

**Module Name/Code: Effective Team Working and
Communication/BMSW4002**

Title: A Report on Communication Within the Workplace

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Executive Summary

A medium sized retail store in Swansea owned by Andrea Jones has requested a report to be conducted and submitted on the 10th of December 2021 to emphasis on communications and teamworking processes which highlight the importance and effectiveness of communication to ensure the teams and individuals currently employed are equipped to run the business smoothly. As the business has expanded rapidly the team need structure to prevent issues hindering the viability of the business.

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1.0 Introduction

Griffiths and Dunham (2015) define communication as an exchange of information, ideas and thoughts that are to be interpreted and understood by the recipient. The process requires a sender and a receiver for the message to be communicated. The receiver has the responsibility to decode the message whether it be written, oral or visual.

Teamwork is defined as the team workers working together with the ability to communicate effectively while anticipating to collectively address demands (Science Direct, 2021).

The author will report its findings with the use of articles, books and websites to underpin recommendations. The author will discuss in depth what is needed to maintain effective communication within organisational settings. The author will also research various models and theories such as communication cycles that will aid in effective communication.

2.0 Findings

2.1 Issues Faced Within the Organisation

The case study has outlined that from the 27 employees hired by company owner Andrea Jones there is no manager on duty for night shift workers though there are three managers employed. John Adair's Action-centred Leadership model (Chapman, 2018) provides the elements needed to apply and adapt to scenarios. It is essential for a manager to have full command of the three areas of the model while keeping the correct balance. The areas are:

- Task – achieving the task
- Team – managing the team(s)
- Individual – managing individuals.

Another issue faced is there are no formal teams within the workplace. Teams are essential in organisations as it signifies a shared purpose towards a common goal while cooperating with other members. Teamworking creates synergy with combined efforts as appose to individual effort, thus creating a sense of commitment (NCVO Knowhow, 2017).

Currently there are some meetings taking place via Microsoft Teams and some are conducted in person as and when needed or necessary though communication is not consistent or regular. This has led to a breakdown of communication. Communication plays a pivotal role in employee engagement which promotes performance and adds to an open culture. However, implementing effective communications can be challenging due to organisational complexity and managers lacking skills (CIPD, 2020). According to CIPD (2017) to be successful in communication appropriate communication channels need to be implemented and by advocating employee voice can give a platform to issues faced and voice matters that can affect performance. As the business has expanded rapidly there is a greater need to structure a formal means of communication amongst the workforce to ensure minimal problems occurring.

2.2 How the Application of Teamwork Theories Can Improve Teamwork in the Organisation

2.2.1 Belbin Team Roles (see appendix 1)

The case study highlights the lack of a night shift manager on duty. As there are stock room staff who work the night shift and there is also some staff who are processing orders from home Andrea Jones needs to appoint a manager for the night shift who possesses the trait Teamworker and Co-ordinator.

According to Belbin (2021) the role of a **Teamworker** can help the teams to gel, identify the work needed and as the strengths are possessing diplomacy the night manager can utilise listening skills to avert friction from designated groups. The drawback of the trait is indecisiveness and avoidance of confrontations. Another Belbin team role that can make a successful manager is the **Co-ordinator** role by concentrating on team task by clarifying goals while delegating tasks well (Belbin, 2003).

As there are no formal teams within the organisations Belbin (2021) suggests in order to build a strong team, team roles need to be identified by behavioural strengths and weaknesses with the help of the nine separate clusters that facilitate success in the workplace. The Apollo Syndrome phenomenon discovered by Dr Meridith Belbin (Team Technology, 2021) whereby highly capable teams collectively perform badly due to certain flaws in the way teams operated. These include:

- Excessive time spent on destructive or abortive debates persuading others to adopt a view
- Difficulties in making decisions as several necessary jobs were often omitted
- Team members acting on own accordance while failing to consider what other members are doing leaving teams hard to manage
- Team members over compensated though there was recognition to what was happening leading to issues in decision making.

A successful Apollo Team succeeded with the absence of highly dominant members and the styles of leadership. To form a successful team is to put together a team of the cleverest individuals who do not need to produce the best results but rather form a team consisting of a blend of roles.

2.2.2 Tuckman Model (see appendix 2)

The author has determined that currently the staff are at the **Forming Stage** of the Tuckman model as there are uncertainty of roles as there is no leadership

and the employees need guidance to define the job that needs doing (Aurora, 2013). Andrea Jones needs to appoint a leader who is open with information and equipped with answers. The leader must invest time in team members while demonstrating empathy and display behaviours he or she would like to see in team members as this will prove beneficial in the long run (Wilson, 2010). At the **Storming Stage** teams should be aware to not leave individuals isolated as factions can form as members battle to make an impression to prove their worth to the leader. A way to curtail this is to provide positive feedback to one another so stable relationships are maintained. If the team can reach the **Norming Stage** it means that key decisions have been implemented by the employees, and in turn ideas can become reality where more risks can be taken with the notion that any failure can be seen as a step in reaching the goal. As relationships are well developed members can concentrate on tasks with full ability (Wilson, 2013). Tuckman (Aurora, 2013) does state however a team will only be effective if the **Performing Stage** is reached so it is essential to complete the processes of Norming.

2.3 Importance of Two-Way Communication (see appendix 3)

The employee who processes orders can benefit from the Schramm's Model of Communication. The processing staff need to carefully encode and convey the information received to the stock room staff. The encoding part is pivotal as it initiates the process of communication (orders received) and converting it into context so the stock room staff can fulfil the orders. Encoding involves converting a body of information from system to system and both processing staff and stock room staff will have their own computer systems, so it is essential for the processing staff to understand what information should be sent and it is the responsibility of the recipient (stock room staff) to decode what the speaker (processing staff) is conveying in the forms of codes or symbols. Decoding is continuous because both processing and stock room staff are continuously communicating so there is no end, and it only works if both parties understand the information (Hattangadi, 2017).

2.3.1 Importance of Virtual Communication and Teamworking

According to Belbin (2018) virtual teams can be beneficial as organisations can build a team of the best of humans for the job. Belbin team roles can aid with

communicating. It is advised to communicate with one another to discover strengths to find out what members have to offer. Determining team roles can open discussions on complimentary pairings for those who need to work together (chemistry). As the 27 employees are working from different locations at different shift, it is important to adapt to virtual communication. Virtual teamworking will rely on team role contributions. The author recommends the following blend of team roles to make virtual communication a success:

- Plant and Specialists – who thrive on the freedom of remote working though they will need monitoring to ensure that they are meeting the objectives
- Teamworkers and Resource Investigators need to adapt their communication style in order to relate to others. Resource Investigators will need to utilise more listening skills to ensure others have airtime while Teamworkers might need to bridge cultural gaps
- Co-ordinators and Implementers will be responsible in the delegation of tasks. Implementors can handle organisational changes by ensuring plans are concise and clear. The co-ordinator role can take on the ‘mentor’ approach to leadership

2.3.2 Importance of Effective Communication for Continued Success of the Organisation

Communication is regarded as the foundation of every organisation and effective communication between two or more people with the intention of delivering, receiving and the understanding of that message requires team members to process the information and interpret what the message conveys. As communication plays an integral part to the success of an organisation the author suggests the following:

- **Good communication fosters good employee engagement** – as the organisation has 27 staff who are not co-located in one space at any given time it is vital to have a weekly Microsoft Teams meeting so everyone is up to date with information. This eliminates ambiguities and misunderstandings
- **One-on-one communication** - it is essential to demonstrate active listening as those who do work better. Listening twice as much as talking is an effective skill in the workplace. Explain with clarity what is expected

alongside adequate time frames. Be prepared to listen to employees and offer resources where possible.

(Kashyap, 2021).

2.3.3 Berlo's Model of Communication (see appendix 4)

Berlo's model of communication (Tools hero, 2021) follows the acronym SMCR which stands for Sender, Message, Channel and Receiver. The model's components are of the basic processes of communication. The **sender** is the source who creates and sends the message to the receiver however there are factors that can influence the message sent and may affect the communication the receiver encodes. The managers who are responsible for delegating jobs to the employees need to adopt **communication skills** in reading, listening and speaking while having familiarity with **knowledge** on the subject matter.

The **message** which is the information can be sent in various forms such as audio or video. It is always the intention of the sender to want the receiver to interpret the message in a certain way. The message however can be influenced by various factors such as **content** of the message in its entirety as well as non-verbal aspects (**elements**) such as body language (facial expressions). There may be employees who would like to meet face to face as oppose to virtual meetings. This should be welcomed as some expressions may be missed by virtual appointments. The **channel** element of the Berlo's model is referred to how information flows between sender and receiver. Sensory elements such as hearing, tasting, seeing and smelling play a part to how communication flows. Whether the employees are working together or remotely, all these senses should be addressed when communicating with one another.

As the **receiver** is the decoder of the message, the assumption is the receiver's thinking is on the same wavelength as the senders. And so, the same factors also apply to the receiver such as good communication skills to understand the message. The receiver's knowledge should also be up to date. The organisation must ensure all policies, processes and tasks are communicated to all and ensure the message is received with no ambiguity (Management Study Guide, 2021).

3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion of this report the author has found that by appointing a manager who will oversee processing order teams that from various locations will ensure that all have a leader who will delegate tasks and ensure that communication is fed equipped with knowledge. By adopting Belbin team roles and by applying the roles to Jone's employees will ultimately build a strong

team based on individual strengths and behaviours. The author has also identified the importance of the Tuckman model especially the Norming Stage as Jone's team will thrive by reaching the criteria of the Storming stage as here positive feedback and relationships are maintained. The Norming stage will enable the team to concentrate on fulfilling goals. As there are employees who work from different locations effective communication is vital to keep all in the loop and so utilising weekly virtual meetings will eliminate ambiguity and ensure there is a designated time where all have a chance to bring up any grievances. There should also be a facility whereby employees can have a one-to-one meeting.

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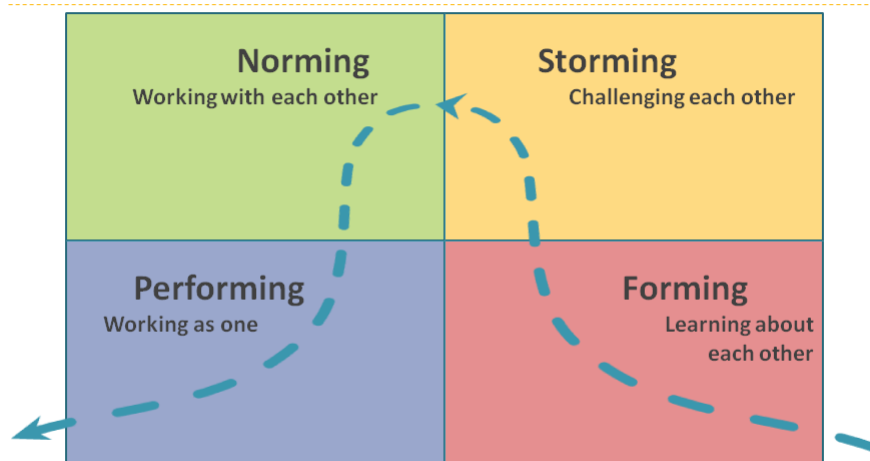
5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Belbin Team Roles

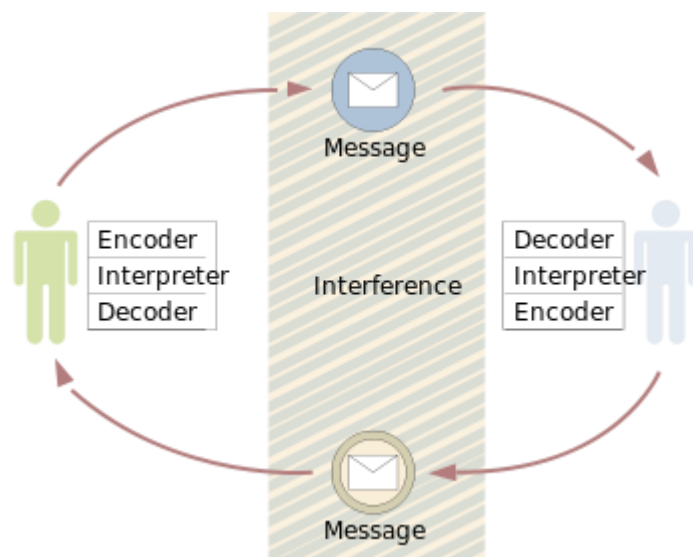
Team Role		Contribution	Allowable Weaknesses
Plant		Creative, imaginative, free-thinking. Generates ideas and solves difficult problems.	Ignores incidentals. Too preoccupied to communicate effectively.
Resource Investigator		Outgoing, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities and develops contacts.	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
Co-ordinator		Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals. Delegates effectively.	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads own share of the work.
Shaper		Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings.
Monitor Evaluator		Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others. Can be overly critical.
Teamworker		Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.	Indecisive in crunch situations. Avoids confrontation.
Implementer		Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organises work that needs to be done.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
Completer Finisher		Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate.
Specialist		Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities.

Appendix 2 Tuckman Model

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing...



Appendix 3 Schramm's Model of Communication



Appendix 4 Berlo's Model of Communication

