

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Businesses need to communicate with a range of different individuals and organisations. All the people involved in a business need to have access to suitable information in order to do their jobs effectively. A business needs to be co-ordinated so that the right things happen at the right time. Good communications are necessary for effective co-ordination between people and are extremely important in any business. It could lead to targets being achieved and everyone having a good understanding between each other.

Communicating means passing on information, or receiving it from somebody else. The correct form of communication must be used or problems could occur if this is not done carefully. Here are some examples of what might go wrong:

1. Delivering the wrong items to a customer
2. Delivering correspondence on the wrong date or to the wrong address
3. Management using incorrect data when making decisions
4. Staff misunderstanding each other

Communicating to different individuals and organisations can be done in various ways.

Internal and External Communication

Each method is used in a relative way compared to what the task is, whether it is internal or external. Internal Communication is communication that takes place indoors e.g. between colleagues or members of staff. It includes verbal communication, e-mail, memos, intercom via telephones, computer network, notices and messages, and through meetings.

External communication is communication that takes place outdoors e.g. communicating with suppliers, banks and customers. It includes fax, telephone, mobile, pager, video conferencing, the Internet, e-mail, and through a computer network.

Formal and Informal Communication

Formal communication takes place when employees use official methods/channels the business has set to pass information. An example of this would be writing reports of aspects such as sales performance or attending staff meetings. This is usually vertically upward and downward communication (between the different levels of authority). You would generally use formal communication, whether it is oral or written with people you do not know well e.g. to customers or the bank.

Informal communication is when people within a business communicate using unofficial methods/channels. An example of this would be talking to a staff member/ colleague working in the same department or one which happened to be passing by. This can be seen as horizontal communication (colleagues on the same level communication with each other). Informal communication, whether it is oral or written, generally occurs between people you know well e.g. colleagues.

Open or Restricted Communication

With any form of communication, it is important to identify the purpose of the message as well as the people at whom the message is to be targeted. If the message is targeted at everyone within the organisation or groups outside and does not contain confidential materials, then the message is open for anyone to see or intercept. For example, a note on the notice board is a form of open communication, since it is there for anyone it concerns to see.

On the other hand, if the message contains confidential materials, the likelihood is it will be targeted at only a few groups of users, either within a particular department or at certain levels of seniority, so that its use is restricted. For example, a meeting between the managers and directors.

Methods of Communication used internally and externally in Tesco

Tesco need to communicate with a range of individuals and organisations, including their customers, their competitors and their suppliers. Good communication in Tesco is essential if it is going to achieve its objectives and to operate effectively. Tesco have many channels of communication internally/externally between their functional areas. Communication is vital to Tesco because then everyone is clear about objectives, there is smooth and accurate

communication both within the organisation (internal) and between the organisation and other individuals (external), ideas and views are clearly heard and everyone in the organisation is kept informed of developments and changes. Tesco uses letters, reports, fax, phone, e-mail, and memos to communicate with people.

There are various ways/methods of communication involved in different companies or businesses. Tesco PLC uses oral (verbal), written and electronic (ICT) communication inside a department (internal), between departments and also outside of Tesco PLC (external).

Oral Communication is a method of communicating by which people talk to each other. It is done face-to-face, through telephone messages, recorded messages using answering machines or voicemail, meetings, presentations, interviews, and memos. Although verbal information can be obtained quickly, it often needs backing up in written form. For example, when you communicate an important message to a work colleague he or she might also say 'could you also email me about that' or 'please can I have that in writing?'

Advantages include:

1. Immediate / instant feedback
2. Immediate and straight forward
3. Quick and flexible
4. Tone and body language can be used to get the point / information across e.g. when face-to-face

Disadvantages include:

1. No record of the conversation (unless answer machine or voicemail is used)
2. Maybe misunderstood
3. Some people may have not heard exactly what was being said
4. Long conversation such as in meetings may have been forgotten

Written Communication is communicated by methods including written information on notice boards, leaflets, financial documents, adverts, memos, notes, letters, newsletters, reports, fax and e-mails. It covers a range of paper documents that are exchanged within an organisation. Written information takes time to process and often requires extensive filing and distribution systems which can be time consuming.

Advantages include:

1. Has backing up since record can be kept
2. Confirmation of message being sent e.g. in cases when using e-mail or text messaging
3. Images and text can be included
4. Can be easier to read e.g. word processed letter
5. Complicated information can be read over until it is understood
6. Can easily be referred to when necessary

Disadvantages include:

1. Sometimes no feedback
2. Takes time to process
3. Often requires extensive filing and distribution systems
4. Can be sent to the wrong destination e.g. wrong address or fax number
5. Can easily include mistakes such as bad spelling

Methods of **Communication** through **ICT** include communicating through the internet, mobile phones, pagers, via fax or e-mail and video conferencing. Electronic information is rapidly replacing other forms of communication. Most large organisations use an internal networking system. Nearly all networks have an email facility, and this is used to send documents in electronic form around a company.

Advantages include:

1. Documents for example can be sent as attachments via e-mail
2. Enables businesses to communicate with colleague who are mile way using video conferencing
3. E-mails and faxes can be received straight away and anywhere
4. Mobile technology allows people to communicate anywhere and anytime e.g. mobile phones
5. The using of Internet of WAP enable people to access banks accounts or order supplies etc
6. Can be cheap e.g. to send a e-mail

Disadvantages include:

1. When using e-mail viruses can be sent and received accidentally which could cause severe damage e.g. systems to crash.
2. Information or documents can be sent to the wrong destination e.g. email, fax, text message
3. Setting up systems, networks, buying mobile phones etc can lead to large amounts of money being spent
4. A lack of security such as passwords may enable people to access important documents or information e.g. credit card details.
5. If server breaks down, e-mails can not be sent or received.
6. E-mails which exceed the file size may not be sent (depends on account they are with e.g. hotmail, yahoo)

Method of Communication used INSIDE Tesco PLC (internally)

There are various methods of oral, written and ICT communication used inside Tesco PLC which are as follows:

1. **ORAL COMMUNICATION:** Face-to-face, telephoning, meetings, presentations, interviews (internally for promotion / assessment), memos and voicemail.

An example of internal oral communication is a conversation between staff during a meeting or small gathering.

2. **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:** Notice boards, memos, notes, leaflets, newsletters, letters (e.g. letter of dismissal, warning or promotion), reports (e.g. to give feedback on tasks, more detailed than memos), staff magazines (based upon the business/organisation) and text messaging (mobile phone, pager).
3. **ICT COMMUNICATION:** Mobile phones, internet, e-mail, via computer and pager.

These methods of communication occur everyday inside Tesco, whether it is formal / informal or open / restricted communication. For example, after a decision was made during a meeting about 'members of staff attending a Christmas party', the manager informs one of his colleagues about this (~~oral communication~~), who then produces an invitation or poster (~~written communication~~), which is then placed on the staff notice board (~~written communication~~). This example sums up all three forms of communicating internally in Tesco.

Method of Communication used BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS in Tesco PLC (internally)

There are various methods oral, written and ICT of communication used between departments in Tesco PLC which are as follows:

1. **ORAL COMMUNICATION:** Face-to-face, telephone/mobile phone, meetings, presentations and memos.
2. **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:** Financial documents, leaflets, reports, newsletters and text messaging (mobile phone, pager).
3. **ICT COMMUNICATION:** Mobile phones, internet, e-mail, via computer, faxes and pager.

These methods of communication occur between departments in Tesco, whether it is formal / informal or open / restricted communication. For example, after a presentation managers and The Board (~~oral communication~~) have introduced changes which will be made within the business, in which all the departments were faxed a report detailing the changes (~~written communication~~). This example sums up all three forms of communication between departments.

Method of Communication used OUTSIDE in Tesco PLC (externally)

There are various methods of oral, written and ICT communication used outside Tesco PLC which are as follows:

1. **ORAL COMMUNICATION:** Face-to-face, telephone/mobile phone, interview (job applicants), Video conferencing and meetings.
2. **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:** Trading documents (invoices, statements etc), leaflets, reports, newsletters, adverts, e-mails, faxes, letters, forms and text messaging (mobile phone, pager).

3. **ICT COMMUNICATION:** Mobile phones, internet, e-mail, via computer, faxes, video conferencing, webcam and pager.

These methods of communication occur outside departments in Tesco, and tend to be ~~more~~. For example, a video conferencing to communicate with the government to show statistics about the company/organisation. In this example, video conferencing is a form of ~~ICT communication~~. It is also a form of ~~oral communication~~ since sounds, pictures and other data can be sent via telephone links so that the different people can see and hear each other, making it almost a face-to-face meeting. Therefore, this example sums up all three forms of communication externally in Tesco PLC.

Alternative or Improved Methods of Communication

After reviewing the methods of Oral, Written and ICT communication I have come up with alternate or improved ways of communicating in Tesco PLC. They are as follows:

1. Instant messaging on desktop computers or laptops so you can communicate with colleague whether they are miles away or not. This way short or long messages and documents/file can be sent, audio conversation can be done or a web cam facility can be activated (depending on messaging service).
2. Use PDA's, a form of mobile technology. PDA's are able to do a wide range of things such as, access the internet, email, word processing, spreadsheets and store telephone numbers and addresses etc so work can be done from anywhere.
3. Use videoconferencing, it may be expensive but a lot of money will be saved since it would not be necessary to pay for airfares, hotel accommodation or other travel expenses. Sounds, images can be sent via telephone links so it would just be like a face-to-face meeting.
4. When messages need to be passed on, make notes/memos so they are not forgotten and can be dealt with later by who ever it concerns.
5. Use Radio as a form of communication to broadcast information to the public. They could maybe broadcast it over a few leading radio stations as these would be ones which more people listen to.
6. Send adverts, leaflet, brochures and newsletters to customers on regular interval, so they are able know is there as any new changes, offers or activities / sessions they may be able to attend.
7. The use of word processing things such as letters, would be better than a hand written letter as it would be easier to read, and lower the chance of spelling, punctuation or grammar mistakes being made (most word processing packages come with spelling and grammar check).