

Using effective communications

Overcoming the barriers to communication



The Shannon-Weaver model refers to the process of 'noise'. This can weaken messages that are being sent and offer some real barriers to contact.

Type of 'noise'

To use an example, many members of UNISON may not have access to a computer and might not understand the communications technologies that are being used. For some, English might not be their first language. To overcome this problem, UNISON has to create a means in which members can access and use the technology. This has been carried out at a local level through each branch.

UNISON has come up with diverse ways of communicating by carefully targeting its messages to individuals rather than groups.

Another blockage to interaction is where people are lone workers. There are many expert lone workers – for example, meat hygienists and lock-keepers - who aren't easy to get hold of. UNISON has come up with diverse ways of communicating with such employees by carefully targeting its messages to individuals rather than groups.

Adapting communications

Being in touch with varied groups of employees and individuals – from the health services to the utility industries – has not been easy. UNISON has had to be flexible and adapt its communications. This is so it can support its members in a way that shows an understanding of the needs of each group.