

Module Title: **Effective team working and communication**

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1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to analyse communication in my workplace, identifying the barriers that exists and suggesting ways in which this can be improved while using findings from published literature.

2. Communication

Communication is the swapping or interchanging of information, concepts, and thoughts by one person to another or to several people (Maund, Schriek and Tinkler, 2017). It also involves making yourself understood by one or more people through the transmission of your message. Normally this involves a sender, a receiver and a message sent via a channel. The process starts with a thought by the sender which is then encoded into symbols as language, pictures or words which is then sent through a medium for the receiver to retrieve them using their sense organs. Several types of mediums could be used, some could be one- on- one, a mobile text message. Communication takes place when the receiver precisely discerns the message emitted by the sender.

2.1 Importance of communication to management

It provides an impulse or motive to perform and strive to achieve the task especially when the task is clear. It also provides data to decision makers in management that can assist them in observing solutions from different angles. Man is by nature a social animal and communication with workplace colleagues creates positive interaction which is beneficial to the employee. Training programmes at work and workplace magazines all assist in fostering a different or improved mindset that can lead to increased productivity. Communication can aid in the identification of barriers that can have a negative effect on the employee and the organization. (Juneja, 2020). Communication is important because a failure of communication can affect the degree of efficiency of planning and control (Laing, 2013)

2.2 Making communication effective in an organisation.

This can be achieved through the improvement of listening skills, creating a two way communication process, using more than one channel to send messages, repetition of important messages, making very important messages within the reach of all employees at all times even if the employee was not present when the message was disseminated.

3. Barriers to communication in Tesco distribution

There are several barriers to communication in my workplace, some of them are:

- Language
- Knowledge
- Jargon
- Psychological and forbidden barriers
- Disparity in comprehension and posture
- Preconception
- State of health and physical condition
- Lack of interest.
- Culture

4. Relevant theories

4.1 David Berlo

In the quest to analyse the barriers to communication at my workplace David Berlo's SMCR model of communication will be used. The model was created in 1960 and SMCR stands for source, message, channel, and receiver. Tesco is a global business and it must contend with employees and clients from different and diverse backgrounds. When a Tesco manager gives instruction to an employee the message depends to a great extent on the manager's communication skills. According to Berlo, the source, in this case the manager, may not have the skill necessary to effectively communicate, skills like speaking, listening, and writing.

Language differences come to the fore in this instance since more than half of the employees are Eastern Europeans and they have a limited understanding of the English language. Majority of the managers at my workplace are Native English speakers and the typical Eastern European finds it extremely difficult to understand the British accent. The attitude of majority of the managers is to speak as if the employee understands what they are saying. The message from the manager has elements that makes it difficult for the receiver to decode it correctly and most Eastern Europeans will pretend to understand the instruction given in order not to appear as if they lack knowledge of English language which could cost them their employment. Language difficulties have

led to employees not understanding the health and safety rules within the workplace which has resulted in very serious accidents involving loss of limbs and a fatality.

This language barrier can be improved if the manager speaks slowly, patiently and with clarity and concision followed by written communication when required. The manager should demonstrate empathy and respect towards the employee. The employee should take English classes and watch movies and videos in English language to improve their knowledge of English. The recruitment process should be more effective in choosing only job applicants with sufficient knowledge of English language.

According to Berlo's model, knowledge of the subject matter of the message is also important. The manager should have knowledge of the subject. The model has been criticized because its success depends on the sender and receiver being on the same plane. Jargon is a way of writing words using abbreviations and symbols, used by people especially of the same profession. It can distort and block the message from the sender. Managers often use jargon, but it can lead to confusion because not everyone understands the meaning. This barrier could be removed by managers using normal and easily understood language. Taboos and the mental state of the sender can influence the message.

The social system is also a barrier. Employees with diverse values, religions and belief system can create a barrier. Most employees of African descent do not stare at older people out of respect, but it might be misinterpreted to mean rudeness in some cultures. The manager and the employee should both strive to have a basic understanding of their cultural background. Performance percentages have been reduced for Muslims during the fasting period because they lack energy and not because they are intentionally refusing to obey the instructions of the manager. Differences in degree of understanding and a fixed mindset based on stoic principles can be a barrier. Managers and workplace colleagues should be open about learning other ways of getting things done, in other words they should be open minded.

Preconceived views and biased thinking coupled with ignorance, ego and pride will have a negative influence on the message. Enlightenment, friendship, learning about other workplace colleagues can be beneficial to the organisation. Employees with physical disabilities may find it difficult to pass or receive a message. Workplace colleagues with hearing problems and those with speech difficulty can find it a daunting task to give and

receive messages. Lack of interest, attention, the act of being distracted and placing little or no importance to the message can cause a blockage of the message. This can be resolved if the sender and the receiver face each other and show some respect while trying to listen to each other.

People associate and interact differently in societies around the world. Cultures and continents around the world express their emotional sentiments in varied fashion, lack of understanding and ignorance of this differences can lead to messages being misinterpreted. The personal boundaries between people is different around the world. Cultural differences at my workplace can be reduced by accommodating and learning about other cultures, listening, and exchanging information about the cultures of fellow colleagues and management having diversity enlightenment training courses.

Berlo's model which flows from the source-encodes-message-channel-encodes and receiver is a simple model, but it is unrealistic as regards my workplace. The sender can have multiple barriers as stated above, the message itself is not void of gestures, way of speaking and nonverbal cues, this element influences the communication process. The way the message is handled and given to the receiver matters. The channel which refers to the five senses of the human being which are touching, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting. This sense is also used to send messages. The decoder refers to the individual who receives the message and deciphers the contents of the message. Finally the receiver is the employee or person that receives the message, and according to this model the receiver should be in tune with all the characteristics and contents of the sender so the message can be effectively received and responded to.

4.1.1 Problems of Berlo's model

- The chief criticism is that there is no feedback which gives room to unspecified results.
- Noise along the communication channels is not mentioned.
- There is no mention of the inherent barriers and problems that can influence and even distort the message before it gets to the sender.
- The model is linear by nature.
- The model preaches the idea that the sender and receiver are equal in their understanding, but this is unrealistic generally.

- The model does not consider the use of instinct and intuition. (BERLO'S SMCR MODEL OF COMMUNICATION, 2020)

4.2 Shannon and Weaver communication model

Barriers at my workplace will also be analysed using the Shannon and Weaver model. This model is a transmission model (Shannon and Weaver's model, 2020) This model was created in 1948 by Claude Elwood Shannon and Warren Weaver. This model of transmitting a message has five basic elements: the source of the information, this source creates or produces a message; then we have the transmitter, which now encodes the message and converts it into signals; next is the channel, where signals are adjusted for transmission; next in line is the receiver, the receiver decodes the message of the signal; lastly we have the destination, this is final point or arrival of the message. Warren Weaver added feedback to the model after it was heavily criticized due to its linear nature.

The sender in my workplace could be a manager who is the source of the information and decides on who he wants the message sent to and through which channel. The encoder will be a telephone if the manager decides to make a phone call to a colleague, the telephone converts his voice. The channel would be the telephone lines and telephone electrical system. This model mentions the effect noise can have in breaking up or interrupting the message.

Noise in this respect can be internal or external. Internal noise could be when the manager makes a mistake when encoding the message, the mistake could be his wrong use of words or if the message was in written form it would mean his failure to spell a word correctly. The receiver can also make a mistake when he decodes the message by not paying attention and thereby misunderstanding the message. External noise in my workplace could be the sound of machinery and trucks which can make the receiver not hear the message effectively. This is like the physical noise in the case of Pedro and Maria where Pedro was working in a noisy construction site.

4.3 Osgood-Schramm model

Founded in 1954, the model states that information is useless if not properly worded and delivered to others (Juneja, 2020). It is a model that is circular in nature (OSGOOD-SCHRAMM MODEL OF COMMUNICATION, 2020). Encoding and decoding are the key elements in the process. Communication is completed when the sender receives a

feedback. The feedback completes the process, for example if my lecturer asked me to assist in making photocopies of study materials and I do not respond, the circle is not completed, It is only completed when I have downloaded my response and send my response back to my lecturer in a way he understands.

Effective communication is important because it assists in meeting productivity targets. Inadequate and ineffective communication can lead to poor morale and ill-informed employees. Skills such as active listening and being assertive are crucial components and can make data more transparent (Maund, Schriek and Tinkler, 2017). I witnessed a colleague who did not understand English very well erroneously open the locks to release fruits into the production line while I was working in an orange juice production company, there was no feedback to the manager before he acted wrongfully and this cost the company huge losses and he lost his employment.

5. Types of communication

5.1 Verbal communication

This refers to the use of spoken or written words to send messages, in other words the oral use of a linguistic form to share information with others.

5.2 Non-verbal communication

This refers to the look of the face to sending a message, gestures, the pitch, and tone of the voice. The sender's words might be saying something while the sender's face and body posture is screaming something completely different.

5.3 Visual communication

This is utilizing visual aids to send a message, for example notice boards, placards, and presentation.

The function and main purpose of communication between management and employees is to augment productivity levels and morale, reduce absenteeism, to minimise mistakes, assist in accuracy. Furthermore, it benefits management in planning, leading, staffing and running organizational operations.

In conclusion, I analysed communication in my workplace and gave examples of the barriers and how it can be improved. The models of communication and their advantages and drawbacks were also analysed using published literature.

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