relate to the content.

Did you know?

Consider W.I.I.F.U (what's in it for you). This is also a key method of influencing. If you want to get people to buy into an idea, they have to see how it applies to their own world. Often communications do not consider the end user in mind and we have to amplify the message using our communication skills as managers. Messages can be distorted or even diluted by both the person delivering the message and those that hear it.

Running your WTLL

Your four-step guide

- 1.** The email will be sent to the manager every Friday afternoon. Read the briefs well in advance and understand the key requirements. Do any further research on the topic in advance.
- 2.** Discuss the agenda with your CWU rep, other managers and coaches and decide who will deliver each part of the session and what sessions you need to plan in order to include the whole office.
- 3.** Prepare for the session by working out how local examples and experiences can be built in. Do you need any props or to print anything out? Would access to your performance boards or screens help you to illustrate particular points? Is there anyone you can recognise for their great performance?
- 4.** After the session sit down with your CWU rep to review any questions and actions – make sure these are fed back to the group at the earliest opportunity.

Recording attendance

Certain briefings are an essential part of our regulatory compliance and it is vital that we record who has been briefed and when.

([Link to - Sign in sheet](#))

Seven tips for a great WTLL

1. Prepare

Know your stuff, think about examples and how to make it interactive.

2. Focus

Focus on what your audience need to think/know/feel, put yourself in their shoes.

3. Start positively

What good news can you share to get you started? A thank you/happy birthday/acknowledgement is a great way to kick off the meeting.

4. Show you care

Show you care about the topic – this will help you connect with your audience.

5. Be open

It's important to be open and honest in order to build trust. If you don't know the answer to a question, it's always better to go away and make further enquiries.

6. Tell relevant stories

These can be very powerful and can bring a topic to life.

7. Bring people into the discussion

For example, show of hands voting, breakout discussion groups, sharing real life experiences, asking questions of the participant.

Did you know?

Colleagues are more likely to get behind ideas which they think they have thought of. Next time there is a difficult decision to make, write the problem on a flipchart and leave the room. Ask your team to come up with suggestions. It is likely they will write the idea you already had in mind. Thank the group for their input and take that idea forward.

Useful resources

Click the button below for useful tools to help you deliver your WTLL. For further information or to give feedback, please contact wttl@royalmail.com.

Helpful tools

Delivery performance screens and performance boards
E-learning resources available via SuccessFactors:

Course Name	Time	Course Code
Facilitating great WTLL sessions	2 hours online	WORK DM70807501
Inspirational Leadership	30 minutes online	ONLINE 1381
Frontline Involvement Toolkit (FIT Kit)	Instructor Led one day	WORK DM10411285
Daily Huddle Bitesize	Instructor Led 2 hours	WORK DM 70808672

Communication - Some helpful guidelines for managing successful discussions

Group discussions – different techniques for different personalities

There are different ways of communicating information so that it is absorbed and understood. Telling stories using real life examples, using props or performance boards to illustrate a point, discussing issues in smaller groups or asking for answers – these are all ways you can bring your sessions to life.

For example - Reverse psychology is a technique which can be used to encourage contributions from people with a more negative outlook. It is often easier to think of how we can disrupt things rather than ways to improve them. Reverse psychology has been used when there is a change in a working process or method e.g. how can we make portering fail:

1. Start off with a situation, problem or a statement on a flipchart.
2. Ask participants how they could make the problem worse or the idea fail.
3. Get them to write responses on the flip chart or in a hand-out.
4. Ask them to reverse their suggestions and think of the opposite.

Step 4 is very important as the group will perceive you as being negative and wanting things to fail!

Ask participants what topics they could use this facilitation technique for, in order to generate ideas from less positive colleagues.

Your communication style

Our top tips!

- Smile
- Use friendly, open body language
- Be approachable - use people's names
- Show that you value them as individuals
- Have an open mind - encourage them to do the same
- Let ideas that come out 'belong' to the group
- Recognise who wants to speak next – maintain eye contact with the group
- Try to get general agreement before you start
- Inject a viewpoint if ideas run dry
- Use humour - but be careful of distracting or alienating people, avoid sarcasm as this is nearly always destructive
- Keep it enjoyable
- Present yourself in a way that is appropriate to the subject matter - don't smile or laugh when something serious or sad is the topic

Some things to avoid

- Being aggressive
- Being passive
- Stating your own strong opinions excessively
- Showing personal bias or prejudice
- Not listening - closed body language

- Not involving everyone - talking to one person or a 'select group'
- Doing all the talking
- Letting the discussion run away from the objective or point
- No structure or summary on conclusion of the discussion
- Not encouraging ideas
- Allowing people to talk at the same time
- Not being personally prepared

A good listener...

- Uses eye contact appropriately.
- Is attentive and alert to a speaker's verbal and non-verbal behaviour.
- Is patient and doesn't interrupt (waits for the speaker to finish).
- Is responsive, using verbal and nonverbal expressions.
- Asks questions in a non-threatening tone.
- Paraphrases, restates or summarises what the speaker says (see note below).
- Provides constructive (verbal or non-verbal) feedback.
- Is empathic (works to understand the speaker).
- Shows interest in the speaker as a person.
- Demonstrates a caring attitude and is willing to listen.
- Doesn't criticise, is non-judgmental.
- Is open-minded.

Asking questions is important because...

- You get the responses required (use of open questions)
- People become involved
- You are able to fully understand any problems (probing)
- You are able to get to the root cause of any problem (probing)
- You are able to clarify fact and figures (using closed questions)

Using your voice

Try to vary your tone of voice during a presentation or WTLL session. This keeps the interest of your audience, reflects your own interest in the subject and helps to emphasise particular points. Your voice needs to sound like you mean it.

Did you know?

On average it takes six attempts to verbally communicate a message until it is accepted and acted upon. The use of visual aids can greatly enhance getting your message across and generate debate. Try and use diagrams or drawings rather than words as they tend to stick in one's mind long after the session.