Needs Assessment

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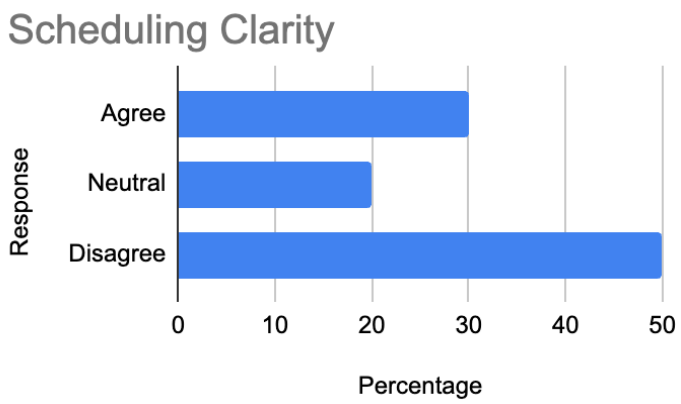
Employees at BrewCo experience inconsistent communication behaviors, including insufficient advance notice for scheduling, reliance on informal communication channels, unclear escalation processes, and recognition that is primarily corrective rather than supportive. These issues contribute to confusion, reduced morale, and decreased trust in leadership.

To better understand this communication problem, a needs assessment was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This mixed-methods approach provided insight into how communication is intended by leadership and how it is experienced by employees.

The survey questions were designed to assess key communication behaviors, including scheduling clarity, communication channels, escalation processes, and feedback. These areas were selected based on the identified communication problem and were intended to measure how communication is both delivered and experienced by employees.

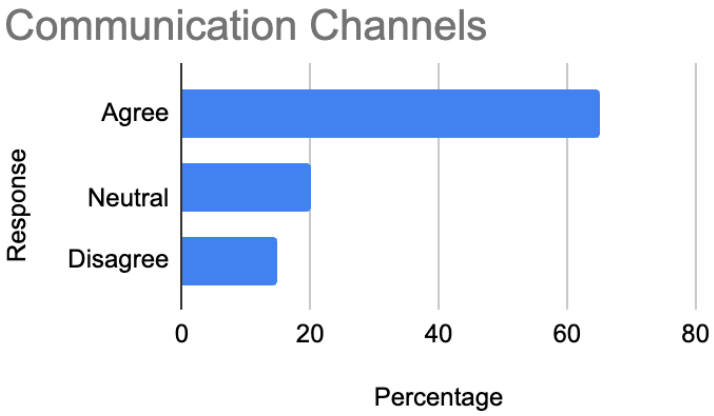
When asked whether they receive their schedule with enough advance notice, only 30% of participants agreed, while 50% disagreed and 20% remained neutral. This indicates that a majority of employees feel scheduling communication lacks sufficient timing and clarity (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Scheduling Clarity



This lack of advance notice may create uncertainty for employees and make it difficult to effectively plan both work responsibilities and personal commitments, ultimately impacting workflow and overall job satisfaction. This issue is further reinforced by employee perceptions of last-minute schedule changes. Additionally, 72% of participants agreed that last-minute schedule changes cause confusion, while 18% were neutral and 10% disagreed (see Figure 2).

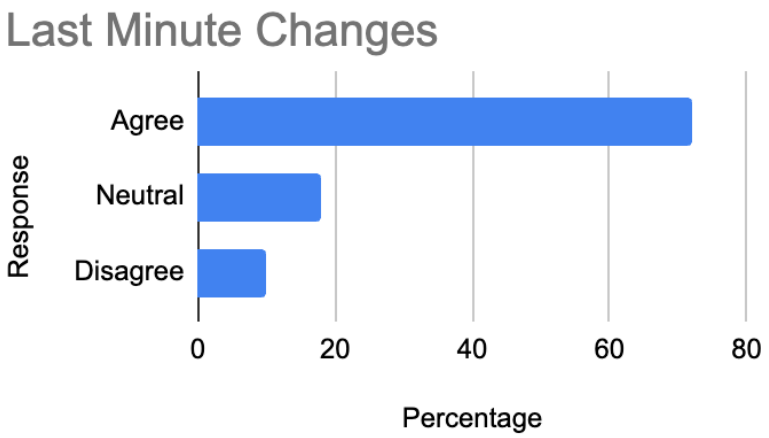
Figure 2. Last-Minute Changes Cause Confusion



This finding reinforces that communication timing is a significant issue. Frequent last-minute changes can disrupt workflow and increase frustration, particularly in a fast-paced environment where employees rely on clear expectations. Beyond timing, employees also reported challenges

related to how communication is delivered. Employees reported relying on multiple communication methods to stay informed. Specifically, 65% of participants agreed that they rely on a combination of the scheduling app, group texts, and in-person updates (see Figure 3). This suggests that communication is not standardized, leading to inconsistent messaging and potential misunderstandings. When multiple channels are used without clear expectations, employees may miss important updates or receive conflicting information, which further contributes to confusion.

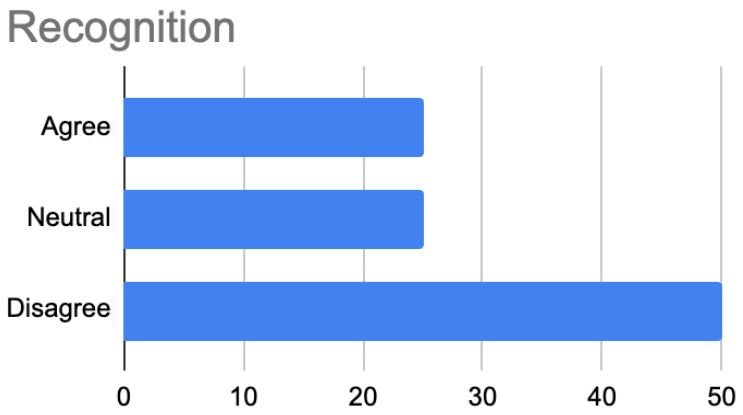
Figure 3. Communication Channels Used



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indicated uncertainty about who to contact when scheduling issues arise, suggesting a lack of clear communication structure. This lack of clarity can lead to unresolved concerns, delays in problem-solving, and increased frustration among employees. In addition to structural communication issues, employees also reported challenges related to feedback and recognition. In terms of feedback and recognition, only 25% of participants agreed that they felt recognized by their supervisor, while 50% disagreed and 25% remained neutral (see Figure 4). This suggests that recognition is not consistently communicated and that feedback is often perceived as corrective rather than supportive. When employees primarily receive feedback focused on mistakes rather than positive performance, it can negatively impact motivation, confidence, and overall engagement.

Figure 4. Recognition from Supervisor



Overall, the needs assessment findings highlight consistent communication gaps across four key areas: timing, channel use, escalation clarity, and recognition behaviors. These results reinforce the identified communication problem and provide a clear foundation for developing a targeted training and development solution focused on improving manager communication practices.

Qualitative Interview Analysis

A semi-structured interview was conducted with a shift supervisor at BrewCo to better understand communication practices from a leadership perspective. To analyze the interview data, a qualitative coding process was used to identify patterns, themes, and meaning within the participant's responses.

The coding process began with an initial review of the interview transcript to identify repeated words, phrases, and ideas related to workplace communication. During this stage, several initial codes were developed, including "fast-paced communication," "last-minute scheduling," "multiple communication methods," "unclear updates," and "corrective feedback." These codes were based on recurring descriptions of how communication is delivered during shifts.

After identifying the initial codes, similar codes were grouped together into broader categories to form themes. For example, codes such as "fast-paced communication" and "last-minute scheduling" were grouped under the theme of **communication timing issues**, as they both reflected how quickly communication occurs and how that affects clarity. Codes related to "multiple communication methods" and "unclear updates" were grouped under **inconsistent communication channels**, highlighting the lack of a standardized method for sharing information. Additionally, codes such as "corrective feedback" were grouped under **limited supportive communication**, reflecting the lack of recognition and encouragement in leadership communication.

From this coding process, three primary themes emerged:

(1) communication is prioritized for efficiency over clarity,

(2) communication methods are inconsistent, and

(3) feedback is primarily corrective rather than supportive.

These themes reveal that while communication at BrewCo is designed to support fast-paced operations, it often lacks the structure and clarity needed for employees to fully understand expectations. The emphasis on efficiency results in communication being delivered quickly, often “in the moment,” which can reduce clarity and lead to confusion among employees.

Additionally, the reliance on multiple communication methods, including verbal updates and group messaging, contributes to inconsistent messaging. This increases the likelihood of employees receiving incomplete or conflicting information.

In terms of feedback, communication was described as primarily focused on correcting mistakes rather than reinforcing positive behaviors. This suggests that employees may perceive feedback as negative or unsupportive, which can impact motivation and engagement.

Overall, the qualitative analysis demonstrates that communication challenges at BrewCo are not isolated incidents, but consistent patterns rooted in timing, channel use, and feedback practices. These findings provide deeper insight into the communication problem and support the need for a structured training solution.

Findings Summary

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative findings align and reinforce the identified communication problem at BrewCo. Both data sources highlight challenges related to communication timing, inconsistent communication channels, lack of escalation clarity, and limited supportive feedback.

The qualitative interview revealed that leadership prioritizes efficiency in communication, while the quantitative data showed that employees experience this as unclear and inconsistent communication. This gap between intention and perception contributes to confusion, reduced morale, and decreased trust in leadership.

These findings demonstrate a clear need for a structured communication training that focuses on improving clarity, consistency, and supportive feedback practices. By addressing these communication gaps, the training can improve employee understanding, strengthen workplace relationships, and create a more positive and effective work environment. These findings provide clear direction for the development of a targeted training program focused on improving communication clarity, consistency, and supportive feedback practices among BrewCo leaders.

References

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Appendix A

Needs Assessment Survey Questions

The following questions were designed to better understand how employees at BrewCo experience communication related to scheduling, feedback, and workplace clarity. The communication problem identified is that employees experience inconsistent communication behaviors, including unclear scheduling, reliance on informal communication channels, limited recognition, and unclear escalation processes.

In order to better understand how communication is delivered, received, and interpreted, this survey includes both demographic and communication-specific questions. The results will help identify patterns in employee experiences and guide the development of a training program focused on improving manager communication behaviors.

Assessment Questions

1. How long (in months or years) have you worked at BrewCo? (fill in the blank)

This question helps gather information about employee experience levels. Employees who are newer may experience communication differently than those who have been with the organization longer. This allows for comparison across experience levels.

2. What is your current role? (barista/shift supervisor/other)

This question helps identify whether communication experiences differ based on position. Leadership roles may perceive communication differently than baristas, which can reveal gaps between how communication is delivered and received.

3. I receive my schedule with enough advance notice. (5-point Likert scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree)

This question measures employee perceptions of scheduling timing. Lack of advance notice was identified as a key issue, and this helps determine how widespread this concern is.

4. Last-minute schedule changes are clearly communicated. (5-point Likert scale)

This item focuses on how effectively changes are communicated. Even if changes happen, clarity in communication can reduce confusion and frustration.

5. I rely on multiple communication methods (app, texts, in-person) to stay informed. (5-point Likert scale)

This question assesses communication channel use. It helps determine whether employees experience inconsistency due to multiple communication methods being used.

6. I know exactly where to go or who to contact if I have a scheduling issue. (5-point Likert scale)

This question measures escalation clarity. A lack of clear communication processes can lead to confusion and unresolved issues.

7. I regularly receive positive feedback from my supervisor. (5-point Likert scale)

This question evaluates recognition behaviors. It helps determine whether employees feel acknowledged for their performance.

8. Feedback from my supervisor helps me improve my performance. (5-point Likert scale)

This item assesses whether feedback is useful and growth-oriented rather than purely corrective.

9. I feel valued and supported by my supervisor's communication. (5-point Likert scale)

This question connects communication to employee morale and engagement, which are key outcomes of effective communication practices.

10. What communication method do you prefer for receiving updates? (multiple choice: app, text, in-person, other)

This question helps identify preferred communication channels, which can guide improvements in communication strategies.

11. What is one thing you would change about communication at BrewCo? (open-ended)

This question allows employees to provide detailed feedback and identify issues that may not be captured in structured questions.

Method Analysis

Likert-scale responses will be analyzed using averages to identify overall trends in employee perceptions of communication. Multiple-choice responses will be analyzed to determine preferred communication methods. Open-ended responses will be reviewed for recurring themes, particularly related to scheduling clarity, communication channels, recognition, and escalation processes.

These findings will be used to identify key communication gaps and directly inform the development of a training and development program aimed at improving manager communication behaviors.