

## E2- Communicating with Customers

Whether a business organisation is communicating internally (employees) or externally (customers and suppliers), there are number of ways in which, communication can take place. They are known as: verbal communication, non-verbal communication, written communication, and technological communication.

### Verbal communication

Verbal communication can either be done face-to-face or even over the telephone. An example of internal communication is having a one-to-one conversation with a manager. An example of an external communication is dealing a customer complaint over the telephone.

Advantage of verbal communication:

- Able to feedback
- It is fairly cheap
- Identify body language, e.g. customer's attitude
- Can check if the listener is paying attention
- Communication can be passed quickly

Disadvantages of verbal communication:

- It is essential to speak clear
- Make sure that the individual can hear the message without any interruptions
- Long messages can be easily forgotten
- Messages must be clear and understandable for the listener

Barclays always monitor all of their telephone conversations, so that the organisation can find out why their customers are unhappy with the services they received, can suggest any improvements in customer service.

### Non-verbal communication

When customers make non-signals, such as hand signals, staff can able to judge how they are feeling. The following are some examples of non-signals and each signal describes how the individual is feeling:

#### Standing or walking

- **Shifting-** this means moving from one foot to another. This signal means that, the individual is feeling uncomfortable. If the individual is part of a group, he or she may also feel isolated
- **Hands in pocket-** this means that, the individual is feeling cold. If the individual is standing, he or she is secretive and withdrawn
- **Leaning-** if an individual is not standing up straight for a long time, it means that he or she is relaxing

### Eye movement

- **Thinking-** if an individual closed his or her eyes for a moment, during a conversation, it means that he or she is trying to remember something more clearly
- **Evasive-** if an individual is staring into the air or down at the ground, and does not look directly at the other person during the conversation, it means that the individual is avoiding the subject
- **Shifting-** if an individual is looking around himself or herself and at another person quickly then, looks away, this means that the individual is seeking out an exit

### Hand signals

- **Pointing-** if an individual is using his or her index finger to point at someone, when they are having a conversation, it means the individual is very aggressive and strict
- **Head scratching-** if an individual is scratching his or her head, it means that the individual is puzzled or unsure about what is being said
- **Clasping-** if an individual is clasping his or her hands at the back of his or her head, it means that the individual is trying to control angry feeling. This signal also means that an argument is developing

### Written communication

Written communication is when sending documents, such as email or business letter to an individual. An example of an internal communication is sending an urgent email to a manager on the internet. An example of an external communication is writing a business letter to an applicant, to congratulate him or her for being successful in the interview of a job.

Advantages of written communication:

- Can be copied for other people
- Useful for difficult communication, e.g. bad news
- Provides formality to the communication
- Can be retained future reference

Disadvantages of written communication:

- Takes time to produce
- Delivery may take time
- Must be clear
- Will be spoiled by poor spelling or punctuation

### Technological communication

Technological communication is the most common type of communication, and it has become more useful than verbal and written communication. Internet and mobile

phones are good examples of technological communication. An example of internal communication is having an important conversation with a senior manager over the mobile phone. An example of an external communication is a customer is filling in a customer complaint form on the internet.

Advantages of technological communication:

- Can improve their communication requirements
- Able to meet customer's needs
- Spend more on communication technologies than competitors

Disadvantages of technological communication:

- Staff training requirements
- Expensive to purchase electric goods, such as, computers
- Computer failure means no file available

### Barrier of good communication

The following are barriers to good communication, and I have provided an example of each situation:

- **Lack of expertise**, e.g. a individual new to computing is reading the 'Computer News' in a quality newspaper
- **The use of specialised terms and jargon**, e.g. the finance director of a company with production units in five widely separated sites in the U.K. and one location in Germany
- **Perceptual differences**, e.g. a mother explaining to her fifteen years old daughter why she does not want her to go clubbing. The daughter's problem in explaining to her mother why she must go
- **The length of the lines of communication**, e.g. a Kashmiri student who just arrived in the U.K. attempting to find his way to the University's Hall of Residence in an English city
- **Information overload**, e.g. the marketing manager of a business confronted by a detailed report on a production's market. The report contains a lot of statistics.
- **Machine breakdown**, e.g. a supervisor sees a worker operating a dangerous machine without the necessary, but comfortable safety, equipment