

## Unit 2: Communicating in a Business

**Unit reference number:** D/506/4145

**QCF Level:** 4

**Credit value:** 5

**Guided learning hours:** 28

### Unit aim

This unit aims to give learners an understanding of the role of communication in an organisation. It also helps learners to understand the importance of being able to communicate information effectively so that all decision making contributes to the achievement of an organisations goals.

### Unit introduction

Communication uses different forms – written, spoken and non-verbal. Traditionally, written formats have been paper based but the efficiency of communication has been improved through the use of digital communications. Whatever the format used, the communication has to be effective, so information has to be articulated fully and clearly so that the intentions of the message sender are fully understood by the message recipient.

Communicating good quality information efficiently to those who need it, while ensuring that managerial control is maintained, contributes to decision making that supports the achievement of the organisations goals.

In this unit, you will learn that some organisations use a hierarchical communication model, some use a flatter, lateral model and others adopt a networked approach. Hierarchical models keep different levels of staff informed but communications and the consequent decision making can be slow. Lateral communication models speed up information flow, facilitating quicker decision making as information does not need to move up and down hierarchies. In organisations the speed of communication often provides a competitive advantage. You will also consider the role of communication in organisations and its contribution to the effective management and operation of organisations. For example, at a senior level, managers of a vehicle manufacturer need to have information on markets and costs of production in order to direct the construction of new assembly plants. At the operational level, section managers in a supermarket need to know whether there is enough bread to meet likely customer demand for the rest of the day and to take action if there is not. The right information has to be communicated in the right form to enable users – whether they are employees, customers or managers, to use it to make decisions.

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

### On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<p>1 Understand the principles of effective communication in organisations</p>	<p>1.1 Evaluate the appropriateness and efficiency of different communication channels and tools</p> <p>1.2 Explain the use of vertical, lateral or networked communication channels and tools</p> <p>1.3 Explain how the use of clear and correct language supports effective communication</p>
<p>2 Understand the role of communication in organisations</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse the features of different models of business communication that support administrative services</p> <p>2.2 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation's communications system</p> <p>2.3 Justify improvements to an organisation's communications system</p>

## Unit content

### 1 Understand the principles of effective communication in organisations

*Communication channels and tools:* direct; indirect; methods of communication; face-to-face, e.g. one-to-one, meetings; telephone; paper based; electronic and digital, e.g. facsimile (fax) , short messaging systems (SMS), video link and conferencing; social media, e.g. Twitter, Facebook; local area networks (LANs); wide area networks (WANs); worldwide web; selection and use; vertical (hierarchical); lateral; networked; cost; ease of use; structured; planned; co-ordinated; needs of user; needs of audience and/or recipient; clarity of message; training of staff in communication techniques

*Communication:* communication conventions; language used; syntax; terminology, e.g. everyday language, technical terms, use of jargon, abbreviations, acronyms; semantics; clarity; accuracy; tone; meeting user needs; audience requirements; effectiveness; document type; format; style; use of images; use of data; presentation methods; confirmation of understanding

### 2 Understand the role of communication in organisations

*Models of business communication:* models of communication, e.g. Shannon, Berlo, Schramm; components of communication; source; message; encoding; channels; decoding; recipient; context; noise; feedback; purposes of communication; provide information to interested parties (owners, managers, customers, employees, debtors, creditors, banks, government); exchange information; negotiate; persuade; influence; support management decision making; support administrative activity; contribute to achievement of an organisations goals

*Communications systems:* chain; wheel; star; all-channel; circle; top down; bottom up; one way; two way; strengths and weaknesses, e.g. formality, accuracy, speed, control, efficiency, freedom from error, informed decision making; formal; informal; verbal; written; non-verbal; paper-based; electronic; digital

*Improvements to communications:* setting objectives for improvement; alignment with an organisations goals; improved speed; improved accuracy; improved detail; improved clarity; consistency; completeness; timeliness; availability in real time; availability of information to users (employees, managers, customers); remote working; cost reduction

## Essential guidance for tutors

### Delivery

Learners should enquire into the topics under discussion and question theory and compare and contrast theory with their professional knowledge and practice. For some learners this will mean building on their existing knowledge and earlier studies, while, for others, it will mean drawing experience gained in a work environment.

Delivery will be through blended learning, using business resources and class-based teaching. Standard tuition materials, texts, business simulations, exercises and formative assessments can be used. Other delivery techniques can also be used, for example, practical work, role play, tutorials, seminars and discussion groups where personal and professional practice can be shared and discussed can also be used. Learners are encouraged to engage in social learning to carry out practical work, discuss problems, consider experiences, work on case studies, prepare reports for presentation and carry out research on an organisations communication. Learners in work will be expected to use their working context and roles to learn about the practical techniques of communication within organisations.

### Assessment

This guidance supports assessors in making decisions about how best to assess each unit and the evidence needed to meet the assessment requirements. Centres can adapt the guidance for learners and the particular assessment context, as appropriate.

It is important that suitable organisations are chosen for investigation so that learners can acquire the information they need to meet the assessment criteria.

Evidence can be presented as written reports or presentations. If presentations are used, then copies of slides, handouts and presenter notes must be included, as well as learner observation records completed by the tutor.

This unit can be assessed holistically with other units within the qualification such as: Unit 5: *Negotiation and Influencing in the Workplace* and Unit 22: *Collaborating with Other Departments*.

Learning outcome 1, learners need to evaluate the appropriateness and efficiency of different communication channels and tools, explain the use of vertical, lateral or networked communication channels and tools and explain how the use of clear and correct language supports effective communication. This learning outcome lends itself to learners being able to draw on own and others personal experience to use as examples.

It could be useful to have a guest speaker and discussion groups to help learners hear examples that will help them to achieve learning outcome 2. For assessment criterion 2.1, learners need to analyse the features of different models of communication that supports administrative services. This can be built on for assessment criteria 2.2 and 2.3, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation's communications system and justify improvements to an organisation's communications systems.

Evidence of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can also be used within the unit to confirm competence. Wherever possible, the learning outcomes in this unit should be assessed holistically across the qualification.

## Indicative resource materials

### Books

Bovee C and Thill J – *Business Communication Today* (Pearson Education, 2011)  
ISBN: 9780273761464

Field M – *Improve Your Punctuation and Grammar* (How to Books, 2009)  
ISBN: 9781845283292

McClave H J – *Communication for Business* (Gill & Macmillan, August 2008)  
ISBN: 9780717144556

Seely J – *Oxford Guide to Effective Writing and Speaking* (OUP, 2005)  
ISBN: 9780192806130

### Websites

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) – The BBC website: material on business communication

[www.bized.co.uk](http://www.bized.co.uk) – Biz/ed: material on business communication

[www.managementhelp.org](http://www.managementhelp.org) – Free management library: articles on business communication topics

[www.teachitworld.com](http://www.teachitworld.com) – Teachitworld: resources for English for specific purposes (ESP), including business purposes

### Other

Business communications and documents, including communications sent to learners from organisations and examples of internal communications used in an organisation