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EFFECTIVE TEAM WORKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

ANGELO FIERRO (1909472)

SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

DR. MOLLY JACK



INTRODUCTION

According to R. Horn, “to be successful at work, you must display excellent team skills”¹.

Although this is a relatively vague statement it seems to be true, for most work environments consist of a group of people often with different skills who need to cooperate in order to achieve a common goal.

The most important factor in teamwork is COMMUNICATION; this is what can make a business succeed and without it, it can also cause it to fail.

How a person can convey a message which another person can subsequently understand is the basic principal of communication.

Yet often there can be many factors that can disturb the original message whether it is down to the way the message has been conveyed, the environment the message is in and the understanding of the person receiving it. These factors need to be considered within a team to enable effective communication and achieve their common goal.

Hospitality is the perfect example of the importance of TEAMWORK and COMMUNICATION.

As part of the team, in hospitality, we are collectively working together to achieve the same goal which is providing excellent customer service and a positive experience for every single customer to want to return to. This not only means communicating effectively together, but also to the guests.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

“The way in which we behave through various media – our words, our facial expressions, tone of voice, and so on – will create impression of us in the minds of others”.²

Communication takes many forms, through written messages, speech, body language and symbols, all of which can be categorised into two groups; verbal and non-verbal.

How they are used can define how effective the communication is.

All of these forms, both verbal and non-verbal are used every day in hospitality, from telephone reservations, placing orders and creating a rapport with the customers.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

“Effective communication involves accurate interpretation of other’s verbal messages as meaning is cocreated. Otherwise the meanings of the words communicate will not be understood. As a professional, you must make effective use of your language skills and improve your abilities to interpret other people messages.”³

Verbal communication is the use of words, through speech or written text, but it is also the tone of voice that is used as instrument to regulate your emotions and the hidden meaning of which words are used.

This is the main form of communication that is used in hospitality.

We use verbal communication from the moment the customers steps in, welcoming them and straight after asking what they like from the menu. (reading and speech)

It is also used in notifying the kitchen of what to cook (written communication), and finally, we end the experience communicating the total price at the end of their visit. (reading, speech and written communication).

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication often complements verbal communication whether consciously or sub-consciously through the way you are presented for instance clothing, facial expression or how close you are in proximity to the other person and even gestures. These signals can sometimes share more information than verbal communication.

As described by Peter Morgan, “the more information we get about the communication and the more consistent that information is, the more likely we are to interpret a message correctly”.⁴

From this we know that non-verbal communication can sometimes conflict with the verbal communication, for example; when a customer is asked if they are satisfied with service in general, it is easier for them to say yes, but then it can be the case that the face says the opposite. This is something which a member of staff should pick up on and see if there is something they can do to improve the situation.

THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

Over the centuries several theorists have tried to encapsulate the communication process in models to try to explain the reasons why problems can occur in communication and teach others how these problems can be reduced and avoided.

SHANNON AND WEAVER MODEL

As engineers during the time that telephones were becoming popular, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver published ‘The Mathematical Theory of Communications’ in 1949. In this book they created a model for communication.

This model shows an information source sending a message to a receiver through a transmitter, but it also includes a noise source where the signal goes from the transmitter to the receiver. The noise source which they refer to is based on statics, errors in transmissions and sound distortions which were related to the new technologies of this era of telephones, radios and televisions. (Figure 1)

Their model of communication showed how easily the information from the sender can be distorted or misinterpreted before it arrives to the receiver, although the publication was related to mathematical formulas and technology the noise source is relevant in everyday communication.

For example; When in a busy and noisy restaurant it is time to get the order from customers but because of the environment the member of staff cannot hear the order correctly so the message itself will easily be disturbed from the beginning, even before it goes to the kitchen and bar.

This in turn, can have an effect on the whole experience of customer service, because it is really simple to make mistakes in the middle of a loud noisy and busy place leaving one of the parties with the feeling of frustration.

Therefore, noise and environment can be a major communication barrier.

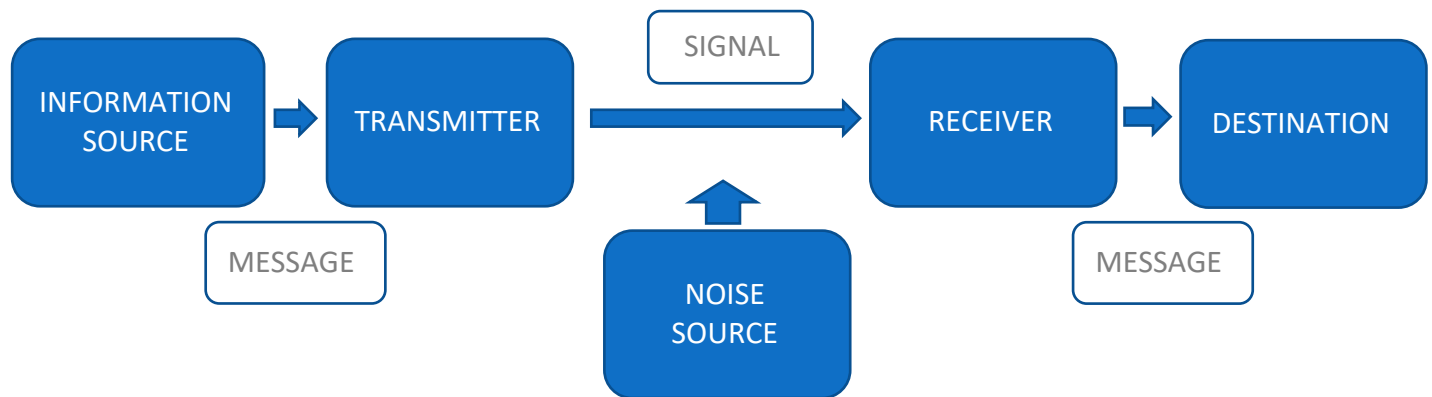


Figure 1: Shannon & Weaver's Model of Communication

BERLO'S MODEL

In 1960 the communication theorist David Berlo developed Shannon and Weaver communication model further in his own book 'The Process of Communication'.

In his model, Berlo breaks the process of communication into four parts **Source, Message, Channel** and **Receiver**, also known as **SMCR**. (Figure 2)

Like Shannon and Weaver's model there is a source of the information and the receiver of the information as the two main components, but his development is based on a more social and psychological perspective rather than technical idea of communication. This is shown by the recognition of the 'encoding' and 'decoding' of the message by the source and the receiver respectively. Here he relates each part of the SMCR to five factors which can each effect the message:

- The Source of communication considers the source's skills and attitude and knowledge as important factors of what message needs to be sent and how.
- Message is the encoding of the information whether it is a language or a gesture, but it relies on the Source to form the content and the structure.
- Channel is based on the five human senses of taste, smell, hearing, seeing and touch as a method of sending and understanding the Message

- The Receiver as the audience of the information then in turn requires the same factors which the Source uses to determine how to decode the information that has been received.

For Berlo, communication is affected by how the Source perceives how the Message could be received. This is based on the Source's social and cultural experiences, which then informs the Source how to treat the Message, alongside deciding which Channel to use. Furthermore, if the Source already is informed that the Receiver has an understanding of the social and cultural experiences relevant to the Source, then the information should be easier to decode by the Receiver. In spite of these efforts, these factors in which Berlo models each part of the SMCR can also create the adverse effect and thereby interrupt communication.

For example; When in a restaurant a waiter receives (encodes) the order from a guest (source) they then pass the order (message) to the kitchen (receiver) through the system (channel) for the kitchen staff to then interpret (decode).

Berlo's model of communication is a good example of how each factor for each part of the communication process is involved. Through attitudes of the guest and knowledge of the waiter or chef to understand the importance of these requests. Especially when a restaurant faces a special request and the manager is involved to make sure that the request will happen correctly without mistakes. For example, food intolerances and allergies are something that the restaurant and staff members cannot make any mistake in serving food where risking the medical conditions of the guests. This is something which needs to be communicated effectively.

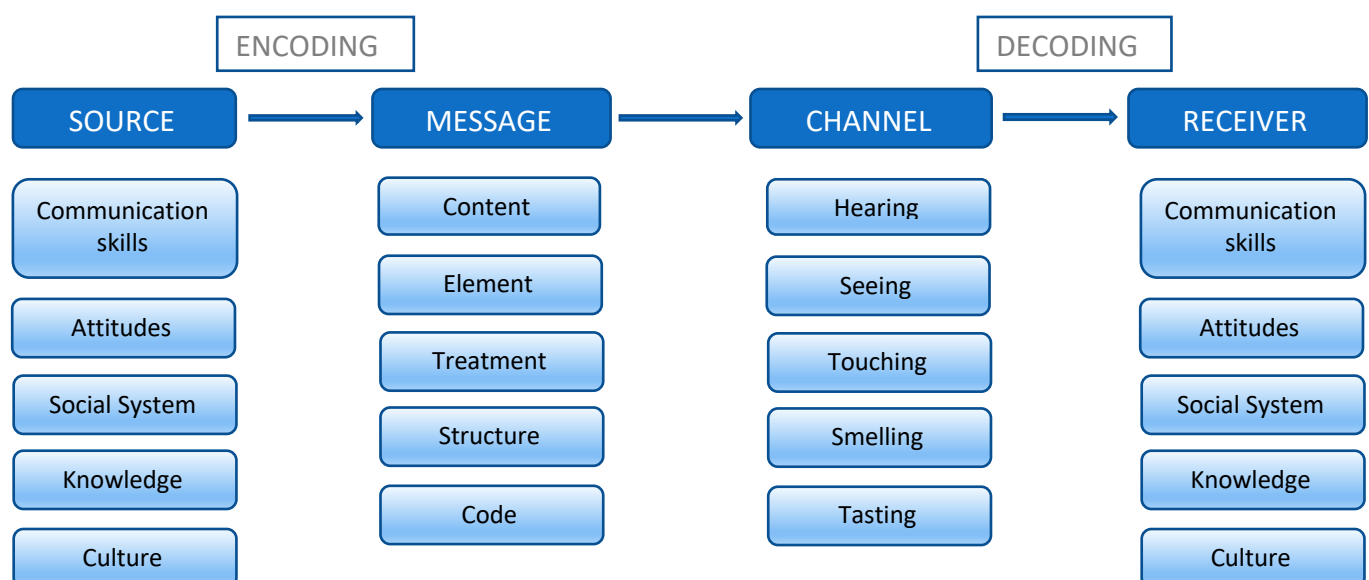


Figure 2: Berlo's Model of Communication

SCHRAMM'S MODEL

In the year following Berlo's model, the communications theorist Wilbur Schramm also further developed Shannon and Weaver's model of communication in his book 'The Process and Effects of Mass

Communications'. Again, here the source and the destination are the two main components which this time are connected through signal. (Figure 3)

Like Berlo, Schramm acknowledges a sociological aspect which was missing in Shannon and Weaver's model, where the source and the destination's field of experience overlap, communication is easier. This is a simplified version of Berlo's model, where Berlo's 'Message' and 'Channel' are incorporated into one component of 'Signal', but the difference in Schramm's model is that there is a notion that feedback of the information received is relevant.

Feedback is the acknowledgment that the message is been received and understood, usually through a gesture like a nod of the head or even a verbal response which proves Schramm's theory that a relevant amount of mutual experiences between the source and the receiver improves the process of communication, and creates a full conversation, and even a rapport between people.

If a restaurant specialises in a certain cuisine which is a new experience for the customer there can be a difficulty in communicating the menu, for example; if the name of the dish is in Italian and the customer has not experience of Italy and Italian food then it will be difficult to explain it properly.

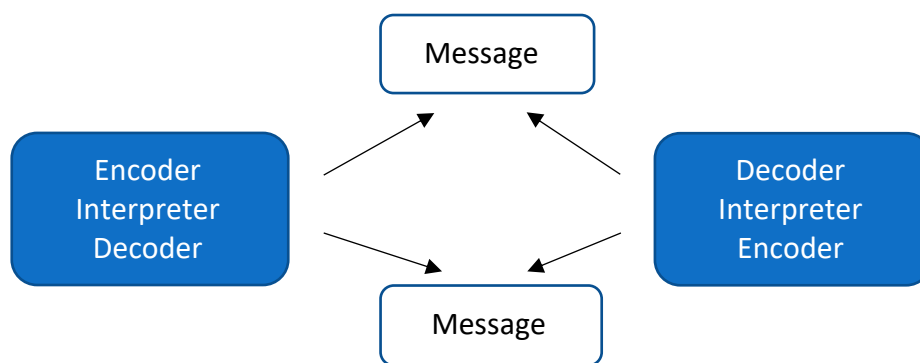


Figure 3: Schramm's Model of Communication

CONCLUSION

In summary, communication is a message prepared and sent by a source which is then received at the destination in all of these models of communications.

We have seen that there are many factors whether it is surrounding noise, social and cultural experiences of the source and the receiver, and the form in which the message is sent. These factors, if used properly can enable effective communication, or instead distort it.

It is the responsibility of the source of the message to understand the best way to communicate their information, but it is also the responsibility of the receiver to decode the information and understand what the source was trying to communicate.

Within a team we need to be aware of all of these factors explained in these models that can hinder the communication process so that we can analyse the situation, plan ahead and resolve any problems that could occur.

Finally, by doing this we can use communication within our team to achieve our common goal of excellent customer service.

REFERENCE

1. Horn R, (2012) *'The Business Skills Handbook'*, London: CIPD (page 105)
2. Peter Morgan (2017) *'the business students guide to study and employability'*, London sage (page 245)
3. Andrew Maund, Michaela Schriek, Paul K. Tinkler (2017) *'certificate in higher education: Skills for the workplace Student year book'*, London sage (page 67)
4. Peter Morgan (2017) *'the business students guide to study and employability'*, London sage (page 252)

Worksheet.....Your Name.....

Communications Strategy.....Your group's ideas.....

Other groups' ideas

Communications Strategy

Target Groups

Communications Goals

Communications Objectives

Words

Messages

Media

Briefing

Who

When

Where

Why

How

Reference

Maund et al. 2017 Chapter 3 Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Maund 2017 Chapter 4 Table 2.1 "Non-Verbal Communication Codes: Consider the Professional Context"

Morgan 2017 Cultural Difference p.285

Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with your Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1. Read the cases and answer the questions that follow

CASE 1: Mary was working on some paperwork when her daughter came into the room upset. As the child told Mary what was wrong and how she felt, Mary kept typing on her keyboard and said, "It'll be OK," and "Everything will be all right." She was confused when the child only continued to become more and more frustrated. Just then, Mary's phone rang and she was all excited when she heard her friend's voice. They spoke for fifteen minutes and when the call ended, she turned and said to her daughter, "Oh, darling, that was Susan. I'm so excited about seeing her tomorrow!". The child broke down and cried.

1. Why weren't Mary's calming words having any effect on her daughter?

BECAUSE MARY BASICALLY IGNORED HER DAUGHTER. SHE HAD ONLY FEW WORDS AND THE SHE STARTED SPEAKING ON THE PHONE AND AFTER THE SHE HAD ALSO CHANGED SUBJECT, IGNORING AGAIN HER DAUGHTER REAL PROBLEMS.

2. What could she have done to make the situation better?

SHE COULD ASK WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS AND SHE COULD ALSO CALL HER FRIEND ONCE SHE CALLED HER DAUGHTER DOWN, OR AT LEAST ASKING THE PROBLEM AFTER THE CALL.

CASE 2: Steve was exhausted from work when his wife, Sally, came home. So he was quite annoyed when she began telling him all that went wrong about her day. He interrupted her and said, "I'm so tired, can't it wait?". The next morning while they were in the kitchen making breakfast, Steve said, "Did I tell you what happened at work yesterday?". Sally said nothing, but walked out of the kitchen.

1. Why was Sally upset?

SHE WAS TRYING TO EMPTY HERSELF, WITH HER HUSBAND, BUT FOR HIS REASON HE STOPPED HER, IGNORING HER DAY PROBLEMS, ASKING TO WAIT. BUT THEN THE MORNING HE TRIED TO TALK TO HER ABOUT HIS DAY, WITHOUT ASKING HER TO FINISH WAS SHE STARTED THE EVENING BEFORE.

2. What could Steve have done to help the tension that had developed?

HE COULD RESIST AND LISTEN TO HER PROBLEMS OR EVEN, THE MORNING AFTER STEVE COULD JUST ASK HER TO FINISH TO EXPLAIN HER PROBLEM BEFORE STARTING WITH HIS.

Lecturer's signature: *Alauk*

Date: *10/12/2019*

Exercise 2: Writing an e-mail.

You are a teacher of Communication and have received this e-mail from one of your students:

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you because I am confused about Communication.
Could you please explain:
1. What Communication is:
2. The Shannon-Weaver model.
3. What is meant by non-verbal communication and why it is important.
Many thanks,
Lucy Mars.

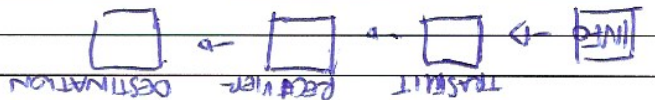
Reply to the student and answer her questions. Use a diagram in your answer, if necessary.

DEAR LUCY MARS,

- COMMUNICATION IS: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
BY SPEAKING, WRITING OR USING ANY
OTHER WAY OF COMMUNICATION.
YOU ALSO HAVE DIFFERENT
WAY OF COMMUNICATION LIKE
VERBAL AND NOT VERBAL.

- THE SHANNON - WEAVER MODEL: IT IS BASICALLY

A TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
USING MATH. MESSAGES,
CODES AND ALL THIS
KIND OF THINGS!



- NO VERBAL COMMUNICATION MEANS IS WHEN YOU SEND
A MESSAGE BY USING A NO-VERBAL WAY LIKE FACIAL
EXPRESSION, EYE CONTACT AND POSTURE.

IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT MAKES MORE CLEAR WHAT
YOU ARE TRYING TO SAY OR IF IT IS NOT USED CORRECTLY IT
CAN SEND A WRONG MESSAGE.

LECTURER'S COMMENTS: I HOPE YOU CAN FIND THIS HELPFUL
AND CLEAR, IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTION
DO NOT ESITATE TO ASK.

YOUR SINCERELY,

ANGUS FIERRO

Lecturer's signature:

Date:

Student Name: ANGEO FIERRO Student ID: 19094472
 Time allocated: 1 hour. Please return your paper to the lecturer upon completion. It will be returned to you at the next session. You will need to include a scanned copy of this exercise in the form of an appendix together with your Task 1 (part of the Assignment for this module).

Ex.1. Read the following brief and write a business email according to the instructions.

You are the Director of Communications at your company and you would like a Supervisor, Mary December, to go on a training course in non-verbal communication because you have observed that her non-verbal skills sometimes send the wrong message.
 - Tell Mary why you are writing
 - Say what you have observed about her communication skills
 - Tell her how you think this course would improve her skills and her relationship with her fellow workers.

Seen

DEAR MARY DECEMBER,
 I AM WRITING YOU REGARDING YOUR PERFORMANCE ABOUT YOUR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION!

AFTER A LONG OBSERVATION I HAVE NOTICED THAT YOU COULD BECOME A NICE SUPERVISOR FOR THE COMPANY AND FOR THE BUSINESS BUT AS I HAVE MENTIONED BEFORE YOU NEED TO IMPROVE YOUR NON-COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND BECAUSE I HAVE DECIDED TO BOOK YOU A COURSE SO YOU CAN IMPROVE THEM.

THE COURSE WILL IMPROVE YOU IN MAKING THE TEAM UNDERSTAND YOU BETTER AND ALSO WILL HELP YOU TO NOT MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND SOMETHING WHICH YOU DO NOT MEAN. I THINK THAT AFTER THIS COURSE YOU WILL BE A BETTER GOOD SUPERVISOR FOR US.

PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT IT AS SOON AS YOU CAN.

SINCERELY,
 ANGEO FIERRO

Lecturer's signature: *Molly* Date: 26/11/2019

Exercise2: COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY

As you read their case, think about how you might help communicate with the employee to remedy the conflict. Answer the critical thinking questions at the end of the case and, wherever possible, say whose communication model is relevant.

BARRY AND HIS STAFF

Barry is a 27-year old who is the manager of a restaurant. He is responsible for supervising and managing all employees in the kitchen. Employees working there range from 16 years old to 55 years old. In addition, the employees come from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For many, English is not their primary language.

Barry has a Health and Safety (Food) Certificate and tries his best to keep up with food safety issues in the kitchen, but he admits it's not easy. Employees receive "on the job training" about food safety basics (for example, appropriate hygiene and handwashing, time/temperature, and cleaning and sanitizing). But with high turnover of employees, training is often hurried, and some new employees are put right into the job without training if it is a busy day.

One day Barry overslept because he had been working on his car until 2 a.m. He was rushing around and realized that he didn't have a clean uniform. However, he managed to find one that was not very dirty. As he dressed, he realized that he needed a haircut and a good hand scrubbing, especially after working on his car.

When he arrived at work, he dashed into the kitchen and noticed several trays of uncooked meat on the work tops. They appeared to have been sitting at room temperature overnight. He called one of the kitchen staff and asked: "Why did you leave the chicken out when I told you to put them in the fridge?"

The man replied: "I heard you screaming but I thought you were trying to talk to the chef above the noise of the food mixer he was using. I didn't know you were talking to me". Barry is frustrated and doesn't know what to do. He felt like he was beating his head against a brick wall in trying to get his employees to practise food safety.

He has made many efforts to get them to learn how to handle food safely. He has put large signs all over the kitchen: KEEP HOT FOOD HOT AND COLD FOOD COLD and WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN.

Questions:

1. What are the communication challenges and obstacles that Barry faces?
2. Which communication models can you use to explain Barry's problems?
3. What solutions might Barry consider in addressing each of these challenges or obstacles?



1) BARRY FACES THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS:

- MISS COMMUNICATIONS WITH CHIEF IN CHARGE
- OVER TIRED FOR HIS JOB AND HIS EXTRA JOB
- BARRY HAS NOT BEEN REPLY CLEAR ~~PROBLEMS~~ WITH THE SIGNS IN THE KITCHEN AS THEY ARE NOT REPLY

clear

2) BARRY COULD MAKE A RESTAURANT BIBLE WITH

ALL THE RULES AND THE INSTRUCTIONS WITH WHICH FOOD CAN BE OUT AND WHICH ONE IN THE FRIDGE, SO- NEW PEOPLE CAN READ AND CHECK AFTER AN ~~ORDER~~ ENGLISH TRAINING (IF THEY CAN NOT UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE WITH).

BARRY COULD GO ~~FORWARD~~ TO THE MAIN CHIEF AND ASK HIM TO EXPLAIN TO HIS TEAM HOW TO SAFE AND STORAGE FOOD.

3) BARRY COULD ~~MAKE~~ IMPROVE HIS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THIS MORE CLEAR WITH THE WHOLE TEAM AND TO BE MORE CLEAR WITH SIGNS AND HE COULD ALSO SEND AN E-MAIL TO EVERYONE WITH A "RESTAURANT BIBLE" ATTACHED AND ALSO EXPLAIN WITH ~~WHICH WORDS~~ CLEAR WORDS WHAT HE EXPECT FROM EVERY ONE.

Lecturer's comments:

Lecturer's signature:

[Signature]

Date:

26/11/2019

Review any lecture content not covered. See Weeks 1-6 on moodle.

Exercise: Classroom divides into self-defined groups of 4-5 persons. (5 minutes)

Reference: Essential Texts from the Module Outline, Maund et. al. 2017 and Morgan 2017

The situation: (Read aloud and clarify keywords and discuss anything ambiguous)

The team are the management of a huge BMW dealership in London and the South East. (Pick another car brand if you do not like BMW)

They have been caught discounting vehicles against other dealers to close sales. The Brand owners in Germany have asked them to relinquish their distributorship. A Chinese electric car brand is eager to find a British partner to test the market for electric cars. They have made an exploratory phone call to management.

The work force knows something is wrong and people have started informally to ask questions to management. Management have replied with "we are still BMW dealers as at this moment.... You must concentrate on your work in front of you"

The work force has key members who are taking days off without warning or due cause. BMW have given them a deadline by which they must cease activity as a main dealer.

TASK:

1. Identify stakeholders (individuals and groups)

2. Create a communications strategy.

3. Identify target groups,

4. Identify goals or objectives,

5. Describe a way of communicating with these groups to achieve your objectives

Words and Messages, and Media.

6. Develop a briefing for each of these stakeholders groups, organised as if they were here in front of you, use as many people as possible and reach these groups.

Presentation

Each group presents the main features of their communication strategy to the other groups present