



MODULE 5

Importance of communication and storytelling in promoting your mastery of Culinary Heritage

Module Contents

In our Final Module, we take you on a learning journey of the importance of communication and storytelling in promoting your mastery of Culinary Heritage.

We want to expose Europe to the stories each region has to tell and highlight the benefit of telling our individual stories from the original idea to the creative reality.

In addition to this, we want to learn about the students' journey and their development.

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01

The Importance of Communication & Telling the Story





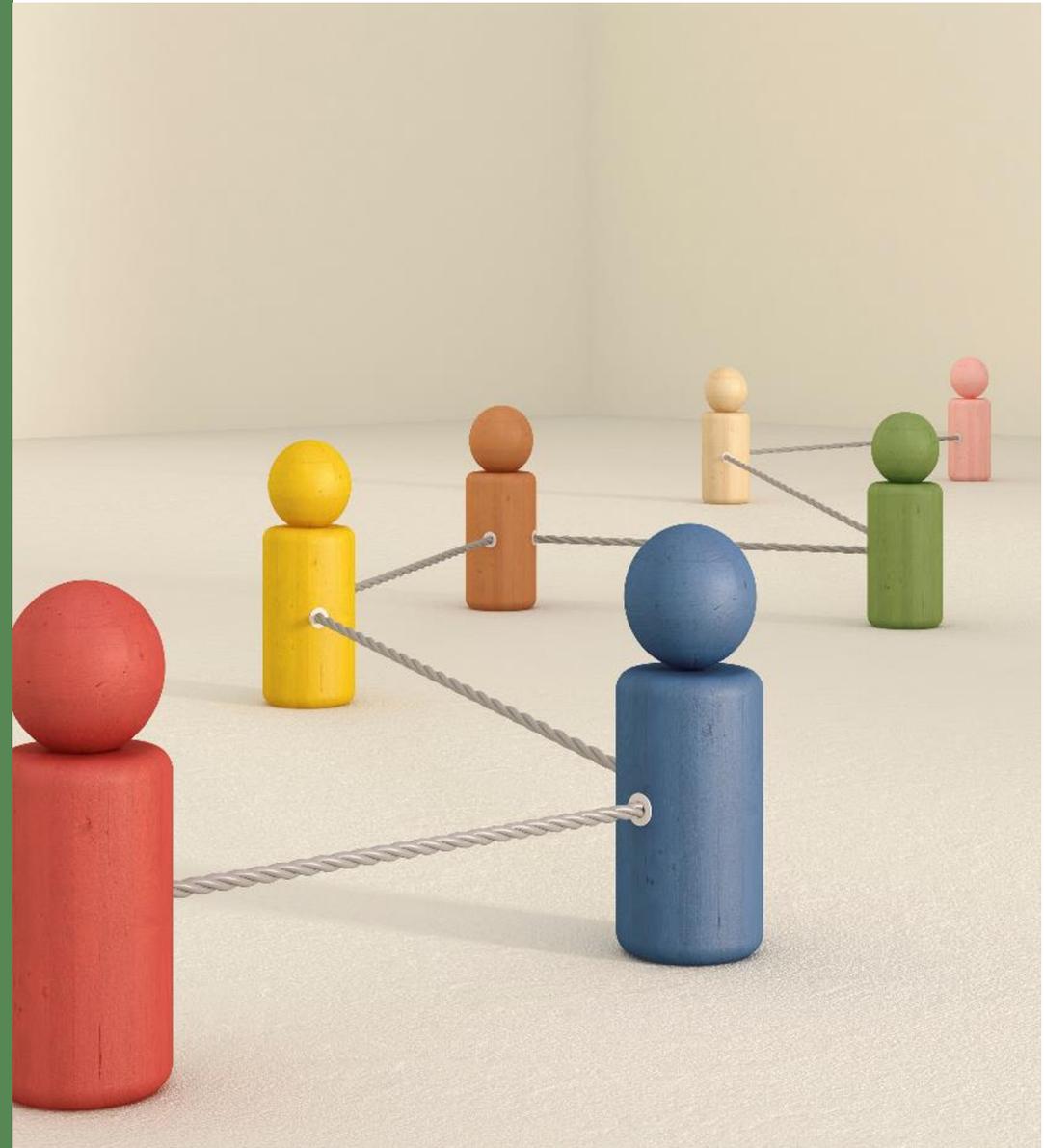
“ *Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using some other medium* ”

Oxford Dictionary

The Importance of Good Communication

Employers who invest time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication will rapidly build trust among employees and students, leading to increases in productivity, output and morale in general.

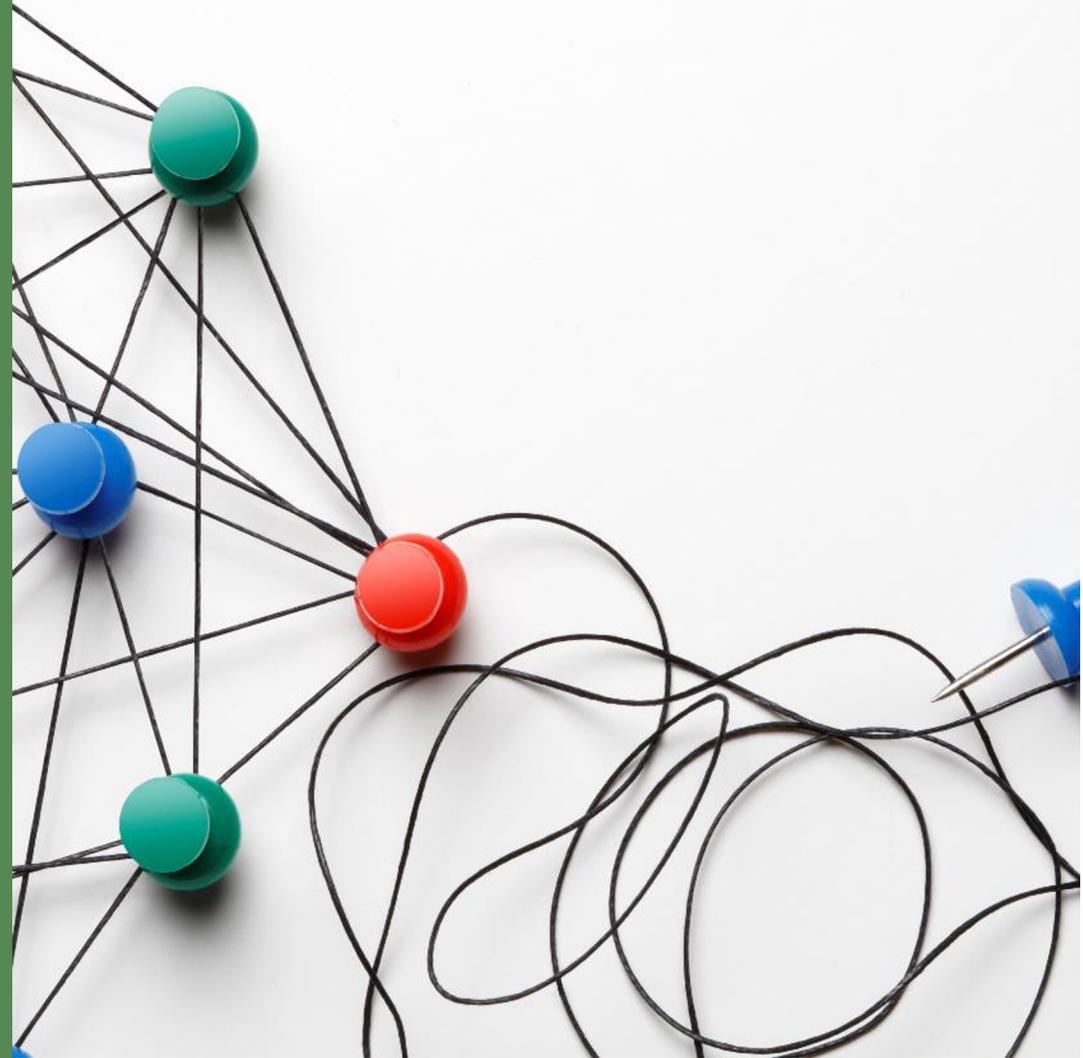
Employees / students who communicate effectively with colleagues, managers and customers are always valuable assets to a business and it is a skill which can often set people apart from their competition when applying for jobs.



Consequences of Poor Communication

Poor communication in the culinary workplace will inevitably lead to unmotivated staff and students that may begin to question their own confidence in their abilities and ultimately, they may lose belief in the business.

Poor communication also means your customer doesn't understand your ethos or message or know what you are selling to them, and this can lead to a lack of business growth.



Strong Communication

The importance of strong communication runs deep within EVERY business. But even more so in culinary businesses.

Here are five key reasons you should be paying attention...to benefit you, your business, your employees, your customer and the ability to share your culinary heritage story.

1

TEAM BUILDING

2

INCLUSION

3

INNOVATION

4

GROWTH

5

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT

1 Team Building



Building effective teams is really all about how those team members communicate and collaborate together. In Module 1, you learnt that bridging the generation gap is an important element in this.

Making the students feel a part of the team is also critical.

By implementing effective strategies, such as those listed below (slide 13), to boost communication you will go a long way toward building effective teams.

Having a strong TEAM, will improve morale and employee satisfaction.

2

Inclusion- Giving everyone a voice



Employee and student satisfaction can rely a lot on them feeling they have a voice and are being listened to, whether it be regarding an idea they have had or about a complaint they need to make.

As explored in Module 3 , active listening is an important element in this and can help foster creativity and positivity within a food business

Well established lines of communication should be afforded to everyone, no matter their level, giving the ability to freely communicate with their peers, colleagues and superiors.

3

Innovation



When students and employees are enabled to openly communicate ideas without fear of ridicule or retribution, they are far more likely to bring their ideas to the table.

Again, in Module 3 we explored how idea creation and innovation relies heavily on this and how an organisation which encourages communication is far more likely to be an innovative one.

Also, in Module 3 we shared how a 'Scenius' can also be created within your food business, to encourage and promote communication by various methods e.g., white-boards, idea-boxes, team huddle areas, good staff areas.

4

Growth



Of course, communication can be viewed both internally and externally. By being joined up internally and having strong lines of communication you are ensuring that the message of your culinary heritage or your business's ethos or mission will be delivered consistently externally.

To grow your business via the assistance of Student placements and by focusing on your culinary heritage you must first ensure that internally everyone understands the message you want to communicate.

5

Strong Management



When employers are strong communicators, they are better able to manage their teams.

The delegation of tasks, conflict management, motivation and relationship building (all key responsibilities of any manager) are all much easier when you are a strong communicator.

Strong communication is not just the ability to speak to people but to empower them to speak to each other – facilitating strong communication channels is key.

Good management basically ties the first 4 elements of strong communication together.

How can you improve how your culinary business communication?



- Define goals and expectations** – Employers are effective when they share clear, achievable tasks/goals to both teams and individuals/ students, outlining exactly what is required on any given task or project, and ensuring that all staff are aware of the objectives of the project.
- Clearly deliver your message** – Ensure your message is clear and accessible to your intended audience. To do this it is essential that you speak plainly and politely – getting your message across clearly without causing confusion.
- Choose your medium carefully** – Once you've created your message you need to ensure it's delivered in the best possible format. While face-to-face communication is by far the best way to build trust with employees and students, it is not always an option. Take time to decide whether information delivered in a printed copy would work better than an email etc.
- Keep everyone involved** – Ensure that lines of communication are always kept open. Actively seek and encourage progress reports and project updates. Team huddles are great for this in an informal way.
- Listen and show empathy** – Communication is a two-way process, and no company will survive long if it doesn't listen and encourage dialogue with the other party. Listening shows respect and allows you to learn about any outstanding issues you may need to address as an employer. As a best practice it is recommended to address the inevitable misunderstandings immediately.

The power of a STORY

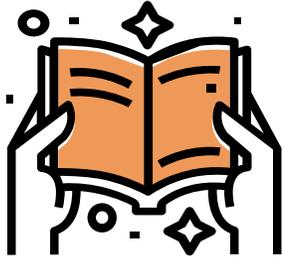
Storytelling is an essential communication tool. It can make complex data accessible, bring a team together, shape work culture and sell successfully.

Here we learn:

- The benefits of powerful storytelling
- How to improve your basic storytelling skills
- How to use storytelling to build relationships



[The Power of Storytelling | eLearning Course - YouTube](#)



Storytelling has psychological superpowers which make it a powerful marketing tool:

Emotion: When you hear a story and feel a personal connection, which isn't just theoretical; it's based on some fascinating neuroscience facts. While hearing a story, many more areas of your brain activate and become engaged.



One of the most powerful communication tools - Storytelling

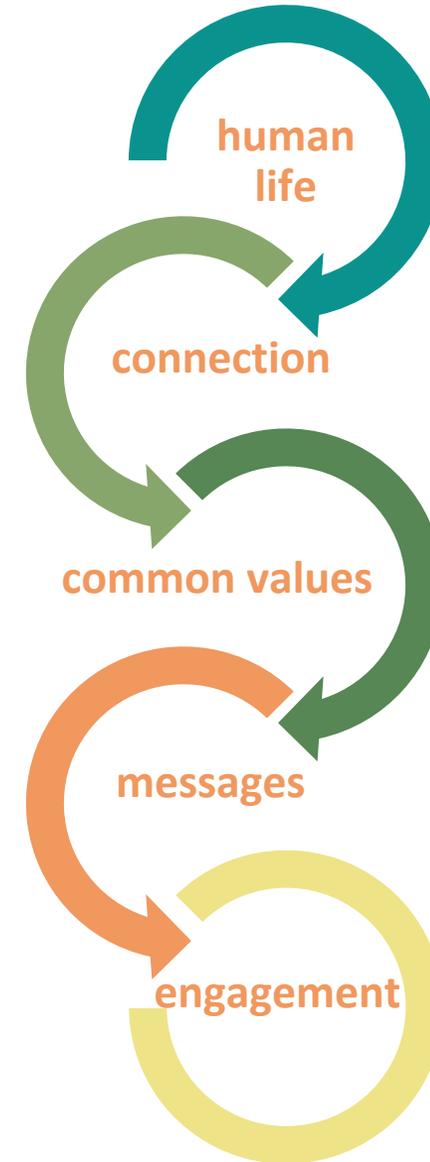
A listener makes an **emotional connection** with a story, and the message is considered **genuine** and so it also establishes the teller as a trusted entity. It encourages the listener's active imagination and involves a two-way interaction between a storyteller and listeners.

A story empowers listeners to visualise vivid, sensory elements of the story based on the storyteller's performance and their own experiences and understandings.

We want you to tell your local heritage food story!



- Stories define the very essence of **human life**
- People begin to feel a **connection**
- **Common values** are identified and messages are communicated
- Themes like family, love, friendship, our history and others are common to every nation – **messages** with global reach
- A compelling story can give the customer the incentive they need to become more **engaged** with your business.



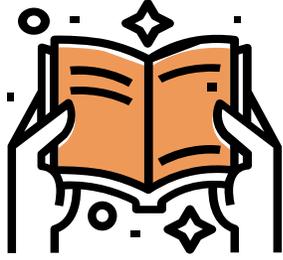


Your story isn't just what you tell people, it's also what they believe about you based on the signals or messages that your brand and product or service sends.



Creating a brand story...

An image or perception is made up of facts, feelings and interpretations, from everything you do...each element of your product, business or brand, from the old recipe, where you found it, the ingredients you use, where you source them, the way you prepare and present your product, to your packaging and even your distribution methods.



You have found the past...now you want to sell it. ...so, it is important to tell your customers the story of how you got here and what you have achieved and involve them in the journey!



Elements in Creating a brand story...

- Start with the Personal Story: Your and your region's history.
- Your Passion Story: What you love about the past, the food, the experience.
- The Personality Story: What is the customer experience ahead of them.
- The Customer Story: What do other customers say about your offerings?
- The Employee Story: How employees explain the 'feel' or culture of the business and the offerings.

Also use Storytelling in your marketing - Storyteller to StorySeller

Here, Darin Persinger talks about how you must combine your storytelling with storyselling... Telling effective marketing stories... how to tell marketing stories that are effective for your business



[Marketing Storytelling: Tell Effective Marketing Stories - YouTube](#)

02

Breaking Down Barriers



Communication Barriers

You've heard the "communication is key" cliché, haven't you? There's a reason that sentiment is so often repeated: it's true!

Effective communication is great but isn't always easy. In fact, it can be really difficult. One poll of 1,000 employees conducted by Interact/Harris Poll found that 91% of respondents think their leaders lack this critical skill.



Common Barriers

When it comes to what makes communication so challenging, there are **seven common barriers** that stand in your way.

Let's talk about each of them, as well as how you and your team can overcome them.

1

Physical Barriers

2

Cultural Barriers

3

Language Barriers

4

Perceptual Barriers

5

Interpersonal Barriers

6

Gender Barriers

7

Emotional Barriers

1

Physical Barriers

Physical barriers are often tangible obstacles or boundaries that keep team members apart. These could be closed doors, dividing walls, small working spaces, and blocked off areas



1

How to Break Physical Barriers down

Nobody is saying you need to immediately convert to an open kitchen or restaurant floor plan, but there are a few things you can do to help steer your team around physical barriers, including:

- **Provide plenty of space for collaboration**, so employees have the option to stay heads down in their work in their own workspace or head to a spot where more discussion is encouraged.
- **Set ground rules** for the different communication mediums on your team (for example, direct face to face or instant messages are for urgent requests and emails or notice boards are for status updates and summaries).
- **Keep your own office door open**, to remain approachable or set regular office hours where team members or students can stop by with questions and feedback.

2

Cultural Barriers

Diverse teams are more productive, creative, and profitable, but having students /employees of all different backgrounds also presents some communication challenges. There are different generations, cultures, races, and more, which leads to different values, work ethics, norms, and preferences, or a student/employee may feel as if they don't mesh with the existing culture of an organisation.



2

How to Break Cultural Barriers down

If cultural barriers exist, it can be tempting to think that you're better off building a homogeneous team. That's not true. You need to find ways to navigate these cultural barriers so you can reap the benefits of a diverse team while still communicating well. Here are a few ideas:

- Discuss communication preferences with each employee to create a manual of sorts, that holds important information about how to work with them effectively, like what their values and ethos are and how they prefer to receive praise and feedback.
- Celebrate the differences on your team with various events and educational opportunities (they're fun, and they boost understanding!). E.g., like a cooking their favourite food or a regional dish of where they are from originally.

3

Language Barriers

If you've ever tried to converse with someone who doesn't speak your same language, you know that reaching a shared understanding is very difficult. That's why language can be a major barrier to communication.

It's important to remember that this isn't just about different dialects, but about jargon too. If a kitchen team member is talking to someone with a non-native tongue using industry lingo like "86 it" and "mise en place" confusion is inevitable.



3

How to Break Language Barriers down

- **Be mindful of jargon** and encourage your team members to state things as simple as possible. You can even turn it into a fun “jargon alert” type of game to build awareness of when you’re slipping into the habit of using acronyms or lingo.
- **Remember body language** too. Various gestures and postures are viewed differently by different people, so don’t neglect your nonverbal communication.
- **Use visuals, demonstrations, and examples** where possible. Those can help provide a lot more clarity than written or verbal communication.
- If feasible, **select one language** for the workplace.

4

Perceptual Barriers

Imagine that you went into a heritage food planning meeting with the assumption that it was going to be a major waste of your time. How inclined are you to listen closely? To engage in the discussion? To actively participate? Your motivation is probably running pretty low, isn't it? That's a perceptual barrier.

The assumptions we carry with us into exchanges influence our communication style and can actually hinder our ability to get our point across or receive messages from others.



4

How to Break Perceptual Barriers down

It'd be nice if your own perceptions, biases, and assumptions had a simple "off" switch. While navigating around this barrier isn't quite that easy, these tips can help:

- Support your points with **facts and evidence**. That type of proof helps to back up your claims, regardless of someone's perceptions.
- **View situations from a different perspective** and encourage team members to do the same. It's easy for us to get stuck in our own way of thinking. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes can help you understand other intentions, opinions, and approaches.
- **Ask clarifying questions**. These require that you operate based on the information in front of you, rather than your assumptions.

5

Interpersonal Barriers

Let's clarify this one with another example. Think of a time when you had to converse with someone who was undeniably stubborn. They insisted that their view was correct, and they refused to listen to any other points of view.

That discussion was difficult because you couldn't truly connect with that other person. That's an interpersonal barrier in action.



5

How to Break Interpersonal Barriers down

Interpersonal barriers are difficult to overcome, especially if someone is withdrawn and isn't willing to engage. But here are a few tips that can start to get things back on track:

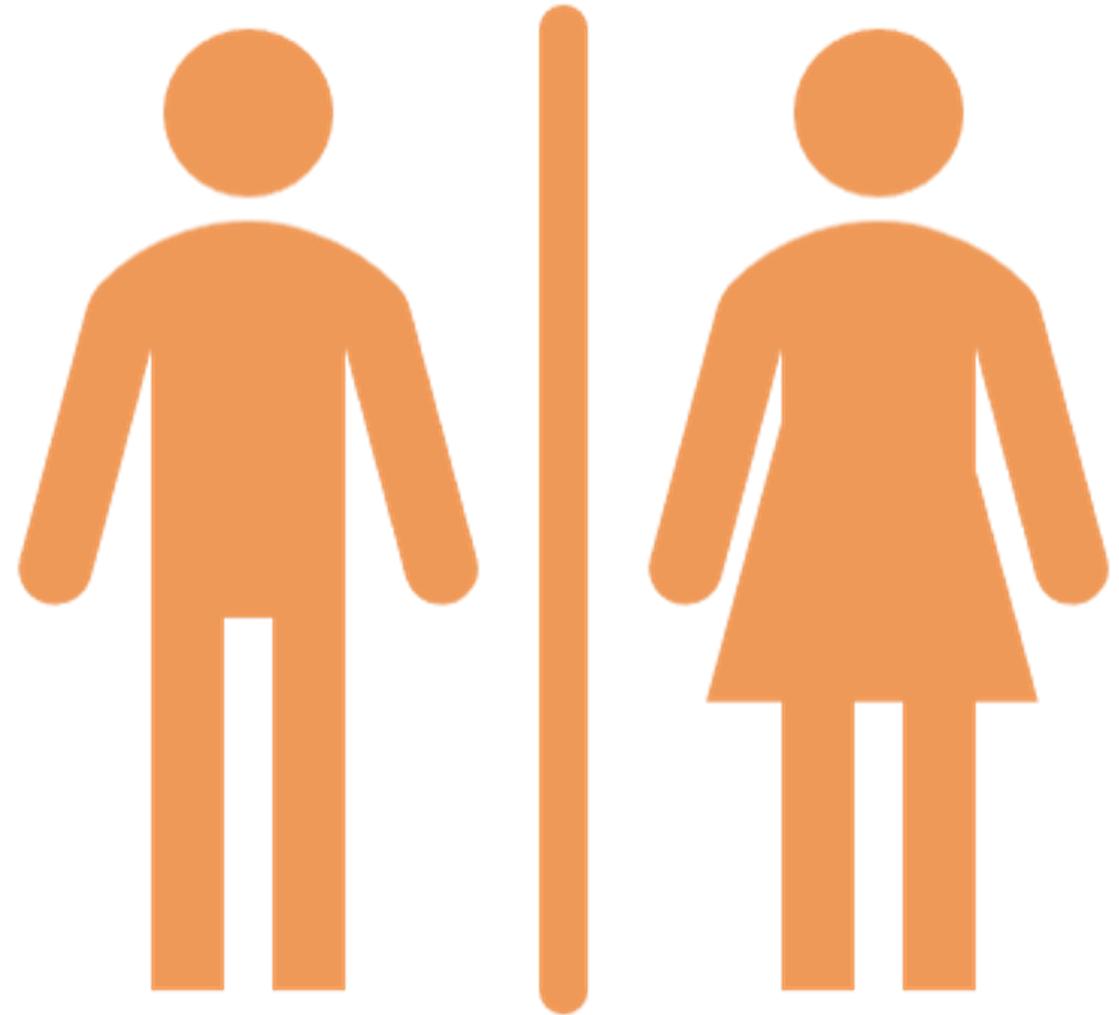
- Take a deep breath. These situations can be disheartening, and frustrating but escalating emotions won't help.
- **Remember to listen.** So often when we think about "communication," we think about the words we're speaking. Listening is just as (if not more) important. Give others a chance to speak their minds. You might learn a lot about where that interpersonal barrier is coming from.

6

Gender Barriers

There's no shortage of stereotypes and generalisations about how men and women communicate differently.

Some of those might hold true while others have been debunked, it's worth paying attention to any discrepancies between how different genders in your workplace communicate so you can facilitate improved collaboration and working relationships.



6

How to Break Gender Barriers down

The best method is to stay away from generalisations and learn more about each team member regardless of gender or gender identity. You can do this using the following strategies:

- This is another area where **personal manuals** can be helpful. These can empower you and your team members to learn more about each other's unique preferences and styles, rather than operating on stereotypes.
- Encourage team members to **provide feedback to one another**. This is helpful for addressing all the communication barriers and enabling people to understand how their messages are being received by their team members.
- Have **open conversations** about gender bias on your team. Being candid and transparent about those issues is far better than turning a blind eye and pretending they don't exist.

7

How to Break Emotional Barriers down

Emotions are natural, and they shouldn't be discouraged or reprimanded. Instead, you and your team need to understand how to deal with them. Try some of these strategies:

- **Know when it's time to walk away.** Whether your emotions are escalating, or you notice an exchange is getting heated between team members, normalise "taking a break" and returning to that conversation when everyone has had a breather.
- **Practice naming your emotions.** As strange as it can feel to say, "I feel angry" in front of your team, it's actually helpful in diffusing that emotion. It's a concept called "name it to tame it." (watch short video on next slide)

“Name it to tame it”

In this video, Author and Psychiatrist Dr. Dan Siegel demonstrates a step-by-step approach to help manage strong emotions. At the same time Dr. Siegel explains how this process is working at a biological level by “squirting soothing neurotransmitters” in the brain!



[Dan Siegel: Name it to Tame it - YouTube](#)

Now let's think about your customers

Ok, so we now know how to improve communication internally (with Employees and Students), but it is important to think externally and consider our existing or potential customers.

A lot of the same principles apply to customers when it comes to communication barriers. Let's review...



Breaking down the Barriers with Customers:

- 1. Physical:** although physical barriers have never been so prevalent in the culinary industry, it is important to still be able to interact with your customers. Digitalisation is a major tool to enable this. Get your message out there via Social media, QR codes, even messages on the new 'barriers' that now often exist between tables.
- 2. Cultural:** You recognise the potential of reawakening an interest in heritage foods. We want you to celebrate your region's cultural identity through culinary stories and to re-create 'places on plates'.

Breaking down the Barriers with Customers:

- 3. Language:** Again, here we can use technology to help break down the language barrier when customers without a native tongue visit your food service business. Translations of your menu could be found via QR codes or on your website. Similarly, your culinary story could be shared.
- 4. Perceptual:** Breaking down perceptual barriers is best done using facts and evidence. Including facts and data into your culinary heritage story can eliminate these barriers.
- 5. Interpersonal:** the old motto 'the customer is always right' is often a difficult one to swallow, but even if it isn't always true making the customer feel that they are right is often sufficient. Listening to them and showing empathy can often change a viewpoint and break down that barrier.

Breaking down the Barriers with Customers:

- 6. Gender:** This shouldn't be an issue when communicating externally. A customer is a customer regardless of gender and it would be very unusual for issues or bias to arise due to gender. However, what may exist is that some team members may feel more comfortable in customer service positions than others.
- 7. Emotional:** Our culinary past may be an emotional story depending on the region and the history. Emotion in this sense can be a positive ...it can portray how embedded you are and how real the story is. Building an emotional connection with the customer is important and leads to empathy, trust and repeat custom.

Sharing your Story...

As we explored, it is important to develop rapport internally with your team and externally with customers and **storytelling** is a very good tool for communication and relationship development.

It allows the recipients to live the story, breathe the ethos and get excited about what you want them to know when it comes to Culinary Heritage within your business.



Be Inspired by THE MISUNDERSTOOD HERON...

This is a prime example of how a small Food Business can make such an impact via good and clear communication. They only sell innovative, fresh, local, and seasonal food, and constantly communicate this (via their [website](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)) and now the word has spread organically...see some reviews:

- [John and Sally McKennas' Guides](#)
- [Lonely Planet List | Food&Wine \(foodandwine.ie\)](#)
- [Leenane Georgina Campbell Guides \(ireland-guide.com\)](#)
- [MISUNDERSTOOD HERON, - Tripadvisor](#)
- [Visit Misunderstood Heron with Discover Ireland](#)
- [How a food business in the West of Ireland has taken flight \(irishtimes.com\)](#)
- [Restaurant review: The Misunderstood Heron - Independent.ie](#)

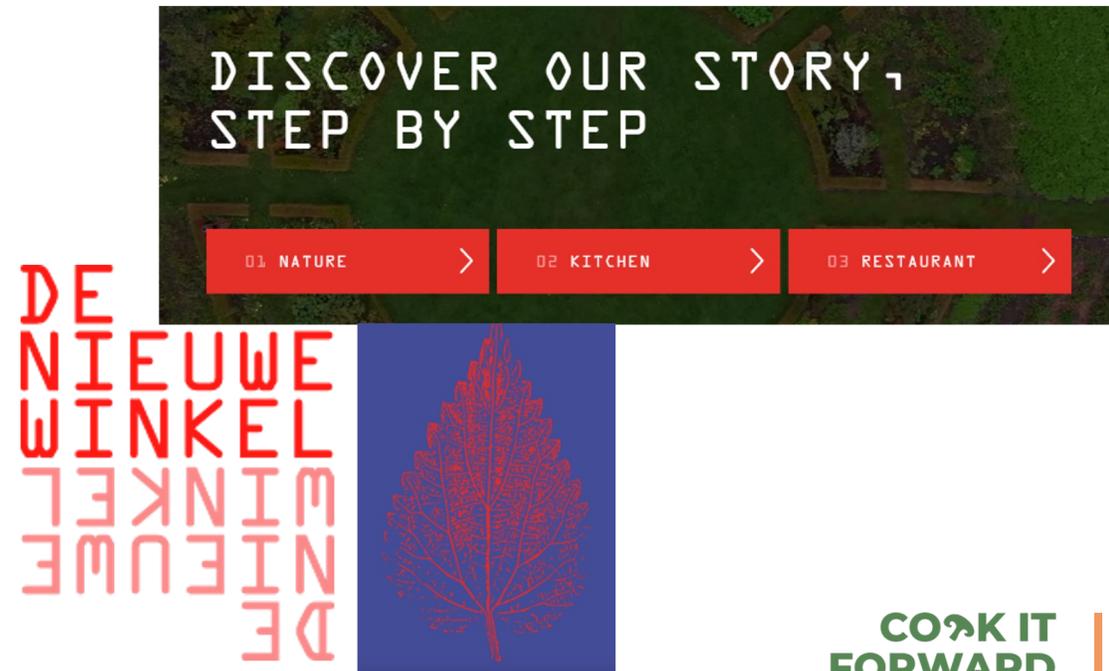


Misunderstood
Heron



Be Inspired by De Nieuwe Winkel Restaurant

Again, this renowned Dutch restaurant is exceptional at telling its story. Their [website](#) uses great visuals to enhance the message (“*We cook with plants. You eat what we find close by. In food forests and kitchen gardens. We believe in botanical gastronomy*”) they are trying to portray to their customers. They invite and encourage any visitors to their website to discover their story and have broken it down into 3 elements nature, kitchen, and restaurant. They are also very good at keeping the customer informed on their Social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).) and are consistent with their imagery and message throughout all platforms.



03

The Benefits of Sharing Ideas to Create Opportunities



Sharing ideas to create opportunities



“The value of an idea lies in the using of it.”

— Thomas Edison

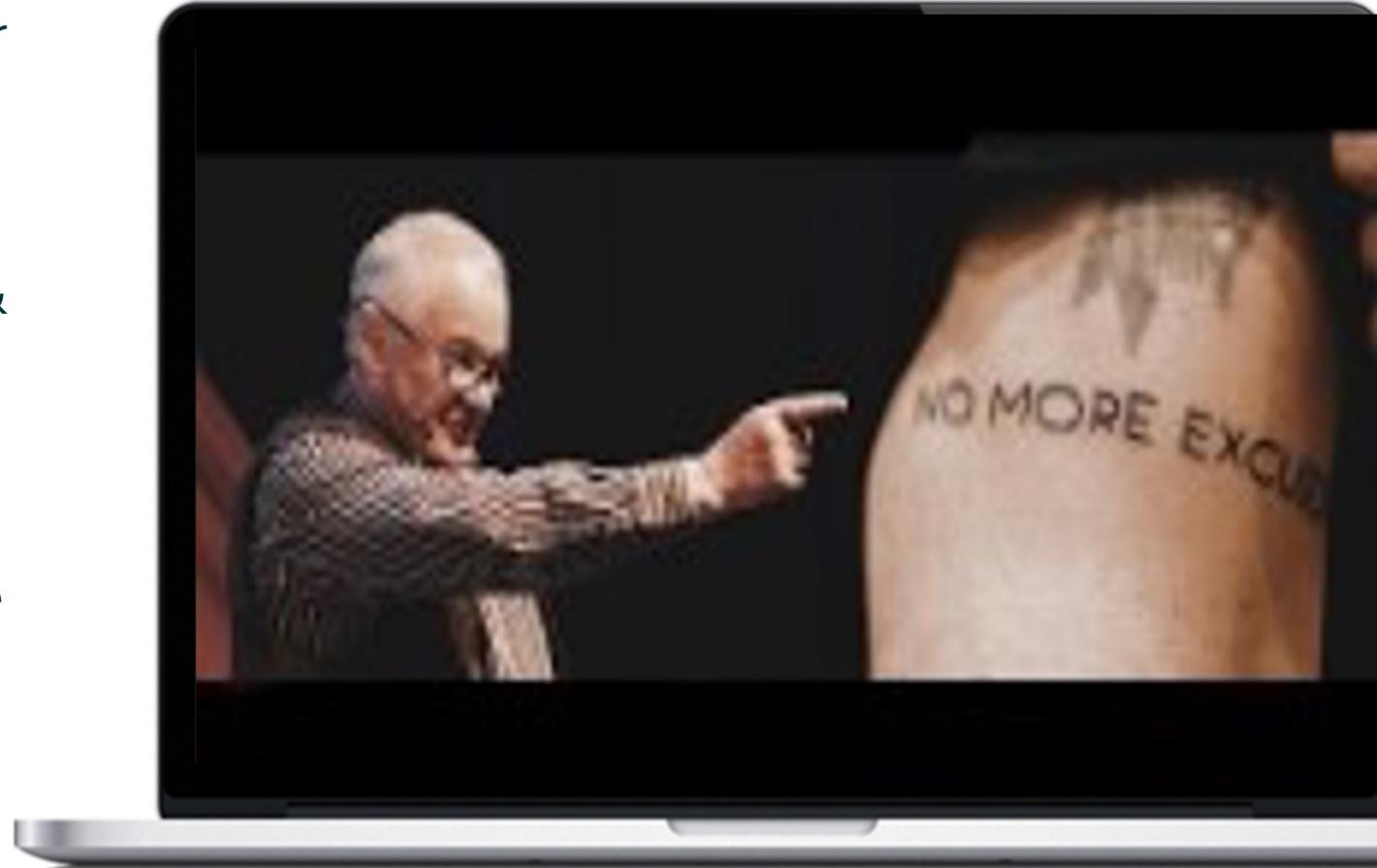
“Creative organisations are more agile”

— Tim Brown, IDEO

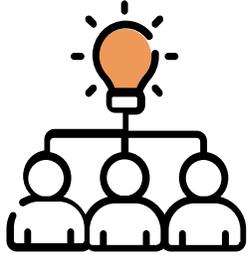
Food on the Edge...sharing ideas to create a better future

Food on the Edge is a coming-together of top international chefs for a two-day Food Symposium in Galway city on the Wild Atlantic Way.

The aim of the symposium is to share & challenge their perspective on food and their connection to it. All chef speakers are chosen for their innovation, passion, and influence on today's food culture. Each talk is on the cultural, social, environmental, and educational aspects of food. The emphasis for the talk is on their vision for the future of food and how we can make things better on both a local and a global level.



[The Future of Food is a Call to Act - YouTube](#)



You and your staff become the sellers of your local culinary heritage!

Seeing and hearing people come and taste it means you as a team are keeping that ingredient, that forgotten vegetable, or that recipe alive and you are protecting the cultural and culinary heritage of your region



Staff Morale

Being part of a team that is involved in an improvement or change is exciting and motivational. It builds staff morale as voices are heard and success is within reach or even tangible.

Knowing that you or your team's idea helped to protect and promote your culinary heritage is success.

Your business will become a learning centre for young people. Nurturing a culture of continual improvement.



Business opportunities

Food Business and Food Tourism opportunities lie within your local culinary heritage! Drawing from the past, enables you to innovate new responsive products and services demanded by ever changing markets.

Sharing your ideas and creations keeps your business alive as well as keeping your culinary heritage alive.

As mentioned in Module 4, opportunities lie within our Culinary heritage for you as a Food business.

By sharing and promoting the ideas you and your team generate, to reinvent your region's culinary past you are creating opportunities for your business. The reinventions are innovative ways to keep your business competitive and to attract new clientele and to retain existing customers.



Maintaining traditions

Our regions are rich in history, traditions, culture and a lot of delicious and varied foods, ingredients and flavours.

Recipes have transcended from generation to generation. Places tend to have unique dishes associated with them due to 'heritage ingredients' or traditional methods or features. We want to maintain them.

The Ideo team of design thinking are firm believers in **sharing ideas** and expanding on them together as this creates more good ideas.

By sharing your culinary heritage ideas among your team and region you expand their potential and thus create a more sustainable culture or practice of maintaining past or forgotten traditions.



Sharing among Regions

One of the core objectives of Cook it Forward is to start the inter-cultural conversation between youngsters about cultural heritage and let them discover the diversity of Europe's cultural heritage. They will realise what European regions have in common in cultural heritage and share with each other culinary traditions, ancient recipes, forgotten regional ingredients and traditional cooking techniques.

Cook it Forward is not only about sharing our new and creative ideas within our own regions but about sharing them with each other. We can learn from each other and thus have a greater reach from our 'learning centres'. We want to spread the word of how important it is to preserve our Culinary heritage across Europe.

Are Ideas worth Spreading??

In this short video Jerre Maas, MSc is a social psychologist and serial entrepreneur. He believes in one thing; sharing is the key to ensuring your ideas become reality.

In his ultra-short TEDx talk, he will show us why adults stop sharing and why this is the biggest idea-killer.



[Ideas worth spreading? | Jerre Maas | TEDxBreda - YouTube](#)



04

Creating Competency Checklists for Students



Key Competencies

Cook it Forward supports youngsters in ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING THE KEY COMPETENCES and soft skills that are essential in finding a job in the future such as good communication, a sense of responsibility, networking skills, entrepreneurial mind-set and a pro-active attitude, thus fostering their employability after they graduate. The world of work assignments will include a variety of elements in which youngsters automatically apply and develop their competences with regards to: doing research, analysing, cooperation in groups, problem solving, discussion, presentation, etc



Impact on Students

Cook it Forward effectuates a true change in knowledge, competences, behaviour & perception of students. By participating in CIF, students will not only realise the importance of their culinary heritage for both their personal identity and the identity of their community, the intercultural dialogue between students will also unlock a sense of regional pride, contributing to regions livability.

It is these VET students that will be working for our regional hotels, restaurants and companies and feed into our society in the future. As an employer, you empower them to be a culinary heritage advocate.



Why do we need to carry out these checklists and how...

The impact assessment of the students consists of 2 distinct phases and moments.

The Baseline Measurement will take place immediately before the start of the Cook it Forward work placement. At this stage, each student receives (or accesses online) the self-assessment sheet. They are asked to rate their perceived level of skills with regards to a specific set of topics and knowledge. The sheets are then collected and closed for access until after the Impact Assessment.

The Impact Assessment is conducted immediately after the implementation of the Cook it Forward work placement programme, with the aim to evaluate the skills attainment with regards to the topics and knowledge included in the self-assessment sheet. It is the same sheet as used in the Baseline Measurement, but at a different point in time. The aim is to assess the progress the students themselves perceive with regards to the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

The VET teacher and/or employer then analyses the sheets to get insight into the student's own perception with regards to their advancement in knowledge and skills



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www.cookitforward.eu

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