

Business Communication

Below are extracts from two high profile cases that occurred during the latter part of 2003 and into 2004 that highlight the importance of communication. The key events of the cases have been highlighted. Your task is to discuss each event in terms of the following:

- What communication processes were adopted in each case (there may be more than one)?
- What message/information was the sender trying to give out?
- How successful was that person/body in communicating that message?
- What barriers to successful communication did the information experience?
- Advise the sender on an alternative approach that may have had different results.

Learning Objectives:

- **To understand the variety of methods and media that can be used to communicate information**
- **To understand the process of communication**
- **To understand the nature of barriers to successful communication**

Event 1: The Rio Rumpus!

What potential barriers to communication are there here? © iStock.com



Rio Ferdinand, the England and Manchester United defender, is due for a random, routine drug test but 'forgets' because he is moving house. He turns up back at the training ground but the testers have gone home. Two days later on 25th September 2003, he gives a test, which proves negative. Discussions then take place between his club, Manchester United, and the Football Association, that he will not be selected from the England squad to go to Turkey for the crucial European Championship qualifying match on October 11th of that year. Delays to the announcement of the squad by the manager, Sven Goran Eriksson, fuel speculation and by October 6th, information is released through a press conference by Manchester United, pointing out that Ferdinand has been left out of the squad.

The rest of the England team are furious; they feel his confidentiality has been compromised and that Ferdinand is being branded as 'guilty' without any charge being made against him. The players register their discontent and mention boycotting the game as a possible option. The press get hold of this and there are big divisions over the stance of the FA and the players. The FA and the players eventually announce that agreement has been reached and the match goes ahead. Rio Ferdinand was banned for eight months and served his suspension, returning to the Manchester United team in September 2004.

Event 2: Accident Insurance Group



The Accident Insurance Group was a company specialising in the pursuit of compensation claims for victims of accidents either at work or elsewhere. The company pursued claims for compensation on behalf of victims and took a slice of the compensation award if successful. Following a fall in the

success rates for personal injury claims and the withdrawal of a key financial backer, the company ceased trading in late May 2003. Approximately 2,500 staff lost their jobs.

Rumours about the future of the company began to circulate amongst staff when some received text messages advising them to look at their bank accounts because there were problems paying salaries; later text messages advised them that their salary had not been paid. There were then stories of the company actually notifying staff of dismissal by text message. The Chairman of the company, Mark Langford, claimed the decision to tell workers they had been made redundant through text message was not his and blamed the administrators.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers.