

Food and beverage manufacturers:

5 ways to boost production through
better communication




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Introduction

In food and beverage manufacturing, proper communication is what gets things done. Whether you're coordinating with inspectors before an audit, managing equipment breakdowns, or adapting to last-minute schedule changes, you and your team need to stay connected. Communication is what keeps your operations running smoothly and your clients satisfied.

When communication fails, the consequences can be severe. Missed communication can lead to halted production lines, disrupted supply chains, and dissatisfied clients. That's why having the right communication strategies in place is essential—not just to avoid delays but to reduce costs, drive efficiency, and strengthen relationships.



This guide lays out 5 easy ways you can improve communication across your business. These simple strategies are designed to help you and your team work more efficiently, respond faster, and keep things moving.

Option 1: Provide company-owned mobile phones

Equipping key staff with company-owned mobile phones ensures critical calls and messages are handled quickly and securely, without relying on personal devices.

Why it works: Work phones separate personal and business communication, help employees stay focused, and eliminate concerns over personal airtime or data.

How to get started:



Provide phones to key employees like production managers or shift supervisors.

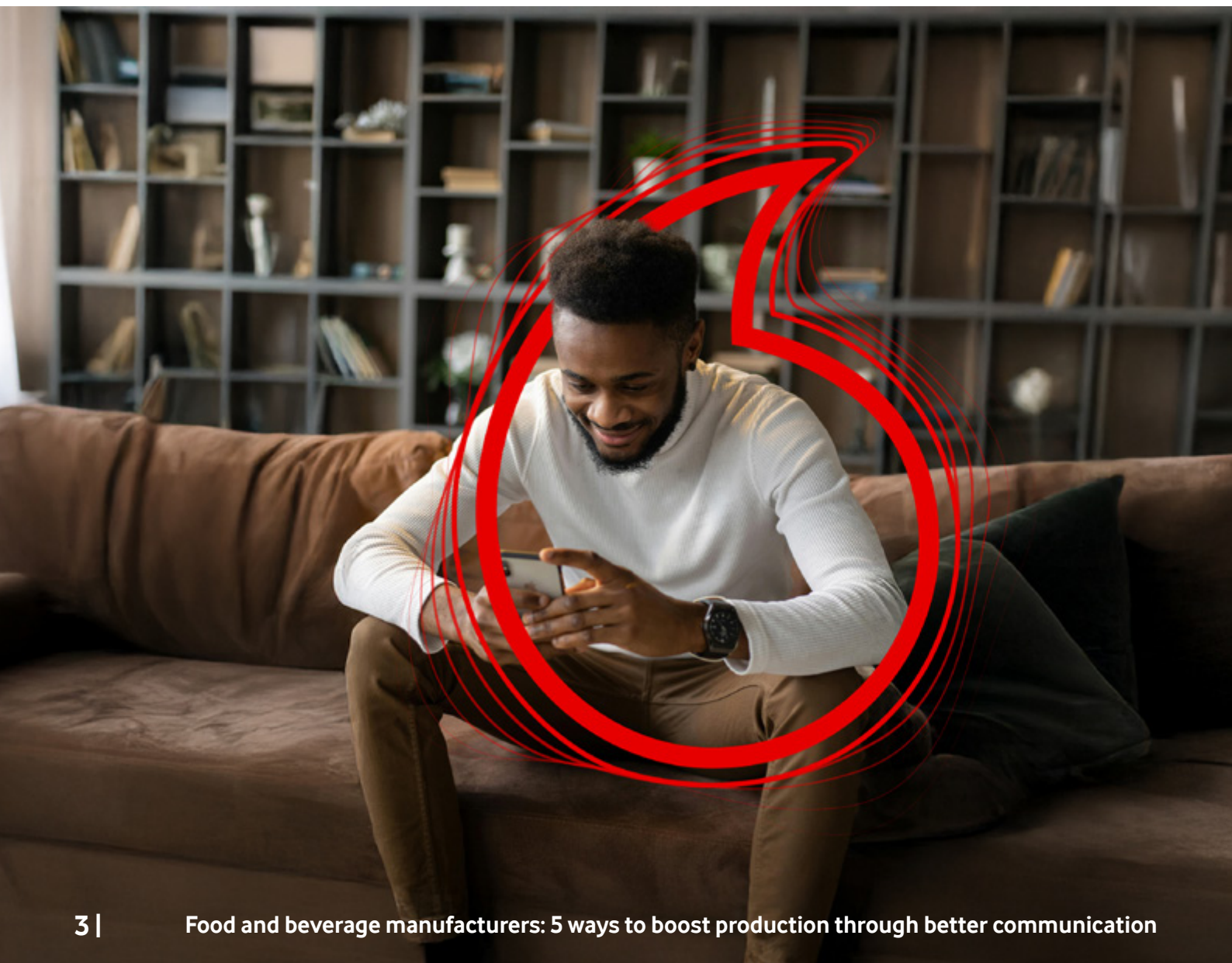


Install apps for messaging, inventory management, or production updates.



Explain that work phones are for business tasks only.

Example: A client calls with an urgent request, but your team can't return the call because they've run out of personal airtime or data. A company-owned phone avoids this issue, ensuring quick and professional responses every time.



Option 2: Use a shared communication tool

In your industry, teams must collaborate seamlessly to handle fast-moving schedules and supply chain changes. A shared communication tool ensures everyone stays on the same page, whether on the factory floor or working off-site.

Why it works: Combining calls, messages, and updates in one place reduces confusion and delays. Real-time updates allow teams to track changes and address issues without miscommunication.

How to get started:



Choose a tool like Microsoft Teams or Slack that works well across devices.



Train your team on sharing updates and accessing key information.



Start with key departments like production and procurement.

Example: Your procurement team is waiting for an update on raw materials, but the email is overlooked. A shared tool ensures suppliers can update everyone simultaneously, allowing production schedules to adjust immediately and avoid downtime.



Option 3: Invest in reliable internet and mobile connectivity

From automated systems to cloud-based inventory tools, manufacturing depends on reliable connectivity. A weak internet connection can disrupt systems and delay updates, leading to costly downtime.

Why it works: Reliable connectivity ensures your tools and systems work when needed. It prevents delays caused by dropped connections and supports real-time monitoring and scheduling.

How to get started:



Assess your connectivity needs based on tools, devices, and team size.



Partner with a provider experienced in manufacturing environments.



Add a backup connection, like a mobile hotspot, to prevent disruptions.

Example: An internet outage hits while processing a large order. Without a backup connection, production halts, delaying delivery. With a failover in place, operations continue smoothly, meeting deadlines and avoiding disruptions.

Option 4: Set up automatic call forwarding and voicemail

In manufacturing, issues can arise anytime, and timely communication is critical. Automatic call forwarding and voicemail ensure important calls are addressed even when no one is immediately available.

Why it works: Call forwarding redirects calls to someone who can act, while customised voicemail messages reassure clients and suppliers their concerns are being addressed.

How to get started:



Set rules for redirecting calls based on availability or time of day.



Update voicemail greetings regularly with relevant information.



Train your team on handling forwarded calls promptly.

Example: A supplier calls after hours to report a delay. With call forwarding, the call reaches the night supervisor, who adjusts schedules and informs the team, minimising disruptions.



Option 5: Establish clear communication protocols

Clear communication protocols set expectations for how and when information is shared, ensuring critical updates aren't missed.

Why it works: Defining preferred channels and response times helps teams avoid confusion, improve efficiency, and prioritise urgent issues.

How to get started:



Define preferred communication channels (e.g., phone for urgent issues, email for updates).



Share guidelines with your team through meetings or written documents.

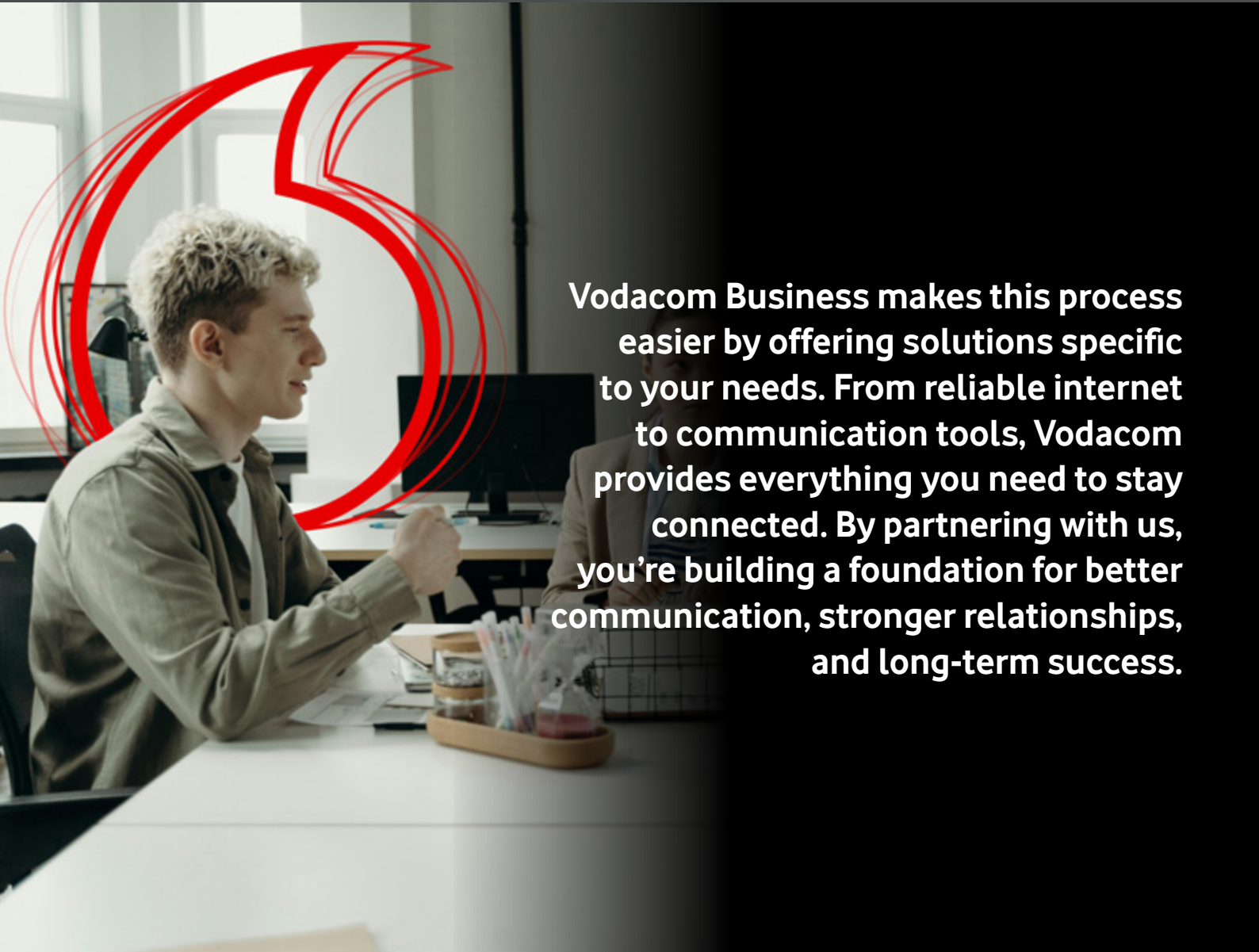


Regularly review and adjust protocols based on team feedback.

Example: Your production team knows urgent machinery breakdowns should be reported directly via phone, while routine updates go through a messaging app. This ensures critical issues are resolved immediately without overwhelming the system.

How Vodacom Business can support your communication needs

Implementing these strategies doesn't have to happen all at once. Even small steps—like starting with company-owned phones or introducing a shared communication tool—can make a big difference. But as your business grows, having all these elements in place will become essential to meet the demands of clients and keep operations running smoothly.



Vodacom Business makes this process easier by offering solutions specific to your needs. From reliable internet to communication tools, Vodacom provides everything you need to stay connected. By partnering with us, you're building a foundation for better communication, stronger relationships, and long-term success.

Conclusion

In food and beverage manufacturing, smooth communication keeps everything on track. Whether it's staying in touch with your team, coordinating with suppliers, or responding to clients, these strategies give you practical ways to avoid disruptions and improve efficiency.

Start with what makes the most sense for your business, and build from there. Each step you take will bring you closer to stronger relationships, faster responses, and a more connected operation.



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