



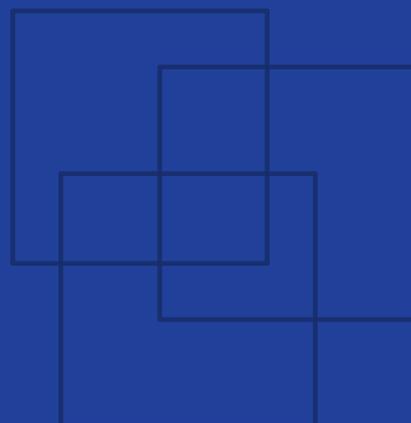
International
Labour
Organization

Improving communication channels

Staff management systems



Factory
Improvement
Toolset



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Table of Contents

About the FIT module	4
Guidelines for successfully using the training tool.....	5
Session 1	
Business case study.....	9
Session 2	
Learning about the topic	15
Session 3	
Action items.....	25

Factory Improvement Toolset

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is an innovative self-facilitated, activity-based learning approach designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to create more decent and sustainable employment. FIT supports manufacturers in global supply chains to improve productivity, competitiveness and working conditions by upgrading production systems and factory practices.

FIT has been developed to be a sustainable, time- and cost-efficient option for supporting factories to enhance productivity through improved business practices and working conditions. FIT focuses on areas of production improvement and actions to be taken specific to each participating factory. It can be utilized as stand-alone learning tools or to complement other training programmes.

With each module lasting no more than 2.5 hours, FIT enables factories to train personnel, whilst minimizing interference with production realities. The easy-to-use methodology makes it possible to rapidly scale the implementation to reach a large cohort of trainees across multiple production facilities.

Working in small groups, participants review real-life situations and engage in discussions to determine improvements to be made in factory without an external trainer or specialist. This self-facilitated, activity-based and highly participatory learning approach positions participants as both student and teacher and makes the toolset self-tailored to the needs and interests of each group.

About this module

The FIT module on Improving communication channels is a training for garment manufacturers to improve staff management systems in the factory. Participants will work on improving communication channels. This module takes about 2 hours to complete.

Upon completion of the training, participants should have:

- Understood why it is important to communicate information in the factory.
- Identified the kind of information that should be relayed (what).
- Identified concrete ways to communicate information (how), and the frequency at which it should be done (when).

The **Factory Improvement Toolset** of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** are developed and provided by the ILO's **Enterprises Department**.

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Guidelines for successfully using the training tool

Read out-loud

The FIT tool is designed for participants to take turns reading the instructions in the modules out loud to the group. At least one member of the group should be selected in the beginning of the session to take this responsibility.

Work as a group

Always work in groups of 5-7 during a FIT session. The programme will not be successful if participants work independently or do not collaborate with each other.

Be active

Encourage everyone in the group to actively contribute to the discussion. Ensure that no group member dominates the discussion or does not participate at all.

Monitor the time

Select one member of the group to monitor the time for each activity and remind the group when it is time to move to the next exercise.

Complete the action plan

Complete the action plan at the end of the session. This will help ensure that FIT results in improvements in the factory. Review the plan a while after the session to make sure that actions in the plan has been completed accordingly.

Icons

A set of icons is used throughout the modules to provide easy to recognize reference points for different tasks within each session and activity.



Read out loud

One member of the group should read out loud to the rest of group.



Knowledge link

Knowledge and skills are linked to other FIT learning resources and support.



Time allotted

Indicates how much time each sessions and activity should take.



Supplies needed

Indicates that supplies may be necessary to complete the session.



Begin step-by-step instructions

Indicates that the step-by-step instructions for an activity are beginning.



Think about it

Indicates additional information for the participants to think about.

Measuring your performance

Measuring operational efficiency is a key aspect of running a productive factory. The box(es) below guides you in understanding which measurement indicator(s) can be used to measure and evaluate the performance of your factory in relation to the topic of this FIT module.

Indicator 1	Turnover rate (%)
Definition	The amount of employees who leave the factory over a period of time and must be replaced, as a percentage of the total amount of employees.
Purpose	To understand how high your turnover rate is, set a turnover reduction target, and identify solutions to reduce turnover in your factory.
Calculation	$\left(\frac{\text{\# of employees who left and must be replaced}}{\text{average \# of employees}} \right) \times 100\%$ <p>Note: $\text{Average \# of employees} = \frac{\text{\# of employees at the start of the time period} + \text{\# of employees at the end of the time period}}{2}$</p>
Frequency	Calculate monthly.
Responsible	HR manager

Indicator 2	Workers' perception of the quality of communication
Definition	Your workers' opinion on the quality of communication between workers, supervisors and managers.
Purpose	To understand your workers' opinion and situation, and identify what can be done to improve communication in your factory.
Calculation	Have your workers fill out the simple online survey (provided by the ILO – ask your FIT focal point for more information), and consult the results. Don't forget that surveys should be anonymous!
Frequency	Measure every 6 months, or once a year.
Responsible	HR manager



Session 1

Business case study

Goals

Preparing you for the type of discussions you will have with other group members throughout the learning module and understanding the benefits of being exposed to different perspectives.

Understanding better why having good communication channels is important in the factory.

Session 1

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



15 minutes



Learning manual, pens, markers and poster paper

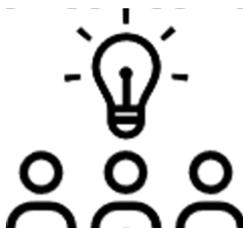
A business case study presents a real-life situation for learners to reflect on and discuss with other group members. By discussing the case, students learn from others' ideas and perspectives, and develop an understanding of the topic at hand within the workplace.



One group member reads the case study out loud



The whole group discusses the case study



Everyone develops a deeper understanding of the topic

Activities

Activity

1



15 minutes

Case study review and respond

The case study below presents a situation that could happen in real life.



Instructions:

- 1) As a group, listen to one member read the case study below while following along in your learning module.

Thy is a new factory manager at the HS garment factory. She has spotted several problems. First, supervisors do not share daily production goals and results with their team. So, workers do not know what quantities to cut or sew, and do not understand why supervisors urge them to work faster. Secondly, new workers are not taught about safety rules and production techniques, which has caused a few accidents, and many mistakes. Lastly, there is little contact between workers and supervisors, so supervisors are often unaware of problems until they become big issues.

Thy thinks that these problems could be solved if the factory shared more information with workers, and vice versa. First, she organizes daily line meetings, during which each supervisor shares yesterday's results and today's goals with his/her team. Then, Thy and the hiring manager agree on a training for new workers on work techniques and safety rules. Finally, Thy hangs a suggestion box by the lockers, and hangs posters to encourage workers to convey questions and problems to their supervisor.

As a result, workers are more informed. They work better, more efficiently, and accidents are avoided. Problems are addressed before becoming too much trouble. Workers feel more respected, included, and trust their supervisor more, which makes them more committed to the work. Thanks to the information that they share, the factory makes several improvements.

- 2) Together, discuss Thy's situation by answering the three questions in table 1 on the next page.

Table 1. Questions about Thy's situation

1. What problems has Thy identified? What impact do these problems have on the factory and its workers?

2. What does Thy do or change in order to solve these problems?

3. What are the results of Thy's solutions for the factory and its workers?

This page has been intentionally left blank and can be used for note taking.



Session 2

Learning about the topic

Goals

Discussing and understanding why it is important to share information with workers/managers.

Brainstorming different types of information that can be shared, and identifying those your factory could share.

Comparing different ways to share information and selecting those that are most adapted to your factory.

Discussing when or how often information should be shared.

Session 2

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



90 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

This training module aims to help you improve the way you communicate in the factory by focusing on communication channels for information-sharing. Sharing information across the factory encourages open communication, and makes employees feel more included and committed to your organization. This, in turn, motivates them to reach quality and productivity standards. Throughout this module, you will work on the three steps below.

What to communicate

How to communicate

When to communicate

First, you will start by discussing why it is important to communicate information in the factory, then brainstorm different types of information that can be shared, compare ways to convey this information, and finally, identify what should be communicated when, or how often.



Improving communication channels is only one part of improving communication in the factory. To keep on making improvements, ask for the “Improving communication skills” module!

Activities

Activity

2a



15 minutes

Why communicate

Communicating across the factory is beneficial to employees, but also to the factory. In this activity, you will discuss why it is important to communicate information.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss: Do you think it is important to communicate information in the factory? Why, or why not?
- 2) Together, read the list of reasons for communicating in table 2, and put a ✓ in the column on the right if you think it is important.
- 3) One by one, select the reason that you think is most important, then share with the group and explain why you chose this reason.

Table 2. Why communicate information?

Reasons	Important
1. To make workers/managers feel respected.	
2. To make workers/managers feel more included and committed.	
3. To make sure production goals are met.	
4. To improve production quality and efficiency.	
5. To make the workplace safer.	
6. To avoid rumours or inaccurate information circulating.	
7. To avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.	
8. To show workers/managers that you are open to communicating.	
9. To help workers/managers understand changes and their rationale.	
10. To help workers/managers understand how the factory works.	
11. To get workers/managers more involved in improving the factory.	

Activity

2b



20 minutes

What to communicate?

Different kinds of **information** can be communicated to workers / managers, for example about production methods, working conditions, safety, etc. In this activity, you will discuss what information your factory currently shares, and what else it could share.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss:
 - Does your factory communicate information with workers/do workers communicate information with managers?
 - If so, what kind of information is shared?
- 2) Together, discuss: What kind of information do you think should be shared? Brainstorm, and write down the different types of information that you can share around the cloud in the table 3.
- 3) Together, look at table 4 listing information that can be communicated with workers / managers. Then,
 - Underline the information that your factory currently shares.
 - Circle the information that your factory could also share.

Table 3. Brainstorming

Example: Holidays



Table 4. Types of information

Changes in organization	Pay calculation details	Maps and legends
Holidays	Change in rules	Using new machinery
Good practices (e.g. for storing fabric)	Rules (for example, “no smoking”)	Change in work processes or tools
Company mission and vision	Special events (e.g. New Year party)	Potential problems and how to solve them
Production results	Staff birthdays	Production goals
New customers or orders	Employee of the month	Organizational chart
Emergency phone numbers	Safety & hygiene guidelines	Questions that you want to ask to workers

Activity

2c



25 minutes

How to communicate?

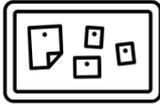
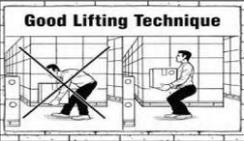
There are many simple and inexpensive **ways** to share information, in writing or verbally. In this activity, you will compare different ways to inform, and discuss which ones should be used for what information.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss the following questions:
 - How does management currently communicate information with workers (both verbally and in writing)?
 - How do workers share information with management?
- 2) Together, read through the list of information channels and their description in table 5. Then, for each one, discuss: Which type of information is it most suited to? Write your answers in the table.
- 3) Together, discuss the following questions:
 - How effective are the channels for communicating information that you are currently using in your factory?
 - Which channels are best for your factory and why? Tip: Think about the type of information to be shared, and who your workers are (e.g. level of literacy).
- 4) Together, discuss the following questions:
 - What kind of information may workers want to communicate with their supervisors / factory managers?
 - How could you make sure your workers are able to share that information? Example: Workplace Committees.

Table 5. Ways to communicate information

Channels	Type of information
 <p>Signs: Boards hung in a visible place to give indications using words or a simple drawing.</p>	<p>Example: Rules</p>
<p>Notice boards: Boards on which to post information, pictures, maps, etc. publically, to be hung indoors/outdoors.</p> 	
 <p>Educational posters: Illustrated posters for workers to learn about a certain topic.</p>	
<p>Line meetings: Short, daily or weekly meetings between a team of workers and their manager.</p> 	
 <p>Workplace Committees: Conversations between workers and managers on a certain topic, organized in advance.</p>	
<p>Announcements attached to payslips: Information that is given to workers with their payslip.</p> 	
 <p>Informal conversations: Conversations that can take place at any time and any place between workers/managers.</p>	
<p>Public address system: System used to make vocal announcements in the factory.</p> 	
 <p>Walking around: Managers walk around the factory daily to greet and chat with workers, and answer questions.</p>	
<p>Labour unions: Organizations of workers who can relay information to and from other member workers.</p> 	
 <p>Trainings and workshops: Formal trainings or workshops organized for workers by the factory.</p>	

Activity

2d



25 minutes

When to communicate?

Once you have identified what information you want to communicate in your factory, and how you are going to do so, it is important to think about **when or how often** you are going to do it. In this activity, you will discuss when to communicate different kinds of information.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss the following questions:
 - How often do you share information in your factory?
 - How often do you think it should be done ideally?
- 2) Together, read the examples of types of information to share and how in table 6, then decide when each example should take place by circling the option you think is best in the right column.
- 3) Have a participant read aloud the scenario in table 7. Then, in pairs, fill in the blank informing plan based on the scenario.
- 4) Share your plan with the other pairs, and complete your plan with ideas suggested by other pairs.

Table 6. When to communicate information?

What	How	When
How to use new machinery or working processes	Trainings/Induction	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Announcing news in the factory (e.g. new customer)	PA system	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Explaining changes in the factory to those who do not understand or are concerned	Informal conversations / Walking around	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Communicating production results and goals	Line meetings	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Reminding and indicating rules visibly	Signs	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Showing good practices and safety guidelines	Educational posters	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always

Discussing specific problems and how to solve them	Workplace committees/union	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Updating birthdays, holidays, and employee of the month	Notice boards	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always
Information on wages and pay calculation details	Pay slips	Daily / Weekly / Monthly / When needed / Always

Table 7. Informing Plan

Scenario: Thy has noticed the following problems in her factory:

- Workers do not understand how their weekly pay is calculated. This creates misunderstandings, and managers have to spend time explaining it to them.
- New workers are not using PPEs correctly.
- Workers bring food and drinks in the work areas, and say that they have not been told that it is forbidden.
- New workers do not know how to use the tools and managers do not have the time to teach them.
- Production teams just go about their daily work without knowing which targets should be achieved daily to complete customer orders on time.

What	How	When



Session 3

Your action plan

Goals

Summarizing and revising the new knowledge gained.

Identifying concrete applications of the new knowledge that benefit your factory.

Session 3

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



20 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

Throughout this module, you gained new knowledge on how and when to communicate what information in your factory.

What to communicate

How to communicate

When to communicate

In this session, you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge to improve the way you communicate information in your factory by reviewing best practices and drafting your own action plan.

Activities

Activity

3a



5 minutes

Best practices checklist

In this activity, you will review best communication practices as a next step for evaluating your own and implementing improvements.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, look at the list of best practices in table 8, and put a ✓ in the column on the right if you use these practices in your factory.

Table 8. Improving communication channels

Best practices	✓
1. Managers communicate information with workers and other managers on a regular basis or whenever needed.	
2. Workers communicate information with managers and other workers on a regular basis or whenever needed.	
3. Managers / workers know what information needs to be shared with whom (workers / managers).	
4. Managers / workers use different channels to share information with others, taking into account on what information needs to be shared with whom.	
5. Managers / workers communicate information with workers / managers at the right time, and with the right frequency.	

Activity

3b



15 minutes

Your action plan

In this activity, you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge to improve your communication channels by drafting your own action plan.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, fill in the action plan (table 9) on the next page. Identify a key problem that you want to solve and write down the solutions you identified while working on this module.

Table 9. Improving communication channels – Action Plan

Problem identified				
Solutions identified	Action(s) to be taken	Person responsible	By when?	How will improvements be measured?

Improving communication channels

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FIT is being piloted in Asia under the regional Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project funded by the Government of Sweden.

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