<u>External Communication</u>

External communications are those with people and groups outside the organisation, for example, customers, suppliers and the local community. The effectiveness with which these are carried out can affect the firm's image and reputation and help or hinder efficiency. It is important therefore that the organisation communicates well with those groups and keeps them informed at all times.

Types of Communication

There are five types of communication:
Written- letters, memoranda, reports, notices
Oral- telephone, face-to-face, meetings
Visual- charts, tables, posters, advertisements
Electronic-facsimile, computer, email, pager
Non-verbal- body language

- The nature of the information- is it long or short? Is it confidential?
- The speed with which it needs to be sent- does it need to be there today?
- Whether it is best in written or oral form- would a telephone call be best?
- The cost- would the cost be too much?

Written Communication
Written communication uses words, numbers and images. A record is kept of the message and it is possible to reach a large number of people at the same time.

Letters
A formal method of communication, which is usually external. It is possible to set out detailed instructions, confirm arrangements or pass on information. Letters can also be used internally for such matters as the appointment or dismissal of staff.

Advantages
- Letters can provide a permanent record for future reference.
- Accurate clear messages can be sent.

Disadvantages
- They are slower than other methods, for example, telephone email.
- They can be less personal.
- There is no immediate feedback.
- If a secretary deals with correspondence, then the letter may not even be seen by the receiver.

Memoranda

Memoranda or memos are usually used internally. They are usefully brief and, as many organisations use computers, they are sent through internal electronic mail systems (e-mail).

Advantages
- They can provide a permanent record for future reference.
- They are short and to the point.
- If sent as e-mails, they can be sent out of work time to await the receiver, for example, from organisations in other countries with time differences.

Disadvantages
- There is no immediate feedback.
- If any e-mails are received, there is a possibility that some are missed and the receiver can suffer from information overload.

Reports

Reports are usually the result of investigation pr research, which is presented to others in the organisation. They are formal and structured and can deal with such things as health and safety, future plans or installation of new computers. The language should be simple and concise. They usually lead to action and help people make decisions.

Advantages
- Reports can be copied and circulated to many people.
- Reports usually deal with complicated matters, which are best dealt with in writing rather than by other methods.

Disadvantages
- They can be complicated
- The language can be too difficult for some people to understand.

Notices

Notices are frequently used internally to communicate to employers within the organisation. They can be used to inform employees of fourth coming social events, job vacancies or fire drill procedures.

Advantages
- They can be seen by a large number of people.
- They are cheap to produce.
- Notices are less time consuming than trying to contact each employee individually.

Disadvantages
- Notices can be torn or damaged.
- There is no guarantee that everyone will read the notice.

Written communication is useful to Wacky world it can inform employees or customers or other organisations with important information, for example, dismissals releases of new products or important information.

Oral communication

Oral communication is communication via the word. No record is usually kept.

Telephone

The telephone is a form of electronic communication, which provides fast communication within an organisation. Mobile telephones ensure people can be contacted in case of urgency or emergency even when they are away from the organisation.

Advantages
- They provide two-way communication
- Immediate feedback can be obtained
- Problems can be sorted out quickly
- Information can be received quickly

Disadvantages
- There is no written record of the conversation
- Verbal messages can sometimes be misunderstood.

- The process can be time consuming if the person required is not available.
- When using mobile telephones, it is sometimes difficult to get a signal or the signal fails.

Face-to-face
Face-to-face communication is usually in the form of a meeting, which can be with one person or many people.
Face-to-face communication can also be one-to-one conversation or an informal chat.

Advantages
- Meetings ensure that everyone gets the same message at the same time.
- Anyone can look at any paperwork and discuss any issue s accordingly.
- Feedback can be given and received
- The body language of the speaker can ensure the message was given effectively.
- Problems can be sorted out quickly.

Disadvantages
- In big meetings there is no way of telling whether everybody is listening.
- There is also no way of knowing whether any body has understood the message.
- People are not always available for meetings.
- Not everyone is willing to speak up at meetings.
- Some people may have to travel, which is expensive in terms of time and cost.

Oral communication can be useful to Wacky World because it gives direct important information and allows the other person to get the write idea and understand better with instant feedback.

Visual communication

An organisation can use charts, tables, pictures, maps, diagrams, photographs, films, videos and advertisements to attract people's attention. Visual communication gives impact to the information and usually simplifies it.

Charts and diagrams

These can be included in reports to show numerical data, which can be easier to understand than lots of complicated technical data. They enable trends to be seen at a glance

Tables

These are a simple way of presenting information. They present information clearly, whilst being simple to produce. If information is in pros form, it can be long-winded, but in a table it will be easier to understand.

Films and videos

These can be used to give information about the organisation, about the organisations services or products or can be used in training of staff, for health and safety.

Advertisements

These can be used to provide information about the organisations services or products or persuade the customer to buy the companies product rather than that of rival.

Advantages
- Information can be presented in a clear way
- The information can be presented as more interesting and appealing.
- Films and videos can show actual situations.

Disadvantages
- There is no feedback unless the organisation checks that the message has been received and understood.

Visual communication is yet an even better use to wacky world as it enables the other person to read the speakers body language, and it lets staff and customers and other organisations in meetings feel better and they will get a sharper and quicker response.

Electronic communication

Facsimile machine
This is a way of sending black and white printed material or images between two organisations. The information is sent electronically between two fax machines using the telephone lines. The cost of sending the message depends upon the distance between the two organisations and the length of time it takes to transmit the message.

A fax has to contain certain information so that the receiver of the fax knows where it has come from and how many pages are being sent. The first page of the fax, therefore, is called the fax header.

Advantages
- Messages can be sent quickly when compared with letters.
- Exact copies of the message, image or drawing sent.
- It is easy to send messages and no more complicated than a phone call.

Disadvantages
- The received hard copy can sometimes be of poorer quality.
- The sender and the receiver each need a fax machine.
- Can be time consuming feeding the sheets through.
- The fax machine can miss sheets.
- The message is not confidential.
- The fax machine can run out of paper in the middle of a fax transaction.

Electronic mail
Electronic mail involves sending messages, data, files and graphics to other users on a computer network. Each person has an e-mail address, such as mlee@ems.hartpool.sch.uk. Messages can be word processed beforehand offline and saved. Users then log on and the message is sent quickly.

Advantages

- E-mail is useful to an organisation spread over a number of different sites.
- Frequent contact can be made between users
- Messages can be sent to a group of users.
- A print out can be made of messages.
- Email can be used at anytime and messages left to await the receiver.
- Attachments can be made, which means other documents can be sent with the email

Disadvantages
- Users need a modem and a computer.
- Connections can sometimes be lost.
- It can sometimes be difficult to log on.
- Users have to subscribe to an ISP- information service provider, for example AOL or demon.
- Users have o check there mail boxes regularly.
- Users can forget to respond if not dealt with immediately.
- Some messages will need printing out, which can be time consuming and costly if the document is long.

Video Conferencing
Video conferencing involves using computer links and closed circuit television, allowing people to see and hear each other.

Advantages
- Saves people travelling long distances for meetings
- Savings are made in terms of time and cost
- Face-to-face communication rather than telephone or letter.

Disadvantages
- The hardware required is still expensive
- Needs a dedicated telephone line
- People may prefer live meetings
- Everyone needs to be available
- Connection or system could fail.

Pager

A pager is a device that is carried around by the owner an enables him or her to be contacted in cases of urgency or emergency or merely to pass on messages.

Advantages
- Very portable
- Not expensive to buy.
- No extra rental charges.

Disadvantages
- No oral communication can take place
- The pager has to be switched on
- There is a charge for each message sent.

Non-verbal communication

Sometimes information is exchanged without speaking or writing. If no words are used, the communication is non-verbal, or body language is used. An expression or gesture, such as a frown, nod or smile, can indicate agreement or disagreement with decision. Sometimes these non-verbal messages can be misinterpreted and people can receive the wrong message

Electronic communication is very useful to Wacky World as important documents can be sent across to different places quickly, as they might need to order new stock for gift shops or new rides, or get permission slips from council to build things which is time efficient.