IB Business Management HL

2.6 Communication

CONTENTS

Formal & Informal Communication

Formal & Informal Communication

Methods of Communication

- The aim of communication is to **exchange** or **transfer information**

- **Formal communication** is channeled **through a businesses formal organisation structure** and is likely to be capable of being recorded in some way

- **Informal communication** is any communication that takes place **outside of the official channels** and is unlikely to be formally recorded

VERBAL

FORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- MEETINGS
- INTERVIEWS
- PRESENTATIONS
- LECTURES

INFORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- FACE TO FACE CONVERSATIONS
- TELEPHONE CALLS

VISUAL

FORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- PRESENTATIONS
- DISPLAYS & NOTICEBOARDS
- MAPS & DIAGRAMS

INFORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- GESTURES
- BODY LANGUAGE

WRITTEN

FORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- REPORTS
- LETTERS & EMAILS
- PRESS RELEASES
- BROCHURES

INFORMAL METHODS INCLUDE
- TEXT MESSAGES & INSTANT MESSAGING

The main forms of communication used by businesses

- The effectiveness of each method **depends on the business context**, the nature of the communication and the **personal preferences** of both the sender and receiver of information

Strengths & Weaknesses of a Range of Communication Methods

Method of Communication	Strength	Weakness
Face-to-Face Communication	- Face-to-face communication allows for the exchange of **facial expressions, body language**, and **tone of voice** which enhance understanding	- Face-to-face communication may not always be feasible due to **geographical distances or time constraints**

YOUR NOTES
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Written Communication	• Written communication provides a **paper trail** that can be referred to in the future for clarity	• Without facial expressions and tone of voice, written messages can sometimes be **misinterpreted** or lack emotional context
Phone Calls	• Phone calls allow for **real-time** communication, enabling quick exchange of information and resolution of queries	• Without seeing the other person, it can be challenging to **interpret their body language** and facial expressions accurately
Video Conferencing	• Video calls allow people in **different locations** to connect	• **Unreliable internet connections** or audio/video problems can hinder effective communication
Instant Messaging & Chat Applications	• Instant messaging (WhatsApp, Slack) enables **fast and real-time communication** making it ideal for brief exchanges or urgent matters	• Text-based communication **lacks non-verbal cues**, increasing the chances of misunderstandings or miscommunication

Barriers to Communication

- Barriers to communication **hinder the flow of information** leading to potential misunderstandings, conflicts and inefficiency

An Explanation of the Barriers to Communication in Business

Barrier	Explanation
Language and jargon	- The use of **technical terminology** or **industry-specific jargon** can create barriers between individuals or departments - Misinterpretation or lack of comprehension can occur when people are not familiar with the terms being used e.g. many businesses use a **large amount of acronyms** which can leave new staff feeling confused
Noise and distractions	- Physical noise such as **loud machinery** or a **crowded workspace** can interfere with effective communication - Similarly, distractions like phone notifications, email alerts, or multitasking can divert attention and **impede clear communication**
Lack of feedback	- Communication is a two-way process and the **absence of feedback** can affect understanding - When individuals don't ask for or provide feedback, **assumptions and misunderstandings can arise**, leading to communication breakdowns
Cultural differences	- In today's **globalised business environment** people from **diverse cultural backgrounds** work together - Cultural differences in communication styles can create barriers **if they are not understood**
Hierarchical barriers	- Employees may feel hesitant to communicate with their superiors due to **fear of repercussions** or a perceived **lack of accessibility** - This can impede the free flow of information and ideas within the business

Lack of clarity and conciseness	• **Vague**, **lengthy** or **overly technical** messages can confuse recipients
Emotional barriers or lack of time	• If individuals are **angry**, **stressed** or **upset** their ability to convey or understand messages may be compromised • **Busy work schedules** and **competing priorities** can limit the time available for communication
Technological barriers	• **Over-reliance** on technology or **improper use** of communication tools can create barriers ○ **Technical issues** such as poor internet connections, malfunctioning equipment or unfamiliarity with communication platforms can slow down communication
Personal biases and filters	• People often have **preconceived notions**, **biases** or **filters** that affect their interpretation of messages ○ These biases can **affect their ability to listen objectively** and understand the intended meaning accurately

- Organisations should **encourage open communication**, may consider providing **training on effective communication techniques** and encourage a **culture of transparency and collaboration** to overcome these obstacles