

# Maersk doha communication report



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Shannon and Weaver's Communications model seems to be a perfect fit for the Maersk Doha's problems on board as there were several instances when language caused miscommunications between crew members and messages were delivered incorrectly. This highlights that not all messages received are identical to the message that was sent or to put it in simpler terms it can almost be described as a game of Chinese whispers. First off we are told that when the emergency occurred and the chief engineer was not informed quickly enough.

This could be down to the incompetence of the engineers or more likely that there was a lack of communication commodities available to them. We were also told that the chief engineer was in a difficult position when it came to communication as he spoke a different language from the rest of the crew. This then created a hindrance upon the crew who were tasked with trying to understand and relay what the chief engineer was saying and along with the background noise, this proved to be difficult and thus caused confusion.

A big problem was the communication barrier between the engineering and deck departments. If a structured communications procedure had been in place, the damage could and probably would have been limited to a minimum. Problems arose as the engine crew didn't report to the chief engineer and the chief didn't report to the captain. Obviously if the senior staff are not made aware of the problems then they can't be solved in a proper manor. It's of utmost importance that the correct procedure where carried out when dealing with safety issues.

On this occasion a threat occurred due to an inexperienced crew, reluctant to communicate with their superiors. All departments should have been working towards a joint goal instead there seemed to be departmental friction and the link of horizontal communication was inadequate. Having an inexperienced first and second engineer helped lead to not only mechanical problems occurring but also further problems in communication. The shipping company had decided all crew had a satisfactory level of English but this was not the case and the language barrier acted as a catalyst to the reason the fire was not dealt with properly.

It is clear that there were problems in all directional flows. The downward communication was ineffective. The chief engineer should have asserted his authority and created a line of communication between his staff. Although the language barrier sometimes prevented proper flow in information there should have been procedures in place in case of emergency to insure the crew could contact him with any problems. The upward communication was also found inadequate as the crew should have been responsible enough to notify the chief engineer that there was a fire in the economiser and that perhaps due to their naivety and lack of experience they did not want to alert the chief and been seen as incompetent.

The engineers where not familiar with the machinery and should have contacted the chief as early as possible. On the other hand the chief is also guilty of miscommunication when it came to the deck department. It is imperative that both departments work together and help as much as possible and it's also necessary to regularly keep up to date with each other's departments. This is the reason companies create procedures and

flow charts that must be adhered by whilst on board. If the system was flawed then the chief should have designed a new communication procedure in order to keep communication flowing between all involved 4 - Its clear to say that the communication environment is heavily affected by the presence of so much background noise. There were problems with both the technical and social aspects of noise. Semantic barriers also lead to a negative influence on the environment.

The information required regarding the economiser was available to the crew but due to this being from the ships previous owner and it not being endorsed by ZMA, there was confusion regarding what documents and procedures were to be followed. If ZMA had constructed their own policy, adding any information they did not carry over from the previous owner, this might have helped avoid the ensuing problems.