

# A quick guide to giving orders

There's something about giving orders that makes most of us slightly uncomfortable if not downright queasy. But sometimes a situation makes it necessary to give a direct order to an employee and know that it will be carried out. Here's how:

- **Provide as much guidance and detail as the person receiving the order needs**—particularly in defining quality, quantity and deadlines.
- **Ask for feedback immediately** to be sure the employee understands the order, and repeat your instructions if necessary.
- **Watch your tone of voice**, avoiding any hint of irritation or anger that could cause resentment or defensiveness.
- **Consider issuing orders in writing**, especially when you are changing previous written instructions or when the work involves a deviation from the standard procedure.
- **When you are ordering that tasks be done, distribute them fairly**, the pleasant and the unpleasant, among both willing and unwilling workers. Give yourself an unpleasant task now and then, and let employees see you working on it. That will boost their morale and make your subsequent orders easier to accept.

If you follow these guidelines when it's time to issue orders, you can be the boss without coming across as "bossy"—and your orders will be received and carried out in the right spirit.