

## E5 – Methods of Communicating

All businesses no matter how big or small need some form of communication to relay information about the day to day running of the business, forthcoming meetings and general information.

The meaning of communications is to pass information between people. All businesses need to communicate with each other throughout the country and in some cases the world. A successful company needs to encourage the use of two way communication such as from staff to manager. For example staff may feel moral is low at a certain time but the manager may feel the opposite, the moral is fine.

There are many ways of communicating. An Acronym **WOVEN** is used to represent them

**W** - Written - Letters, memos, notice and reports

**O** - Oral - Telephone calls and faces to face

**V** - Visual - Charts, tables, posters and advertisements

**E** - Electronic – Emails, pagers and fax

**N** - Non - verbal - body language of people

### Written communication

Written communication is an effective and formal way to communicate with a person, letters are the most formal method of communication.

One major advantage of a letter is that the reader can take as long as necessary to digest the information and can also re-read the document. One problem which doesn't happen often is the letter(s) are lost in the post or the written poorly so the reader cannot understand and therefore needs explaining again or the reply will be slow. Letters can be kept for reference to a problem.

**Memos** - are good way to tell some one briefly about some thing that happened in a meeting that they agree on, this is sent by hand or even through electronic mail (E-mail), managers of different department use this to get in touch with their staff or with supervisors. The problem with this is that you may forget to give this message to the person who it is for or if sent by email some of the message might be lost so the reader does not understand it.

**Reports** - are written they tell the staff about future plans and also what has happened to the business during the year. These reports are a very good document because this can be given to all the staff so that every one knows about the future plans and every thing, but there is a problem with this, this is that it could be written in a complicated language that some people cannot understand it. This is a very good thing for Boots because then this lets all the staff know about the companies plans and where they are regarded compared to other stores.

**Notices** - are a common thing in all business; this lets you know of all the things that are happening on a certain day or procedures for a certain event such as a fire drill. Boots have these pinned up in the staff rooms so that every one knows about upcoming events. The problem with this is that the notice can be damaged or torn down and there is no guarantee that staff will read it.

### Oral communication

The fastest method of communicating, people can be contacted by phone to confirm an order for example, in case of an emergency (fire brigade). Face to face meetings are also a good way to communicate because they hold two advantages, you can read the body language of a person, such as facial expressions and, tone of voice and the way the person sits.

## **Internal**

**Directors** – they use all types of communication because they communicate with different sections of the company. When meeting oral and visual communication is used, as they need to show statistics through photo's, diagrams and graphs. The direction is horizontal. Other forms of communication are e-mail and written memorandums, this direction is usually downward as they are communicating with other members of staff below themselves.

**Senior Manager** – Communicate mostly with the branch managers for the area that they are in charge, but would also have to report back to the directors on a weekly basis. To communicate with branch managers oral communication is most often used via the telephone to see if everything is running smoothly, if there are any problems a meeting or a visit from the senior will be organised which will be oral and visual too discuss the problem a solution. The information can be formal or informal depending on the nature of the situation. If senior managers have to communicate with individual members of staff it is usually written and formal, unless it is a matter of discipline then a meeting face-to-face would be arranged.

**Branch Managers** - When communicating with the Senior Manager the direction is upwards, as senior management makes the important decisions. If branch managers communicate with each other the direction of this is horizontal as they are sharing ideas etc for instance the statistics of their branch such as profit, moral of staff and efficiency of schemes and processes.

Finance department communicates with production via oral communication in this instance a telephone; this would be to inform production how much they have to spend on resources in the following month.

Human resources would communicate via letter to a functional area for instance in case of an employee misbehaving or employing a new member of staff for the department. Written communication is the method used as it can be on recorded on file for further reference; also it can not be altered or changed as with verbal communication, as it travels further it losing detail.

**Branch Staff** –

## **External communication**

Boots would communicate with external contacts such as the media through letter or e-mail as it is a reliable method and will probably have to travel through a few people before reaching its occupier, this way it won't get distorted and the occupier will get the extract information boots wanted to supply them. Boots would use different methods of written communication for different external contacts –

**Media** – Press reports are released to publicise new events or successes in the firm, media may in return communicate through interviews, which are orally. Boots also communicate through the media to the public, advertisements in magazines and newspapers, also television commercials.

**Community** – Usually written, notifying customers of deals or special offers at the local store. Sometimes boots holds special evenings, where they are open after hours for selected invited members, members attending these events may have to sit through an electronic presentation using power point, and also an oral presentation of up and coming events throughout the boots calendar. Boots can also communicate through their website, positing events notices and other information for

the community to read at any time. Posters are also an efficient way to spread information, as it can be read as people walk by the boots store or as they are shopping inside.

**Customer** – If boots needed to inform a customer of forthcoming products or services they would either use e-mail, as most people are now connected to the internet or send out a chain letter, this may be formal or informal depending on the information.

**Supplier** – Boots would send a supplier a letter or an order form provided by the supplier, once again it is reliable and the information/data cannot be altered without leaving some evidence.

**Stakeholders** – This type of communication is electronic as it is viewed over the internet through the companies' web site. If stakeholders require any further information they can request it via e-mail from the company and will either receive the information through e-mail or the post. The direction of communication is downwards as the information is being passed from Boots to outside individuals. This is formal as it is written and updated regularly.

Communication is important to a business to meet its aims and objectives different functional areas need to know what is going on around the business, they need to know what other departments are doing as their work more conflict. There could be sick employees or employees misbehaving and nothing would be done about it. The company could be in debt and production is making the situation worse by spending on resources. This could all happen if functional areas did not communicate on a day to day basis, so by communicating the company stays on top of all goings on throughout the company.