

BAA INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

BAA communication transmits information through the hierarchy/chain of command. This transmission takes place via communication channels. The formal channels are indicated by BAA's formal structure, shown by the vertical chains of command in its organisation chart. Horizontal communication channels also exist: for example, communication taking place at team meetings where the team is drawn from a number of departments. A channel may be either 'open' - to all within BAA, e.g. via a noticeboard - or 'closed', where the communication is limited to named individuals or roles.

BAA communicates with people both inside and outside the organisation and proper systems are set up for both. Different types of communication methods are required for each group or audience. Methods which are suitable for internal users are unlikely to be appropriate for external ones. Memos, for example, are only used internally.

- Internal communication is concerned with communication within the organisation for example between people within different departments.
- External communication takes place with people outside the organisation. BAA liaise with many people outside the organisation.

The main forms of communication BAA employs are as follows:

- Written communication
- Verbal communication
- Electronic communication

Internal	External
Written communication	
Reports	Letters
Memorandum	Business documents
Notice, agenda and minutes	Services literature
Staff newsletter	Advertisements
Suggestion boxes	Press releases
Notice boards	
Verbal communication	
Face-to-face	Meetings
Meeting	Telephone
Telephone	
Electronic communication	
Computer networks	Computer networks
Electronic mail	Electronic mail
Facsimile	Facsimile
Computerized automatic branch	Computerized automatic branch
Exchange (CABX)	Exchange (CABX)
Integrated services digital	Integrated services digital
Network (ISDN)	Network (ISDN)
Combined photocopier/fax/	Combined photocopier/fax/
Telephone	Telephone

Written communications

There are many different methods of written communication that are used by BAA to communicate both internally and externally. The main advantage of written communication is that a permanent record exists which

can be stored and referred to at a later date. The other advantages and reasons for BAA using written communication are:

- It enables difficult and complex information to be sent, e.g. statistical information.
- People who are located at a distance can communicate.
- It can serve as a reminder to people.

Internal written communications

Reports - an informal report is usually shorter and less structured than a formal report which is longer and more detailed with a set structure. Written reports are widely used by BAA for the following reasons:

- To present the findings of the organisation.
- To fulfil legal requirements; for example BAA must publish an annual report and accounts for shareholders.
- To present statistical information.
- To recommend changes within the organisation.

Memorandum - often shortened to 'memo' this is an informal written document which is frequently used within BAA. It will often be attached to some other information which the recipient needs to look at. Memos are usually written on pre-printed paper. BAA adopts its own 'housestyle' and layout. Other reasons why a memo is sent by BAA are:

- To remind someone of something.
- To confirm a verbal message.
- To ask for information.
- To pass on instructions.

Notice, Agenda and Minutes - Meetings are a common feature of BAA's modern business life. Managers spend a large part of their time attending meetings on both a formal and an informal basis. Formal meetings require certain written documentation to be issued before and after the meeting, as follows:

Notice. This will be sent out prior to the meeting to inform the participants of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

Agenda. This is a list of items to be discussed at a meeting and it is often combined with the notice.

Minutes - these are a written record of what was discussed at a meeting. They are written by the secretary and sent out to members. At the next meeting the members will formally approve the minutes and they will be signed by the Chairperson.

In-house newspaper/staff newsletter - It is common for BAA to publish, on a regular basis, an in-house newspaper and staff newsletter. The main purpose of this is to keep staff informed of what is happening within the organization. It also allows staff to contribute articles of any interest. The types of information that have been included are:

- Appointment of new personnel
- Introduction of new services
- Opening of a new building etc
- Public relations activities
- Forthcoming staff social events
- Review of past staff social events

Notice boards - notice boards are used within BAA to display general information to all staff. They are not used to display vital information which all staff should see as many people may not take the time to read it. Types of information which has been displayed include:

- Company information
- Job vacancies
- Union news
- Classified information
- Health and safety notices.

Suggestion boxes - BAA are keen to involve their employees and increase their sense of belonging in the organisation. One of the ways in which they try to do this is through the introduction of a suggestion box. Employees are encouraged to put forward any ideas which they feel will improve the organisation, increase its efficiency etc. BAA offer a reward for the best ideas.

External written communications

Letter - the letter is the most commonly used form of external communication. A letter is usually written on the organisation's own letterhead and BAA adopts its own housestyle. There are many reasons as to why BAA send a letter:

- Letter of enquiry to a contractor/supplier
- Letter of complaint to a contractor/supplier
- Letter to shareholders confirming events
- Letter to job applicants to confirm interview details
- Letter to job applicant to confirm offer of job
- Standard letter advertising services.

Annual report and accounts - it is a legal requirement for BAA to publish an annual report and accounts for their shareholders. These are usually printed on glossy paper with many photographs, charts and tables included.

Services catalogues - these contain the services that BAA sells. Sales catalogues are produced by BAA to send out to customers and prospective customers.

Advertisements - advertising is a form of communication used to inform people about services and to persuade them to buy.

Press releases - BAA uses press releases as part of its public relations activities. They are articles of interest about the company and include:

- Opening of a new building
- Appointment of new personnel
- Launch of a new service
- Sponsorship of an event

Verbal communication

This is communication by the spoken word and can include face-to-face communication, speaking on the telephone or at meetings.

Face-to-face - within BAA people will come together in the staff canteen and discuss both work and non-work issues. This is face-to-face conversation on a normal basis. Staff may attend a meeting to discuss a particular issue or they might have to attend a disciplinary meeting or interview. This is face-to-face conversation on a formal basis. Non-verbal means of communication involving eye contact, body posture, gestures also play an important part in face-to-face conversation.

Meeting - these are an example of formal face-to-face conversation. All staff at some time will have to attend meetings which serve a wide variety of purposes including:

- To pass on information.
- To make decisions.
- To make recommendations.
- To solve an issue or a problem.

Meetings within BAA can take place on either an informal or a formal basis. An informal meeting will be a gathering of two or more people to discuss a certain issue and it will not involve any formal written documentation. A formal meeting is one that has set procedures laid down in a written constitution. It will have officials, for example a chairperson and a secretary, and formal documentation. Some meetings are a legal requirement, for example BAA must hold an annual meeting, the annual general meeting (AGN) - by law. Meetings are held both internally and externally.

Telephone - the telephone provides a very common method of verbal communication within BAA. It enables communication between people within the organisation on a local, national or international basis. The main

advantages of using the telephone as a means of communication are that quick and instant feedback is possible. The main disadvantage is that a written record of what was discussed is not provided. Also important aspects of non-verbal communication e.g. facial expression, gestures, are lost in telephone communication.

Electronic communication

The 'electronic office' is now widespread with BAA having introduced computers and electronic equipment to process their information. The impact of the electronic office has brought about changes in the preparation of documents and written material, the storage and retrieval of documents and the transmission of information. Below is an outline of the main methods of electronic communication used in by BAA.

Computer networks - a computer network exists where a number of personal computers (PCs) are linked together using an – internal telephone line. A computer network allows computers to share resources and information so that they can 'talk to one another'. BAA also employ WANS (wide area networks) which people to communicate to each other from distant buildings.

Fixed telephone systems - BAA's switchboards are computerised which allows, for example, automatic queuing system. Phone answering machines tape callers messages, which can then be played back from a distance by calling the number and typing in a pre-set code.

Fax machine - these are used to transmit and receive copies of documents. The dedicated fax machine within BAA is also currently being replaced by integrated fax/computer facilities.

Electronic mail (e-mail) - this is the transfer of text, graphics and other information between computer users. Communication can be one-to-one, or one-to-many.

Internet - BAA recently launched its own web site on the internet which allows interested parties to access information on the company, including information on flights.

EDI (electronic data interchange) - this is a form of electronic mail which allows BAA to pass orders, invoices and other business transactions directly between company computers.

Video conferencing - this allows people from different locations to be linked together by sound and vision so that BAA can hold meetings.