

Flight Foods Ltd:

Communication Barriers and Solutions

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Module Code: LCLM4003

Module Name: Effective Teamwork and Communication

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Flight Foods Ltd: Company Background

- Medium-sized company: manufacture and sale of ready meals to Airlines.
- 40 staff on factory floor
- Employees aged 16–60 years and from 5 different cultural backgrounds
- Complaints from airlines: poor food standards, meat found in vegetarian meals and poor packaging



Key Problems Identified

- Poor food hygiene standards
- Language barriers between manager and workers
- Lack of formal training
- Noise and distraction from old machinery
- Lack of professional leadership example



Communication:



Communication is the process of exchanging information through spoken language, written text, or other non-verbal channels (Kurniadi et al, 2021). Literature approves that communication is the foundation of every successful organisation (Zerfass et al., 2028). However, modern organisations, such as Flight Foods Ltd increasingly encounter the challenge of managing and supporting employees from different generational and cultural backgrounds (Rai et al., 2023). In these cases, communication can become more demanding due to differing expectations, experiences, and communication styles (Rai et al., 2023).

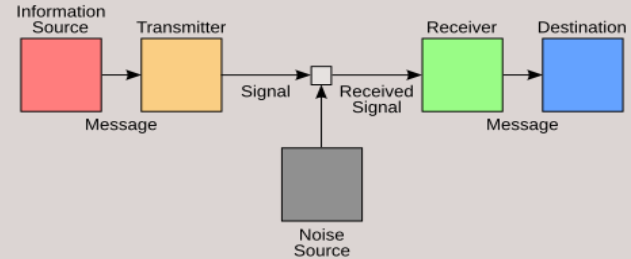
Communication models are valuable tools for analysing and explaining how communication systems work (Al-Fedaghi, 2012). Two of the most widely models are the Shannon & Weaver and the Schramm and Berlo.

Shannon & Weaver Model vs Flight Foods

The original model includes five main components (Chandler, 1994):

1. **Information source:** creates the message.
2. **Transmitter:** encodes the message into a signal.
3. **Channel:** the medium through which the signal is transmitted.
4. **Receiver:** decodes the signal back into the original message.
5. **Destination:** the final point where the message is delivered.

A sixth component, **noise**, refers to anything that interferes with the message as it travels through the channel. Noise can distort the signal, causing the message received to be different from the one that was sent.



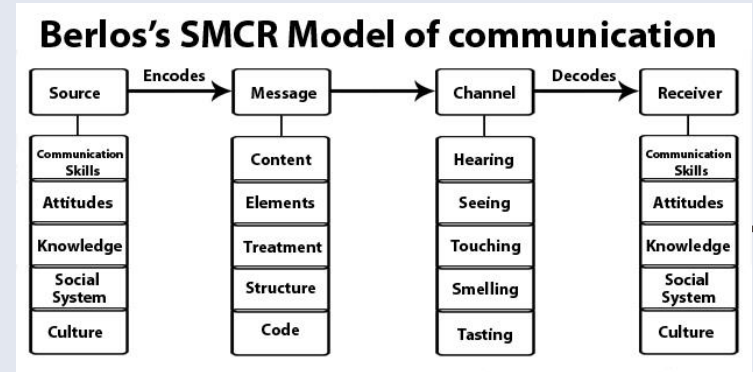
The model suggests communication problems can occur on three different levels:

Technical	Interferences with the correct transmission of the message	- The factory is loud and noisy due to old machinery, making it hard for workers to hear instructions.
Semantic	Misunderstandings caused by unclear language or differences in meaning.	- Employees have limited English and struggle to understand instructions. - Signs written in English, so workers cannot interpret them. - 5 different cultural backgrounds can mean different interpretations of meanings. - Misunderstandings lead to unsafe food handling
Effectiveness	Occurs when the receiver does not react or behave in the way the sender intended	- Manager gives instructions, but workers do something else as they do not understand. - Communication fails to produce the desired action or results. - Signs have no effect as worker behaviour is unchanged.

Berlo's SMCR Model: Poor Leadership and Inconsistent Practice

Berlo's Model of Business Communication focuses on the emotional and personal aspects of communication. An important aspect of this model is the source's communication skills, attitude, knowledge, social system, and culture which all affect how the message is delivered. Good skills, a positive attitude, clear knowledge, and sensitivity to cultural and social context help make the communication effective (Kalogiannidis et al., 2020).

In connection with the Flight Food case, we have a source (The manager Gary) with a poor Leadership attitude. The manager arrives with dirty uniform, unwashed fingernails and no haircut, and violates hygiene standards he expects others to follow. When the staff see these contradictions with the message they lose respect and motivation.



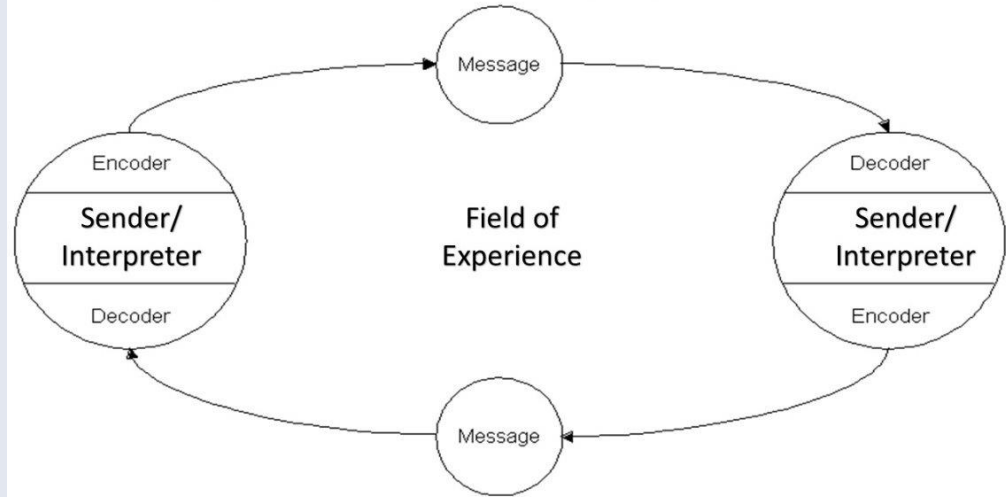
Schramm's Model of Communication (1954)

Schramm's model reflects that communication works well only when the sender and the receiver share some common understanding, such as similar language, knowledge, or experience. If they do not have this shared field of experience, the message can be interpreted differently or misunderstood (Schramm, 1954).

In Flight Foods

- Gary speaks English and understands food hygiene rules well, but many workers come from different cultures and do not speak English fluently.
- Because they do not share the same knowledge or background, Gary's instructions are not fully understood, which leads to mistakes and poor hygiene practices.

Schramm's Model of Communication, 1954



Solutions & Recommendations

The proposed recommendations are grounded in both the issues highlighted in the case study and the communication theories studied. By applying the Shannon and Weaver, Schramm, and Berlo models, we were able to understand the causes of miscommunication and suggest solutions that improve clarity, understanding, and teamwork.

1

Provide Multilingual and

- Visual Training
- Use demonstrations, pictures, colour codes and short instructions.
- Helps workers understand hygiene rules even if their English is limited. (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2017)

2

Hire a Bilingual Supervisor / Interpreter

- Supports communication between Gary and workers.
- Ensures instructions are explained clearly and consistently. (Gudykunst, 2004)

3

Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with Images

- Clear, step-by-step guides for food handling and hygiene.
- Reduces confusion and ensures consistency. (Lunenburg, 2010)

4

Introduce Daily Briefing Meetings

- Clarifies tasks before work starts.
- Allows workers to ask questions. (Tuckman, 1965 – teamwork and group communication dynamics)

5

Encourage Team-building and Cultural Respect

Improves relationships and reduces misunderstandings. Builds trust between manager and staff. (Hofstede, 2001)

CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, the communication problems at Flight Foods are mainly caused by physical noise, language barriers, and the lack of shared understanding between Gary and the workers. The Shannon and Weaver, Schramm, and Berlo SMCR models show how these barriers interrupt the communication process and lead to mistakes in hygiene and food handling. By introducing multilingual and visual training, hiring a bilingual supervisor, using clear Standard Operating Procedures, and improving teamwork, the company can strengthen communication, reduce errors, and improve both food quality and workplace cooperation.

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