



THE TIMES 100

BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

Communication - Kellogg's

Kellogg's has been active in supporting breakfast clubs in schools for many years. Breakfast clubs provide a healthy meal at the start of the day in a safe and friendly environment. They also provide a great opportunity for kids to play, learn and socialise with classmates. According to research by Kellogg's, many schools have run into trouble with the funding of their breakfast club due to recent budget cuts by the UK government. Kellogg's responded by putting a team together to create a communications plan which highlighted the importance of breakfast clubs to parents, schools, the UK government and the public.

The communication process involves transmitting information from a sender to a receiver. However, effective communication needs to ensure that the message has been not only received but also clearly understood. The message needs to be sent in a way that it will appeal to and be understood easily by the target receiver or audience. This involves selecting an appropriate format or channel to deliver the message. Examples of media that may be used include a leaflet, a television advert and a personal letter. The feedback part of the process is vital as this is how the sender knows if the message has been received correctly. For the message to be effective, barriers to communication (known as noise) need to be eliminated or reduced. Noise is anything that might distort the message or prevent the receiver getting or understanding the message. For example, noise might include using language or jargon that the receiver will not understand or using a channel such as email or the internet when the receiver does not have a computer. Businesses engage in both internal and external communication. Internal communication may involve transmitting messages to shareholders, senior managers, other employees or contractors. Communication externally may be to a range of stakeholders including customers, suppliers, the media, government or the wider public. An effective communications plan can help to give clear direction within the organisation and improve employee motivation. Externally, it can even change public opinion.

Research with teachers showed that the majority believe that the lack of breakfast opportunities would lead to poorer academic results and worsening behaviour in schools. The purpose of the Kellogg's campaign was to show its commitment to breakfast clubs in schools in the UK. The important messages that the campaign was aiming to get across were that:

- " breakfast is important for people of all ages especially young people
- " breakfast clubs positively impact on children's behaviour, attendance and ability to concentrate
- " Kellogg's has supported breakfast clubs since 1998
- " by buying Kellogg's Corn Flakes you are helping to feed children at breakfast clubs.

Kellogg's faced potential noise for its messages from different sources. At the time, the government spending review was high profile in the press which could have resulted in the Kellogg's story being overlooked. In addition, other food companies also support breakfast clubs which could have led to confusion or dilution of its messages. The Kellogg's breakfast club campaign had a number of key objectives which depended on promoting the right messages to different audiences.

Objective	Target audience
Develop greater understanding of the impact of Kellogg's long-term support of breakfast clubs as part of its Corporate Responsibility programme	Shareholders, employees, customers, national media, wider public, government, others
Change or increase public awareness of the impact of breakfast club closures	Shareholders, employees, consumers, national media, wider public, government, others
Raise additional funding for breakfast clubs by attracting consumers to support the initiative through donations made from the purchase of Kellogg's Corn Flakes	Consumers
Improve public perception of the company	Consumers, the wider public and key opinion formers
Motivate employees by involving them in the initiative	Employees



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In order to achieve these objectives, Kellogg's devised a communication plan for internal and external stakeholders. The main internal stakeholders being targeted were Kellogg's employees. They were encouraged to get involved through information posted on the company intranet (internal communication). Employees were also invited to attend a breakfast club in the atrium of the Kellogg's building with two local primary schools.

Format/channel of communication	Campaign activities
Written communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters were sent to MPs and to schools Press releases were sent to television, radio and newspapers (as well as appearing on the Kellogg's website) Information about the campaign was added to eight million boxes of Kellogg's Corn Flakes Information for employees was communicated through internal briefings and posters displayed in the company's social areas e.g. reception and restaurant
Television and radio advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various visual (television) and audio (radio) advertisements were placed The launch of the campaign featured on ITV's Daybreak programme
Internet and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated website featured the campaign and included videos of a local breakfast club A twibbon (a method of raising awareness through Twitter) was created so that people could show their support for the campaign on their twitter and facebook accounts A media partnership was created with Netmums (a social networking site for parents offering advice, information of interest and a blog) Messages were communicated through the company intranet Kellogg's employees also received voicemail messages encouraging them to support the campaign
Face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kellogg's held a briefing day about the campaign with mummy bloggers MPs were invited to attend their local breakfast clubs to award funding cheques Kellogg's employees volunteered at their local breakfast club and joined a breakfast club held at a Kellogg's on-site launch

The various campaign communications involved a mixture of formal and informal communications. Formal communications are through approved channels and so might include, for example, a company policy document or a press release. Kellogg's formal communications

included the letters sent to MPs. In contrast, informal communication is more spontaneous and less structured, for example, a chat with colleagues over coffee. Informal communication can be very effective in a business as it has the advantage of being quicker and more direct. Kellogg's face-to-face interactions at breakfast clubs and the briefing to mummy bloggers demonstrated a more informal approach to communication. The problem with informal communication is that it could result in rumours that can cause messages to be mistrusted or even convey inaccurate information.

Kellogg's carried out an evaluation of its campaign to assess whether messages were reaching the target audience effectively. Highlights include:

" The first six weeks of the campaign generated 73 press articles across a variety of media . including news coverage on ITV's Daybreak and news articles in The Observer and The Independent. All carried positive reaction to the messages and reached a potential audience of nine million people.

" Over 700 schools applied for the funding and around 500 of these received a grant of up to £450 for their breakfast club.

" The money raised from the campaign will provide a million breakfasts by the end of 2012.

Questions

1. What is meant by internal communication?
2. Describe the problems that could occur with informal communication.
3. Explain why Kellogg's needed to use different methods in its communications plan.
4. Analyse why it is important for businesses like Kellogg's to evaluate their communications.

Task

Scenario: The governors and leadership team of your school/college have decided to join with another local school five miles away. All the students at your school will be transferred to the other site. Some staff redundancies may be made as a result.

Put together a Communications Plan that will inform the relevant stakeholders about the changes. Justify the methods of communication you have recommended.

What have you learned?

Create some revision cards of the main learning points from today's session.