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Introduction:

Good communication is the key to successful businesses and their operations, it allows for information to be shared effectively, collaboration and decision making across all levels of the organisation. In large multinational companies such as tesco, communication is a vital role that is established in connecting head-office management with store level employees to make sure that customers receive consistent high quality service. Throughout this report the methods tesco use for communication, the challenges that tesco may face and the way these can be an important model of communication will be explored. Using communication theories such as Shannon and Weaver' theories, Berlo's SMCR model and the media richness theory this will link the theory to practice with Tesco's organisational context. This report will also go through how Tesco's hierarchical structure can influence communication between departments and staff. Recommendations will also be presented to see how Tesco can improve its efficiency, engagement and overall communication across Tesco's head office, stores and customers.

Communication and Methods:

Tesco is one of the biggest retail networks in the U.K, having over 330,000 members of staff across thousands of stores (Tesco PLC, 2024). Having a company this big requires structured, efficient communication to organise activities and plans from senior management to store level employees. Communication at Tesco is done between managers and employees but also between departments and colleagues using both informal and formal channels.

In the corporate department and level in Tesco, they rely heavily on formal communication such as email, digital newsletters and company wide bulletins distributed through the platform "Our Tesco." This platform provides consistency in passing messages regarding company policies, training and corporate social responsibility campaigns. The Shannon and Weaver model explains communication in 5 simple components; a source, a transmitter, a channel, a receiver, and a destination. Applying this to tesco, corporate will act as the send, 'encoding' messages such as health and safety policies which are 'transmitted' through different digital platforms to 'receivers' (store staff). However, too much information that can be unnecessary or unclear language can cause 'noise' which can make the messages confusing and can cause misunderstanding or slow implementation at the store. Berlo's SMCR model is a model that explains communication in four components; Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver. At store level, Tesco managers are conducting daily meetings and team huddles to talk about sale targets, promotions and safety updates. These meetings improve communication because managers and staff members can give each

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other feedback and report problems immediately (Berlos SMCR model, 1960). Non-verbal

forms of communication such as tone, gestures and facial expressions can also help clarify meaning, making face to face communication particularly effective in retail environments.

Tesco also uses digital devices and the tesco colleague mobile app to form a two-way communication. Employees can check rotas, clock in and clock out for their attendance and breaks and get instant updates from managers or supervisors. The media richness theories emphasises that using more media such as video calls or in-person discussions are better for more complex messages and meetings, while things like emails are appropriate for simpler updates (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Tesco's use of different channels depending on the message which shows a good approach to media choice.

Tesco generally communicates with their customers through marketing campaigns, social media, customer-service desks and loyalty programmes like the clubcard often sending vouchers and offers to customers via post. These platforms are managed by a corporate communications team, which ensures brand messaging and brings in customer loyalty. However, some feedback from the customer service interactions is also shared internally which can close the loop between customer experience and internal improvement.

Common issues:

Tesco's communication system is a mix between digital platforms with face to face interactions to make sure that messages flow consistently and effectively between departments and stores. However sometimes this can cause; unnecessary information, inconsistent feedback, hierarchical barriers, communication barriers and cross cultural communication issues.

Information load will occur with numerous employees because they receive excessive messages from multiple channels. Tesco's digital platforms like email and the mobile can will often deliver numerous updates from HR, store operations and marketing. Receiving multiple things at once can make an employee miss a urgent or important task or message. From the Shannon and Weavers model it was shown that this is called 'noise' which can interfere with message clarity as if theres too much 'noise' an employee may fail to act promptly especially during busy periods. Some studies show that an overload of information reduces employee engagement and leads to communication fatigue specifically in retail environments (Kumar, 2020).

Tesco's hierarchical organisational structure can slow down the rate and flow that information is passed down. Messages will often go through different managerial layers before it reaches store staff. Tall hierarchies has a higher chance of message distortion as each department can interpret information differently (Mintzberg, 1993). For example if head office has operational updates when this passes on to regional managers before it goes to store staff it can lead to confusion or change in message as the regional managers can simplify the message or change it to their own understanding. Limited upward communication is another issue Tesco can face. While Tesco generally encourages feedback through staff surveys and a platform called 'voice of colleagues', many employees can feel hesitant to give their true opinions and feelings to management. Berlo's SMCR model discusses how important feedback is for effective communication. However when

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feedback is inconsistent or weak it can cause misunderstandings. For example store staff may talk about practical problems (stock management and customer complaints) but these

complaints may not reach senior managers promptly.

Another challenge that Tesco might face is cross-cultural communication, especially in Tesco's diverse workforce and international operations as employees have different cultural backgrounds, communication styles, tone and expectations. Cultural differences in power difference and uncertainty avoidance affect how employees understand managerial messages. For example employees with a stronger culture or employees with slight language barriers may avoid questioning managerial instructions until they escalate. Technological barriers can also cause a problem with communication. Even though Tesco's digital transformation has improved connectivity and has seen positive outcomes, some employees may not be comfortable with technology especially those who are older and part time, these employees potentially may prefer verbal instructions over app based updates. This can create inconsistency on how effectively messages are received and acted upon.

Tesco can also face external challenges when it comes to customer feedback as it may not efficiently feed into internal improvement systems. When customers complaints are submitted online most of the time it is not communicated to individual stores which limits Tesco's ability to respond quickly. Mixing external and internal communication is vital for maintaining brand trust and service quality (Argenti, 2020). These issues highlight the problems that may arise when maintaining consistent communication in a large organisation like Tesco.

Recommendations:

To address these challenges, Tesco should put a series of targeted communication improvements in place

1. Simplify and prioritise digital communication: On the app Tesco can introduce message filtering or prioritisation features so that important updates are highlighted or flagged. This would reduce information overload and make sure that critical information is not ignored or missed.
2. Strengthen upward feedback channels: If tesco encourages open dialogue through listening sessions or through anonymous digital session boxes this would emphasise Berlo's model of two way communication which will allow senior managers to act on staff insights.
3. Give staff communication training: Regular workshops on intercultural communication and digital literacy would help employees from all backgrounds and ages to communicate better and more confidently expressing problems across departments and technology platforms.

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4. Mix customer feedback with internal communication: If tesco were to link the customer service database directly to store level dashboards this will allow teams to respond faster and more effectively to complaints or compliments.

5. Get rid of unnecessary communication: Tesco reducing unnecessary layers in communication for urgent operational messages will give a more organised information structure which canals out any 'noise'

These recommendations could promote clarity, inclusivity, and responsiveness in Tesco's communication network, improving both employee satisfaction and customer experience.

Conclusion:

Good and effective communication is a key to Tesco's success as one of the largest Retailers in the UK. The company uses a variety of both formal and informal communication methods from internal digital platforms to face to face team meetings. However some complications like information overload, hierarchical filtering and limited upward feedback can show that even well structured systems have some downsides in large organisations. Applying communication theories like Shannon and Weaver's model, Berlo's SMCR model and media richness theory shows how message clarity and feedback processes can improve communication. By simplifying communication channels, supporting open dialogue and improving digital and intercultural skills Tesco can further strengthen both its internal and external communication. Improved communication not only strengthens operational efficiency but also builds stronger employee engagement and customer trust. Key components of long term organisational success.

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