



Good Practice Guide



Factory Improvement Programme

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is essential to ensure that production is going well and any problems are addressed and solved immediately. This also helps to make workers feel that they are fairly treated by their managers.

PROSPECTIVE USERS:

All members of the staff, management and workers need to be involved in developing and maintaining effective communication systems.

This practice can be applied to all kinds of factories.

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED

- Industrial relations problems.
- Lack of information sharing and bad communication among employees.
- Bad communication adversely affecting productivity and quality.
- Worker complaints and dissatisfaction.

PROCESS

To improve the internal communication in the factory, it is necessary to develop an information sharing culture. There are a number of tools that can help achieve this. This first step is to develop a formal policy. Other tools include, systems of internal communication such as information boards, standard productivity and quality monitoring forms, regular meetings between management and staff, regular meetings between supervisors and workers, newsletters, factory wide social activities, etc.

Steps in implementation

1. Develop a formal internal communications policy. This policy should make a strong statement that the factory values open and honest communication, transparency and information sharing. It should outline the major tools and processes of communication that will be used in the factory.
2. Develop and make clear reporting procedures. These reporting procedures should be made for all the official reporting points between workers and managers, production and quality control division, and among different workers in a production line. The reporting procedures should clearly indicate who has to report to whom (e.g. quality control staff have to report to his/her quality control manager) how often (e.g. when errors occur or at the end of the shift) and by what means (e.g. verbally or using an inspection report). If possible, draw a map of reporting procedures.
3. Set up and use bulletin boards to provide information to employees. Information boards should be placed in a convenient place for workers to see the information while resting during break time. Boards must be updated regularly. Old material should be removed when it is out of date. Keep the boards neat, tidy and attractive so that workers want to read them. Bulletin boards should be divided into different sections such as Labour Safety, Quality Control, Operation or Production, or Creative Ideas for Improvement. Quality Policy and/or Environment Policy should also be included. (See FIP Good Practice Guide: *Organisation of the Notice Boards*)
4. Conduct a number of different regular short internal meetings:
 - Daily line meetings between workers and supervisors to ensure workers understand production targets, requirements, discuss any issues from the previous day, and share general information. (See Good Practice Guide: *Daily Line Meetings*)
 - Regular meetings between management and workers. This will break down the hierarchy in the factory and provide opportunities for workers to discuss issues directly with management. These can be formal meetings, but informal opportunities such as football games or management joining workers for lunch can also be very valuable.
 - Regular meetings among different departments of the factory to share information and discuss any issues that arise.
 - Regular Union meetings – with workers and with management. Trade Unions should ensure they regularly listen to the needs and problems of workers. They can then represent these views to management.
5. Encourage workers to have informal and open discussion about any matter related to their work or their time at the factory with each other or with their managers during the tea-break, lunch time or any time convenient for them. Encourage them to speak about difficulties in production so that other workers or supervisors can help them or provide advices. The sharing of information and experience should be highly encouraged and appreciated.
6. If possible, organise internal factory or company-wide events such as a Factory Festival, Team Building Retreat or Contest on Company History to provide workers with chances to enjoy time together, cooperate with people from other divisions and encourage teams to work with each other. Such events contribute greatly to strengthening relationships among workers and improve internal communication within the factory.



RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Efforts of human resources personnel and line managers.
- Internal management policies and regulations.
- Information boards and space to hang them.
- Involvement of all employees.
- Possible additional support from external consultant.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

- Difficult to implement communications measures in a working environment where managers often do not want to share information.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- Better communication in the factories.
- Workers are happier.

INDICATORS FOR MONITORING

- System of bulletin boards set up and used
- Information on the bulletin boards is up-to-date
- Workers understand major factory policies, regulations, their working missions and contact persons, system of standard management forms and instructive signals
- Worker satisfaction survey.

Further Information Available:

FIP References:

Module 1 - Workplace Cooperation

Social Dialogue and Workplace Cooperation – an overview