

The importance of written communication in business essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Drive a successful and sustainable business model in a multi-channel world: This aim is focusing on how the business can maintain and grow as the world changes; this includes working closely with suppliers, improving customer service and reducing costs.
2. Be a leader in each of the markets in which the Group operates: This aim is focusing on how the business can become a market leader and well known with its customers; overall to improve awareness of the brand.
3. Align the Group to leverage consistently pan-European scale and knowhow: This aim is focusing on how the business can improve on a European scale; this includes working with other European branches in improving store formats, layouts and sales techniques.

Source: dixonsretail.com/dixons/en/aboutus/strategy

Verbal Communication could be reasonably appropriate when following the strategy above and making decisions; however there are some disadvantages involved when using this method of communication:

Using verbal communication to work closer with suppliers could be beneficial for Currys as members of staff could make a telephone call or meet face to face with suppliers. This could overall improve the relationship between Currys and their suppliers, as using this method could be quicker and save time rather than communicating in writing. It also is more personal too compared to reading a letter or an email, as relationships can be built between members of staff as they get to know each other better on a face to face basis. This could be beneficial for Currys as they could negotiate a

better deal with pricing and keep up to date with news; however this method of communication could also backfire if further problems arise as there is no physical evidence as proof. For example Currys may wish to take legal action with their suppliers following a mistake that was made, resulting in a loss of sales. However Currys would find this extremely difficult to prove if there was no physical evidence such as a letter or an agreement, if all communication was made on a verbal basis.

When it comes to improving customer service verbal communication could be very beneficial for Currys, as members of the sales department can use this method to speak directly to their customers and try to improve their shopping experience with the business. This could include meeting and greeting customers, asking if they require any help and general conversation. This method is also much quicker compared to writing to customers as some may not have the time to respond or even read the material. However as mentioned previously this could have the opposite effect, as customers may feel uncomfortable being approached and the verbal communication could be received in the wrong way e. g. being too pushy. This could then influence the customers' purchase, as they are less likely to purchase a product or spend less time in store if they feel uncomfortable or on edge; overall resulting in a decrease of sales and possibly lead to further effects such as a decrease in profits and share value.

When it comes to reducing costs verbal communication can be effective to a certain point; for example the manager may speak to all employees and suggest ways to reduce costs e. g. put all packaging in the recycle bin,

switch off lights when necessary etc. However this is only on a small scale, if Currys had strict instructions to reduce costs it is likely they would use written forms of communication to prevent any misunderstanding. This could include signage, memos on the display board and emails to senior members of staff; therefore verbal communication may not be effective with reducing costs due to reliability and the risk of misunderstanding instructions.

With the 2nd aim of becoming a market leader, verbal communication appears to be very effective for Currys. In May 2012 Currys and PC World signed a deal with Absolute Radio to promote the business on the daily radio show 'Rock 'N' Roll Football', during the Euro 2012 tournament. The show included adverts from Currys and PC World and also featured a promotion called 'cash for goals'; where customers who had purchased goods over £549 from the retailer could win £10 cash back for every goal the England team scored. By doing so this created awareness of the brand, as the public listening to the football show would hear the adverts; it also allowed Currys and PC World to take an advantage of a period of time where Televisions are popular/often purchased – during big sports events.

However Currys and PC World also used several online and social media competitions, with people encouraged to share videos of their own best "goal celebrations" with Currys and PC World, via the Absolute Radio website. This method of communication is also known as multi-media or web based, which will be mentioned later in this report.

Source: mediaweek.co.uk/News/MostEmailed/1133908/Absolute-Radio-nets-Currys-PC-World-football-deal/

The information above shows that Currys and PC World used verbal communication to their advantage in order to improve sales and create awareness of the brand; assisting in achieving their strategy/aims and objectives. However the information also shows that the business wasn't going to rely solely on verbal communication and turned to a different form of communication whilst promoting their brand and products.

When it comes to the 3rd aim of working with other European branches, verbal communication may not be very effective for Currys. The main reason is that in other European countries English may not be their first language, which could cause confusion or misunderstanding when communicating on a verbal basis. This could cause further problems as the information being exchanged could be of an important nature, which could directly affect the business and its customers. In 2006 Dell recalled over 4 Million laptops as the rechargeable battery within the unit was faulty, resulting in the battery overheating and then catching fire. Therefore if a UK Currys PC World branch spoke to another European branch (on a verbal basis), regarding this the information could be misunderstood due to the language barrier, resulting in the laptops not being successfully recalled; therefore putting the business and their customers at risk.

Source: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4793143.stm

Another aspect to consider, particularly on a face to face basis, is the costs involved with this process. For example a member of staff would have to travel to another country, stay in accommodation, possibly use a translator and other expenses such as time. This is where technology becomes beneficial as communication between countries can be done over the internet and some computer programmes can translate information exchanged into different languages; reducing costs and the risk of confusion.

So overall verbal communication can help Dixons Retail with strategic decisions such as improving customer service and relationships with suppliers; as verbal communication is quicker and more personal than written communication. However when it comes to more complex aspects such as reducing costs through given instructions and working with European branches; written communication and the use of technology appears to be more efficient and reliable in the circumstances.

Written communication can be effective for Dixons Retail when it comes to achieving their aims and objectives/strategy:

Using written communication to achieve the first aim of working closely with suppliers could be relevant to a certain extent. This form of communication would be beneficial when forming contracts or agreements, as there is physical evidence in writing to refer back to when needed or if further problems arise e. g. pursuing legal action. Overall both parties have the information in writing, which reduces the chance of information being forgotten or misheard – compared to communication on a verbal basis.

However, when it comes to day to day aspects such as checking deliveries, dates, times etc. the element of written communication becomes less effective in achieving this aim. For example, writing a letter to the suppliers querying the dates and times would be more time consuming compared to a telephone conversation. The letter can also lack personal elements often featured in a telephone conversation; so a phone conversation (verbal) may include asking how the person has been, what they done over the weekend etc. Whereas a letter wouldn't usually feature this and would have a consistent layout: Dear Sir/Madam, Subject: Delivery dates etc. Therefore preventing the chance of any personal/professional relationships being built between Currys PC World and their suppliers; which may have assisted in achieving the aim of working closer together.

Written communication could also be used to improve customer service by carrying out primary research in order to gain customer feedback; this would give Currys an overall picture of their customer's views and see if there is room for any improvements to be made. However this method could be time consuming and not many customers may feel comfortable in filling out forms or questionnaires in-store. When it comes to reducing costs written communication can be very effective if there is strict guidelines or instructions to follow, as there is less of a chance for the recipients to forget the message and gives them something to refer back to at a later date if need be. Communicating written forms of information without the use of technology could be expensive too, especially due to the cost of posting letters recently increasing and heavier or items that require extra security

could also see costs increase; therefore having the opposite effect of reducing costs.

The second aim is mainly about increasing brand awareness which can also be achieved to a certain point by using written communication; examples of which can be newspaper or magazine adverts, leaflets and letters to customers. This can be effective for Currys as technology isn't always available or used by some customers; for example an elderly customer may use the traditional method of looking through a catalogue compared to using the internet to look at products. This means that by having the more traditional methods available such as catalogues, there is less of a chance that Currys would be neglecting the customers who browse or make purchases using that method – rather than just relying on the internet/technology. This way Currys would have all areas and customers covered, without neglecting groups such as elderly customers and would therefore be increasing the awareness of the brand.

In some circumstances the use of technology is limited or even forbidden e. g. on an underground train there may be no signal for the internet and most hospitals don't allow mobile phones to be used; therefore a newspaper advert is effective in this case as there are no limitations involved. However it may not be cost effective using only written information methods to improve customer service, as printing leaflets or catalogues maybe costly compared to uploading information onto an internet site; this would also affect the aim of reducing costs too.

The other drawback is the reliability risk when using written information, a mistake that was made on an internet site can be corrected quickly and cheaply; compared to wrong information that was printed on catalogues. As this would result in the material being reproduced which would cost the business money and could result in negative publicity e. g. customer complaints due to the wrong price being displayed. In February 2001 the Advertising Standards Authority launched a case against Currys, resulting in the slogan “ unbeatable low prices” to be banned. The retailer used the slogan in newspaper adverts, leaflets and other promotional material; however the ASA found that on average Currys were more expensive compared to their rival Comet at the time. This was therefore considered to be misleading and the ASA prevented the slogan from being used by Currys; therefore Currys has to be careful with the reliability of written information not only for research purposes but when producing the information too.

Source: news. bbc. co. uk/1/hi/business/1157629. stm

The third aim focuses on working with European branches, which non-electronic written communication may not be appropriate for. The main reason being is that some European countries may not speak English as a first language or at all; resulting in complete confusion or misunderstanding of the information. This would therefore contradict the aim of working together; as this would be very difficult or almost impossible if there wasn't a basic level of understanding in place when communicating. The other problem could be time and cost, as sending written letters using postal

services could take up to a number of days to be received (depending on the location) and may also be expensive; especially with heavy documents.

Referring back to the Dell Laptop example mentioned previously, if a UK branch wrote to a European branch informing them that the laptops must be removed from the shelves immediately; non-electronic written communication wouldn't be effective in this case. This is because the time it took for the letter to be sent, the faulty laptops could have still been sold inbetween and once the letter did finally arrive the information could be misunderstood; resulting in the dangerous laptops still being sold to customers.

The use of electronic communication and multimedia would be very appropriate for Dixons Retail when it comes to achieving their aims/strategy:

When it comes to working closely with suppliers' electronic communication would be very effective as it is quick and clear, for example a member of staff at Currys could email suppliers requesting for more products to be sent. The email would be received quickly compared to sending a written letter and there is less chance for a error to take place as the information would be in front of the recipient; compared to a telephone call where information could be forgotten or misunderstood. However rather much like written information it may be harder to build relationships, as electronic communication such as an email can lack the personal element of verbal communication e. g. getting to know the person on a face to face basis. This isn't such a major drawback as other forms of electronic communication or

technology could be used instead, such as video conferencing as this would allow relationships to be built on a face to face basis; without actually physically meeting the person or leaving the location. The use of multimedia could also be used to a certain point e. g. sending videos or photos to the suppliers to keep them up to date or as proof of a damaged item.

Electronic communication can also be effective for improving customer service too, Currys website currently contains a high amount of information for their customers to view in the convenience of their own home. The website allows customers to track an order, contact Currys via email, read product guides and product descriptions, share advice or feedback with a particular product, locate their nearest store and read documentation such as the returns policy. The use of multimedia can also be very effective when it comes to improving customer service too; the website also contains a high amount of photos and video guides which can help customers view products and watch help videos about the certain type of products. This is effective as it allows customers to view all this information in the comfort of their own home, it also prevents any drawbacks featured in verbal communication from appearing e. g. customer feeling too pressured or uncomfortable; as if they don't like what they are hearing or seeing they can just click close – which cannot be done whilst in store.

However this aspect doesn't cover all of the aspects of shopping in store, customers who are purchasing an item may prefer to physically look and touch the product first e. g. is this iron comfortable to hold or too heavy? Electronic communication can be very effective for increasing awareness,

especially as the way customers are shopping for products and services has changed over the past 10 years. The use of price comparison websites has become extremely popular when purchasing electronics, insurance and holidays; the website allows potential customers to search for a product then receive price listings from different retailers – usually showing the cheapest price first. Currys and PC World are featured on the price comparison website pricerunner. co. uk, which receives around 2 million visits per month which will certainly assist in achieving this aim. Potential customers who would have never considered looking at Currys or PC World can receive their current price for a product in seconds and some customers can even receive notifications for the lowest price for an item they were looking for.

However this isn't always good news for Currys, in November 2011 two thousand customers placed an order for a Samsung Netbook which was being sold for £22; instead of £229. This price was down to human error and Currys had to notify the two thousand customers who had placed the order of the actual price and apologise for the mix up. The majority of the customers who had placed the order for the giveaway laptop were notified by the price comparison website, which automatically notifies users of the best deals and of course a £22 laptop would be at the top of the list. The error was featured in national newspapers such as The Telegraph and a Currys spokesperson apologised again for the mix up. The way people view multimedia such as videos has also changed and Currys appear to be using this effectively too, the video sharing website YouTube allows people to upload and watch videos using their pc, laptop or mobile phone. Since

October 2011 Currys and PC World have their own YouTube channel that allows the retailer to upload videos about the latest products, help videos and even television adverts.

The retailer currently has 596 subscribers which allow other YouTube members to be notified of any new videos that Currys and PC World upload; their channel has also had 810, 341 people watch their videos too. This shows that electronic communication and multimedia can be very effective for Currys when it comes to increasing awareness. However they must be careful as any mistakes made don't go unnoticed and can result in negative publicity, as featured with the £22 laptop being used in an article in The Telegraph newspaper; which can then be seen by thousands of readers nationwide. This can also have the potential to damage the overall image and reputation of Currys PC World, as pricing mistakes could be seen as a lack of care or interest; resulting in a decrease of sales revenue, profits and share value.

Source:

onefeed. co. uk/data-feed-services/partner-sites/pricerunner-uk-comparison-shopping-site-overview/, telegraph. co. uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/8913599/Currys-apologises-over-22-laptop. html, youtube. com/user/curryspcworld

The use of electronic communication and multimedia could be the most effective method when working with other European branches. This is because electronic communication would be quicker and cheaper compared

to the other forms of communication; an email can bounce around the world in minutes whereas a letter would take a number of days if sent by post and would also be more expensive too. The language barrier issue may also be overcome by using technology, as several computer programmes can translate from one language to another at a click of the mouse. The use of multimedia may also be effective with this aspect too as the use of pictures or video can be used and understood regardless of the language that person speaks. So from Currys point of view a change of store layout could be shared with another European branch by using photos and videos; this would be much clearer compared to using verbal or written communication.

Although these methods of communication are clearer there is still room for human error which can have the opposite effect, the most common is the 'reply all' button being confused with the 'reply' button. This means that instead of just replying to the sender it also may include other members of the team or the whole business, so an email containing confidential information or an embarrassing photo can be sent to everyone by mistake at the touch of a button. The other common mistake is the use of spell checker as the corrections aren't always correct or as intended, for example the word inconvenience if misspelt can be automatically changed to incontinence without the sender knowing which could be embarrassing. Therefore this method of communication can be much clearer and efficient compared to written or verbal, but the use of technology itself could create further confusion or embarrassment if the content hasn't been double checked or used correctly.