

University of Wales Trinity Saint David



ACADEMIC REPORT

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1. Introduction

Communication plays an important role in how Pret A Manger works every day. In busy stores, staff need to share information clearly, support each other and respond to customer needs. When communication is clear, teams can work smoothly, provide good service and avoid mistakes. When communication is poor, it can slow down service, create confusion and affect the customer experience. Effective communication helps employees understand their responsibilities and work towards the same service standards (Robbins and Coulter, 2021).

This report focuses on communication in Pret A Manger and how it affects daily operations in stores. It examines common communication methods used by managers and employees, identifies typical communication problems and explains how these issues can influence teamwork and service quality. The report also provides practical recommendations to help improve communication and support consistent service in Pret stores.

2. Communication in the Business Environment

2.1 Definition and Importance of Communication

In a business context, communication means sharing information clearly so work runs smoothly and tasks are completed correctly (Cole and Kelly, 2020).

It also means ensuring everyone understands instructions. Robbins and Coulter (2021) explain that communication is effective only when the message is received and understood. In Pret A Manger, this is especially important because the company operates in several countries and employs thousands of people working in busy stores, where staff must react quickly to customer needs and follow instructions during peak periods (PwC, 2024).

Communication supports teamwork and helps employees coordinate daily tasks. When communication is clear, staff avoid mistakes and provide better customer service. Huczynski and Buchanan (2019) state that good communication reduces misunderstandings and improves cooperation in fast-paced environments. In Pret stores, clear communication between team members and managers helps maintain service quality during busy shifts.

Clear communication also helps managers organise daily operations and solve problems quickly, allowing stores to run smoothly. Mullins and McLean (2019) argue that effective communication improves cooperation and organisational performance. In Pret A Manger, this means staff can work together effectively and deliver consistent service to customers.

2.2 Communication Methods in Organisations

Pret A Manger uses different communication methods to make sure information is shared clearly between managers and staff during daily work. In busy stores, communication is essential because employees work at a fast pace and need to support each other to maintain service quality. At the start of each shift, managers give short team briefings where they explain daily targets, product availability and customer service expectations. These briefings help staff understand their tasks and prepare for busy periods during the day (Pret A Manger, 2024).

Communication also takes place between colleagues working on the same shift. Staff often share quick updates, ask for help and pass information to each other while serving customers. This helps the team stay organised and respond quickly when the store becomes busy. Communication between employees at the same level is known as horizontal communication and helps daily work run smoothly (Robbins and Coulter, 2021).

Informal communication is also common in Pret stores. Employees talk to each other to solve small problems or remind each other about tasks. Pret also uses digital tools such as email and scheduling systems to share information quickly between stores and managers. Clear communication through these systems helps reduce mistakes and maintain consistent service standards across locations (Pret A Manger, 2024).

2.3 Communication Practices in Pret A Manger

Communication practices in Pret A Manger are closely connected to daily store operations and customer service. In Pret, staff rely on clear instructions from managers to prepare food, serve customers and follow company standards. Regular team briefings and direct communication help employees understand their tasks and work efficiently during busy periods.

Communication is also important when new services are introduced or store operations change. A clear example is the launch of the coffee subscription service, which allowed customers to receive up to five drinks a day for a fixed monthly fee of £20 (The Guardian, 2020). This service changed customer behaviour and required staff to understand the offer and deliver consistent service across locations.

Effective communication practices in Pret help maintain service quality, support teamwork and allow the company to respond to changes in customer behaviour. According to Robbins and Coulter (2021), clear communication helps employees understand expectations and perform their tasks more confidently in fast-paced service environments like Pret.

3. Common Communication Issues

3.1 Miscommunication and Information Distortion

Miscommunication is a common issue in busy Pret A Manger stores, where employees need to react quickly and follow instructions during service periods. For example, if a shift leader gives unclear instructions about product availability or task priorities, employees may prepare wrong items or repeat tasks, which can slow service and frustrate customers.

In Pret A Manger, communication often happens quickly between team members and managers. When messages are passed under pressure, there is a higher risk that information will be misunderstood or incomplete. This can lead to mistakes, delays and reduced service quality, which directly affects customer service and store operations.

Another issue is information distortion as messages move between different levels in Pret. Managers may simplify information, while employees may hesitate to report problems. This can result in important details being lost, making it harder to maintain consistent standards across stores (Robbins and Coulter, 2021).

3.2 Cultural and Language Barriers

Cultural and language differences can create communication challenges in Pret A Manger, where staff often come from different countries and backgrounds. Earlier reports showed that Pret employed people from more than 100 nationalities, which means teams in many stores are multicultural and need clear communication to work effectively. In busy Pret stores, employees may understand instructions differently, especially during peak periods, which can lead to small mistakes or delays in service.

Communication in Pret is not only about words. Tone of voice, body language and confidence in speaking English can influence how messages are understood by team members. For example, a new employee may hesitate to ask questions if they are not confident using English, which can create confusion during a busy shift.

Mullins and McLean (2019) explain that cultural differences can affect teamwork and how employees respond to feedback. In Pret A Manger, managers often need to repeat instructions or check understanding to make sure tasks are completed correctly. According to Pret A Manger (n.d.), teamwork and clear communication are key values in the company's culture, helping staff work together and provide consistent customer service.

3.3 Structural and Managerial Communication Challenges

Communication challenges in Pret A Manger are often linked to how information is shared between head office and individual stores. In Pret, decisions about products, promotions and service standards are usually made centrally and then passed to store teams. If managers do not explain instructions clearly or messages are delayed, staff may misunderstand tasks, which can affect daily service and customer satisfaction.

Store managers in Pret play a key role in communication because they organise shifts, guide employees and respond to problems during busy periods. Their communication style directly influences how confident staff feel and how smoothly the team works during peak hours.

A recent example reported in the press shows how important managers are in maintaining safe and controlled store environments. Pret introduced body-worn cameras for team leaders and managers in some stores to support staff safety and help manage difficult situations, showing the importance of clear leadership and communication in daily operations (The Guardian, 2024).

4. Recommendations

4.1 Strengthening Upward Communication

The first recommendation is to strengthen upward communication between store employees and managers. Staff working directly with customers often notice problems first, such as delays, product shortages or customer complaints. If employees feel confident sharing this information, managers can respond more quickly and prevent issues from becoming bigger problems.

Managers in Pret stores should actively encourage employees to speak up and report concerns during daily briefings or team meetings. Creating a supportive environment where staff feel comfortable sharing feedback can improve teamwork and decision-making. Regular communication between frontline employees and management helps ensure that information flows accurately and supports consistent service standards.

4.2 Making Communication Part of Managerial Responsibility

Communication should be treated as a core responsibility of store managers, not only as a personal skill. Managers organise shifts, guide employees and solve problems during busy periods, so their communication style directly affects how the team performs. Effective leadership communication can also increase employee engagement and trust in the workplace (Men, 2020).

Communication skills could be included in managerial performance reviews, alongside operational targets such as service speed or customer satisfaction. Managers who communicate clearly, give simple instructions and listen to staff feedback are more likely to build trust and maintain smooth store operations (Robbins and Coulter, 2021).

4.3 Developing Practical Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

Because many employees come from different countries and cultural backgrounds, practical communication training can help reduce misunderstandings in busy stores. Training should focus on giving clear instructions, checking understanding and encouraging employees to ask questions when unsure.

Short workshops or on-the-job coaching sessions could help staff feel more confident communicating with colleagues and managers. This would improve teamwork, reduce mistakes and support consistent customer service across stores (Mullins and McLean, 2019).

5. Conclusion

Communication plays an important role in how Pret A Manger operates and delivers service. This report has shown that communication is not only about passing information, but about making sure people understand each other and work towards the same goals. Clear communication supports teamwork, service quality and a consistent customer experience. At the same time, problems such as miscommunication, cultural differences and structural barriers can affect daily work and overall performance.

Strengthening communication between employees and managers, encouraging managers to take responsibility for communication and improving cultural understanding can help reduce misunderstandings and support better teamwork. In a fast-paced environment like Pret, clear and consistent communication is essential for maintaining good service and strong organisational performance. Effective communication also builds trust between employees and helps maintain consistent service standards.

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