

Title: Communication Barriers
and Solutions at Flight Foods Ltd
Module: Effective Teamwork and
Communication

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Overview:

- This presentation will cover:
- Background of the case study
- Key communication barriers at Flight Foods
- Theoretical models explaining these barriers (Shannon & Weaver, Schramm, and Berlo's SMCR model)
- Recommendations to reduce communication problems
- Conclusion

Key Issues in the Case Study

- Flight Foods has been losing market share due to poor food standards, hygiene problems, miscommunication on the factory floor, and human error (Case Study, 2025).
- These problems link directly to organisational communication failures.



Barrier 1: Language Differences

- Staff come from 5 different cultural/language groups
- Most speak “their own language with a few English words”
- Instructions are not understood
- Written signs may not be understood due to low English literacy
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- Theory link (Berlo’s SMCR Model):
- Berlo states that communication fails when the sender and receiver do not share the same language “codes,” meaning the message cannot be accurately decoded (Berlo, 1960).



Barrier 2: Cultural Differences

- Staff of different ages and cultures interpret instructions differently
- Younger staff ignore or misunderstand instructions
- Cultural norms may affect attitudes toward hygiene, authority, or communication style
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- Theory link (Schramm's Model):
- Schramm argues that communication requires a shared "field of experience," and when individuals do not share common cultural understanding, miscommunication increases (Schramm, 1954).



Barrier 3: Poor Training and Knowledge

- Staff receive no formal food hygiene training before work starts
- Gary tries to teach “on the job,” but staff cannot follow properly
- Staff rely on signs, not real training
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- Theory link (Shannon & Weaver):
- Shannon and Weaver explain that a lack of knowledge increases “noise,” making the message unclear or distorted (Shannon and Weaver, 1949).

Barrier 4: Ineffective Communication Channels

- Over-reliance on signs on walls
- Staff cannot read English properly
- No demonstrations, videos, translations, or visual training materials
- Verbal communication is rushed and unclear
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- Theory link (Shannon & Weaver):
- Choosing the wrong communication channel amplifies noise and reduces message clarity (Shannon and Weaver, 1949).

Barrier 5: Leadership and Personal Behaviour

- Gary himself breaks hygiene rules
- Comes to work tired
- Dirty uniform
- Poor hair/hygiene management
- Sends mixed messages to staff
- Reduces credibility as a leader
- Theory link (Berlo's SMCR Model):
- Berlo highlights that communication depends heavily on the sender's credibility, attitude, and behaviour; when the leader appears unprofessional, communication becomes less effective (Berlo, 1960).

Communication Theories Used

Shannon & Weaver Model

- Explains how “noise” interrupts messages
- Noise here = language problems, lack of training, poor channels, misunderstanding

Schramm Model

- Communication needs a shared “field of experience”
- Cultural/language differences reduce shared understanding

Berlo's SMCR Model

- Emphasises sender/receiver language, knowledge, culture
- Shows why instructions fail if the sender is unclear or the receiver cannot decode

Solution 1: Provide Proper Training

- Mandatory food hygiene training before staff start work
- Use translated materials
- Use videos, demonstrations, visual instructions
- Provide simple multilingual manuals

Result:

- Clearer understanding = fewer mistakes.

Solution 2: Improve Communication Methods

- Use diagrams and colour-coded signs
- Provide visual work instructions (photos of correct/incorrect practices)
- Hire interpreters or bilingual supervisors
- Provide short daily briefings with demonstrations
- Use digital screens for visual guidance

Solution 3: Improve Leadership Behaviour

- Gary needs hygiene refresher training
- Must model correct behaviour (clean uniform, proper grooming)
- Delegate communication tasks to trained team leads
- Adopt clear, calm, respectful instruction methods

Solution 4: Build Cultural Understanding

- Provide cultural awareness training
- Encourage team-building activities
- Pair older/more experienced staff with younger ones (“buddy system”)
- Reduce stereotypes (e.g., “younger ones don’t listen”)

Solution 5: Modernise Processes

- Replace old noisy machinery (less distraction = less noise)
- Use temperature sensors and alarms to prevent food being left out
- Improve packaging checks
- Implement quality control procedures

Conclusion

- Flight Foods' problems are mainly caused by communication failures including language barriers, cultural differences, lack of training, poor leadership, and ineffective channels.
- By applying communication theories and implementing practical solutions such as better training, multilingual support, improved leadership, and modernised processes, the company can reduce errors, improve food safety, and rebuild trust with airline customers.

References

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- Case Study (2025) Flight Foods Ltd.
- Schramm, W. (1954) How Communication Works. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Shannon, C. and Weaver, W. (1949) The Mathematical Theory of Communication. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.