Theme One Activity 1: Business communication models, systems and processes

Communicating with internal and external stakeholders

The principles of effective communication are to ensure that:

communication is a two-way process.

the information is clear, concise and in the right level of detail for the recipient.

all parties are clear about what is being communicated.

In a business environment you will communicate both formally and informally, using different methods including verbal and written. You will also communicate in more subtle ways – for example, through body language.

Communication in organisations can be complex, as there are some specific factors to consider, including:

the flow of information within the organisation

the culture of the organisation

the systems and processes in place

the degree of complexity of the information.

Analyse the communication needs of internal and external stakeholders. Start by defining the difference between internal and external stakeholders and describe examples of the different types of stakeholders in a business environment. Use the table below to help break down the elements in order to explain your answer fully. Also, explain the factors that affect your choice of specific method for that purpose of communication. For example, why would you email or phone a client or customer rather than visit them in person?

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| Different communication needs |
| Purpose | Stakeholder | Method | Analysis of stakeholder needs |
| **Customer service feedback** | **External** | **Email** | **Explain what the needs of the customer are and what the needs of the organisation are.** |
| **Setting weekly work tasks** | **Internal** | **One-to-one meeting** | **What information is needed by each party and what communication methods will be used?** |
| **Setting business objectives** | **Internal – who?** | **Formal meeting** | **What information is needed by each party and what communication methods will be used?** |

Once you have undertaken the activity to identify and analyse the different communication needs of stakeholders, you can begin to draw your conclusions together and then present your findings in a written report, presentation or discussion with your assessor.

There has been much theory development of communication models and their effectiveness. Research two different communication models and analyse how they might support an administration system or process. There is a wealth of different communication models to investigate, including:

Shannon & Weaver’s communication model

Wilbur Schramm’s communication model

Berlo’s communication model.

Once you have undertaken the research to identify and analyse different communication models, you can draw your conclusions together and then present your findings in a written report or presentation.

There are several common communication systems that operate in a business environment. Four different communication systems are detailed in the table below. Undertake some research to investigate these systems in further detail and use the table to evaluate the effectiveness of the different systems. Draw a conclusion, giving reasons, to evaluate the overall effectiveness of all of the systems detailed in the table on the page below.

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| Different formal communication systems in a business environment |
|  | Two-way | Circle | Top-down | Star system |
| Advantages |  |  |  |  |
| Disadvantages |  |  |  |  |

Additionally, undertake some research to identify the barriers to communication, you must then complete a short written report to explain ways of overcoming barriers to communication.

Use a document from your workplace and critique the document to explain the importance of using the correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and relevant conventions in a business environment. Also, explain the factors to take into account when planning and structuring different communications.

Finally, explain the different proofreading techniques that can be used in a business environment, and the importance of undertaking proofreading.

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Body language

As well as the words you use when communicating, body language affects how you are perceived by others – for example:

the way you sit or stand.

whether you fold your arms

the facial expressions you show.

the tone of voice that you use.

These all affect the way that your communication is perceived and received. Body language conveys your attitudes and feelings towards others, and this is why it is important to think about how you present yourself to others through your body language, use of facial expressions and tone of voice. Tone of voice is particularly important in showing that you are interested and that you are actively listening. Barriers to effective communication do exist and these barriers can cause problems in terms of misunderstanding by one or both parties.

There has been some specific theory development of communication models involving body language. Research two different theories and explain them in detail. You may want to investigate the following theories:

Mehrabian’s model

Argyle’s communication cycle model.

Also, explain the use of communications theories and the relevance of body language.

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NNegotiation

Negotiation is an important process in a business environment, and quite often it is necessary to develop a strategy when negotiating. By understanding the perspectives of others, it is possible to resolve conflict, understand cultural differences, reach agreement and achieve a compromise.

A fair process (‘win-win’) can improve business relationships and help facilitate the smooth running of organisation and business efficiency.

There are generally two approaches to negotiation:

disruptive ( a fixed or competitive stance)

integrative (a willingness to work collaboratively)

Gather together three examples of where you have negotiated something at work. Then, undertake some research on the different types and styles of negotiation and for each of your examples describe what type of negotiation you have completed. When doing this, you should

explain the importance of negotiation in a business environment.

explain the different features and uses of different approaches to negotiation.

identify the components of different negotiation tactics.

End Point Assessment Portfolio: evidence gathering and professional discussion.

In order to meet the EPA criteria, you must be confident talking about the communication needs of stakeholders in your organisation.

Practice taking part in a professional discussion, it is important that you prepare for this discussion. Some topic areas that you should consider are:

the communication needs of internal and external stakeholders in your organisation.

the different communication models that support your administration systems

the effectiveness of different communication systems in your organisation

the importance of using accurate grammar and relevant conventions in business communications.

the importance of planning and structuring different communication methods.

the methods used to overcome barriers to communication.