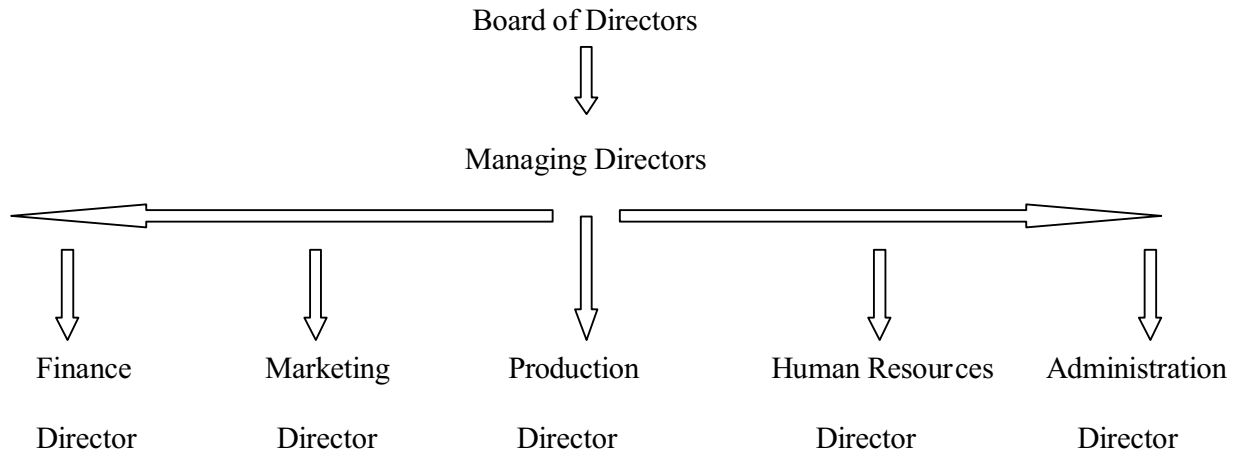


An Investigation Into Business Communication

I have been assigned to solve a firm's communication crisis after the purchase of a new production site 50 miles from London. The company employs 120 people. This has led to split between the staff and workers. The diagrams show how the business configuration was before the change. The diagram shows the hierarchy level of how the directors stand against each other and also the span of control. Each director will not have easy access to another director due to the distance of each site.



Good Communication is extremely important in any business, without it there is not much point. Having good communication between the managers, directors, workers and others is necessary so that goals can be achieved and that everyone will have good understanding between each other.

“Communication – social intercourse, the science and practice of transmitting information.” - Oxford Concise Dictionary

All businesses have objectives and targets which all must be fulfilled. The main goals of businesses include pleasing customers and obviously profit maximisation. These can only be done with support from every member of staff and help from suppliers. With poor conditions of interaction in a business, nothing will be achieved. For example, if an order placed through requested a certain amount of an item and the order came through with less than required, then you'll have a weary customer. This would damage the business' reputation and trust from the customer. With perfect or adequate communication between staff, problems like these are certain not to happen.

There are several ways how people and businesses interact with each other. Here are a few of these methods.

- Talking to people is the easiest way to interact with one another. This can be done by verbal communication face-to-face. During meetings and gatherings people express

themselves with their body language and tone of verbal language. This way everyone can understand what exactly is going on because it is immediate and straightforward.

- Most messages and notes are placed on paper. Sometimes whenever someone is unavailable, a written message is left for him or her. Telephone messages are recorded on paper then passed on to the recipient.
- Most long messages are sent electronically via e-mail or fax. Sometimes documents can be attached to e-mail with a message or vice-versa. It's not just e-mail that is involved in electronic communication, it also involves faxes and telephones. Messages can be passed on verbally via telephones or intercom. Some computers are programmed through a network with instant messengers. You can have a written conversation using these. You also have a choice of talking within a group (conference) or privately (PMs)

Each method is used in a relative way compared to what the task is, whether it is internal or external. Internal Communication includes verbal communication, e-mail, memos, intercom via telephones, computer network, notices and messages, and also through meetings. External communication includes fax, telephone, mobile, pager, video conferencing, the Internet, e-mail, and through a computer network. We call communication that takes place indoors, internal communication. This involves verbal interaction, e-mail, written memos, intercom or telephone, through a network, notices, and obviously at meetings.

When conversations between staff occur during meetings or small gatherings in different areas, we call this verbal communication. One advantage of talking is because it is immediate and straightforward. One disadvantage of this is that there is no record kept of the conversation. E-mail can be classified as internal as well as external because mail can be sent anywhere as long as it is to a specified address of another staff member, for example, too far to reach within the building. Once e-mail has been sent, it should be received straight away. One bad disadvantage of using e-mail is that you can receive viruses and maybe send them accidentally. This would give the firm a bad reputation. Another problem is that you need a computer or a device that is able to send and receive e-mail; this might lead to a large amount of money being spent on machines.

Written memos and notices are mainly short messages or notes on paper. Whenever someone is unavailable then the message is written on paper. These aren't as reliable because you'll never know when the recipient will come back. Telephones are the easiest way of communicating within a building. Calls can be transferred from one department to another via intercom to provide help and service, as long there is a phone around. Through a network you can access your work from any computer on the network. To keep your work private and safe passwords are necessary. Some computers are programmed with instant messengers where you can chat to each other using these. One disadvantage of having a network is that thousands of pounds will have to be invested for buying computers. The other great danger of using a network is that data put into the network may not be safe. There may be a lack of security in the system. If another party get hold of someone's data, the Data Protection Act would be violated. Meetings take place when necessary, normally when scheduled. These are conferences between the top levels of the hierarchy.

When the company communicates with another party other than the firm, we call this external communication. This involves fax, telephone, mobile phone or pager, video conferencing, e-mail, through a network, and also the Internet. Fax is a way of sending forms and documents all over the world via telephone lines. Documents come in clear but can sometimes take their time. Fax can authorise documents with a signature. The sender and receiver must both have fax machines. Fax machines are relatively cheap, as there are different ways of communication emerging. Fax machines are quite expensive depending on quality. To have one machine in each department

would be a heavy cost. Mobile phones are the latest trends in technology with nearly every businessman having one. Verbal interaction can be received and sent whenever as long as there is network coverage. People can also communicate by sending each other text messages (SMS). Telephones are used everywhere and still is the most used method of reaching someone far. Pagers can only receive messages. These are very efficient when a supervisor is unavailable because you can chat or text them whenever necessary.

Video conferencing is a good way of dealing with a meeting where members are unable to attend. By the aid of cable connections members can speak and hear clearly with each other. One great disadvantage to this is the cost of holding a meeting on-line, but it is cheaper than travelling from different locations. One issue concerning video conferencing involves the use of VDU equipment. This equipment must be operated and positioned at the correct expense. There must be breaks in between usage. The Internet is an interactive network provides a range and variety of web sites, including email. You can use video conferencing through the Internet provided you have the right hardware and software. There are already programs such as NetMeeting, which allow you to do so.

Documents and graphics can be sent through e-mail. They are then received straight away after sending. If you are through a network you can access your work and e-mail anywhere on a computer, which is part of that network. One disadvantage of using e-mail is that if the server brakes down you will not be able to send or receive your mail. The two sites can contact each other by telephone where they can have conversations directly to each other. They can also use e-mail as it can be sent and received instantly. The two sites can have meetings by using video conferencing. In order to contact other businesses they could use telephone to have a verbal conversation or fax machine to send and receive everything on paper. This can also be done using e-mail. By using e-mail, it is possible to send and receive reports and orders. Application forms can be sent and received via fax or e-mail. By using telephone, they can create an intercom within the premises. One disadvantage to using intercom is that it can only be used internally. To solve this problem, senior workers should have mobile phones provided by the company. Other members of staff should be provided with pagers or even mobile phones. By using mobile equipment, intercom wouldn't just have to be internally but also externally. One downside of this strategy is the cost of supplying every worker with mobile equipment. For those who are stable throughout their working day, if the network were provided with an instant messenger, not all workers would need mobile phones or pagers.

I chose to use e-mail rather than fax because it is more reliable and efficient. Both use telephone lines and both cost money. They both have different strengths and limitations from each other. E-mail can be sent and received over the Internet. There are no stamps or envelopes needed and it's free. One great advantage of using e-mail is that it can be sent and received wherever, whenever. Once sent, it will be received straight away. One bad effect of using e-mail is that depending on the size of the e-mail. The download time of the mail will depend on how large the mail is or the speed of the connection. Through e-mails you can send documents, graphics, programs, music, etc. E-mails are popular towards businesses because they are used for newsletters in a way of being loyal to customers as well as advertising. To use e-mail all you need is the Internet, WAP enabled phone or even an e-mail phone. One bad disadvantage of using e-mail is that if the server breaks down, no e-mail will be able to be sent or received. To use fax, you must have a fax machine. These are quite expensive but they all differ in price and quality. Fax machines also require ink. These machines also send documents all over the world as long as there is a fax machine. It does take time to scan the document as well as sending it. Sending fax may sometimes be unreliable because of manual error. Digits maybe miss-typed. This may happen in e-mail where the e-mail

address maybe miss-typed. Fax is normally used for business use rather than personal or commercial use. When meetings are held between the two sites, I insist that they use video conferencing. It takes place over telephone lines. Each must be supplied with a television and also a camera for video conferencing to be possible. I don't think there is any other suitable alternative to video conferencing at this moment.

My decision is that the company should use telephone, e-mail and video conferencing. I believe that my suggestions should satisfy the firm excellently. I don't see a problem growing from any of the two sites. I think that my suggestions have solved the problem over the two sites. They can communicate effectively between each other by using telephones to interact verbally, to use e-mails to keep up-to-date with each other or to send and receive forms or reports and to use video conferencing when holding meetings to prevent travel costs. Within the sites they have telephones connected on the intercom so they can all keep in touch. They will also have the instant messengers installed on the computers. When communicating with other businesses or customers they would still be using telephone, fax and e-mail. They would call and receive calls through telephone from customers to have a brief word. They would use fax machine to dispatch application forms and other documents and also receive them, these can also be done using e-mail. E-mail is more efficient because there is no limit of how much you can send and also that once sent; it will be received straight away.

I would also recommend that the senior members who are frequently outside the premises should carry around a mobile phone to keep in touch. The Internet has played a major part in businesses lately with many of them having their own web site and their own e-mail address. This has persuaded me to include e-mail as one of my suggestions in communicating internally as well as externally. These Internet connections can even hold meetings on-line by using web-cams. This is a way of video conferencing. I decided not to select postage as part of communication as it can take up and waste a lot of time. Costs are quite expensive compared to free e-mail because all you pay is the phone bill, the postage costs also depends on what you are sending and where you are sending it. I had to reconsider selecting e-mail as part of my recommendations because sending and receiving documents over the Internet are risky. Personal information or secret information could be stored on the e-mail, and with hackers and viruses floating on-line which could evade the Data Protection Act. This is one of the disadvantages I had to face. I decided that the senior members should bring a mobile phone with them rather than a pager because by using a mobile phone you can interact verbally whereas using a pager, all you would receive is text. I had to choose the suitable methods of communication that would be most convenient to the customer.