MASTER THESIS

To attain the academic degree of

Master of Arts in Business

from the

Degree Programmes

International Marketing & Sales Management

of *CAMPUS 02* University of Applied Sciences

Development of an international internal communication concept with a focus on social intranets

Mentor:

Mag. Bernd Oberzaucher

Presented by:

Michael Lazansky, BA

1510558010

Graz, 23 June 2017

Declaration of authenticity

I hereby certify that I have written the present thesis independently and without help from any third parties. I have not used any sources other than those which are clearly indicated and have duly provided details of the sources of both direct and indirect quotations. The present piece of work and parts thereof have to date not been presented to this or any other examination board in the same or similar form, nor have they been published. The present version is the same as the electronic version submitted.

Graz, 23 June 2017   …………………………………

                                                                    Michael Lazansky, BA

Acknowledgement / words of thanks

I hereby also wish to cordially thank all people, who have supported the successful completion of my master thesis.

First, a big thank you is to be dedicated to my mentors, both my thesis mentor, Mag. Bernd Oberzaucher, and my company mentor, Konrad Berger, MSc. They both accompanied me in writing my thesis and provided me with all relevant information. Especially Mr Oberzaucher strengthened my belief in my own intentions and ideas, and encouraged me with his constructive and professional feedback.

Furthermore, I want to thank all employees of RECOM, who have supported my thesis from every point of view. It is definitely not taken for granted that such a high number participated in my online survey. It was great to see that my questions and ideas to improve the company's communication structure were taken seriously.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends, in particular Lisa, for their emotional and motivating support. Without their encouragement and patience even in difficult times, it would not have been possible to complete this thesis resp. studies.

Thank you!

Executive Summary

Today, companies steadily try to consider latest trends affecting the business and industry in order to grow and make profits. Unfortunately, they often forget to keep an eye on trends regarding internal communication. Often it is also the main area for which companies want to save expenses, albeit internal communication is very important to make employees communicate and collaborate. Furthermore, it is a central business function that is needed to get things done by indirectly influencing the company's external image and reputation. Accordingly, it is essential to carry out research and develop an international internal communication concept for a company's positive change.

Having said that, the present master thesis deals with the elaboration of internal communication by outlining its significance and possibilities. As a wide range of instruments is already offered, it is vital for companies to know which communication instruments and tools can be applied for which purpose, and, additionally, to provide what internal stakeholders require. Even for an international active company the right choice of its communication activities can determine its long-term success, because this affects the way employees from different locations work together. In this context, new media and new technologies become more and more important to ensure a state-of-the-art working environment that turns into a more digital and social place. As a result, the thesis focuses on social intranets as collaborative internal communication tools. These platforms allow businesses to increase interaction and productivity by promoting efficient two-way communication. They support to redesign communication structure, reduce unnecessary correspondence and provide everything from one-source in real-time.

However, various differences in terms of culture, language, etc. influence and determine a company's internal communication. Although the requirements from company and user end may vary a lot, the main research results show that the commissioning company's internal stakeholders are open for change and willing to use a social intranet to improve its situation. Thus, the primary dots are connected by developing an international internal communication concept with a focus on social intranets for RECOM. It provides an explanation as to how the company can achieve its communication goals making corporate life easier.

Abstract

Moderne Unternehmen versuchen ständig, sich auf die neuesten Marktrends, die das Unternehmen und die Branche beeinflussen, einzustellen, um höhere Gewinne zu erzielen und weiter zu wachsen. Dabei vergessen sie leider immer häufiger auf die interne Kommunikation, wenn diese auch die Zusammenarbeit unter den Mitarbeitern fördert, nicht zuletzt um Kosten einzusparen. Interne Kommunikation ist ein zentraler Funktionsbereich, maßgeblich für die Zielerreichung und hat indirekten Einfluss auf das externe Image des Unternehmens. Dementsprechend ist die Durchführung einer konkreten Marktforschung erforderlich, um anschließend ein internes Kommunikationskonzept zu entwickeln.

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Notwendigkeit und den Möglichkeiten der internen Kommunikation. Aufgrund des weitreichenden Angebots an Kommunikationsinstrumenten ist es für Unternehmen entscheidend, dass sie ihre genauen Einsatzmöglichkeiten kennen und diese mit den Anforderungen der internen Stakeholder abstimmen. Vor allem für internationale Firmen ist die Wahl des Kommunikationsmediums für den langfristigen Erfolg ausschlaggebend, da dieses die Zusammenarbeit der Mitarbeiter verschiedener Standorte bestimmt. In diesem Kontext spielen neue Medien und Technologien eine wichtige Rolle, welche eine moderne, digitale und soziale Arbeitsumgebung schaffen. Deshalb konzentriert sich diese Arbeit auf soziale Intranets als kollaborative Kommunikationstools. Mit ihrer Hilfe können Unternehmen die Interaktion und Produktivität steigern, indem sie die Umgestaltung der internen Struktur unterstützen, unnötige Kommunikation vermeiden und jegliche Inhalte als One-Stop-Plattform zur Verfügung stellen.

Allerdings beeinflussen verschiedene Faktoren, wie bspw. Kultur und Sprache, die interne Kommunikation des Unternehmens. Obwohl die Anforderungen von Firmen- und Anwenderseite oft sehr variieren, zeigen die Forschungsergebnisse, dass die internen Stakeholder des auftraggebenden Unternehmens offen für Veränderungen und bereit sind, ein soziales Intranet zu nutzen. Schlussendlich werden die gesamten Ergebnisse in einem internen Kommunikationskonzept für RECOM mit dem Fokus auf soziale Intranets gebündelt, welches veranschaulicht, wie das Unternehmen seine Kommunikationsziele Erfolg bringend erreichen kann, um die interne Zusammenarbeit zu erleichtern.

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of abbreviations

IC   Internal Communication

HR   Human Resources

CC   Corporate Communications

KM   Knowledge Management

PDI   Power Distance Index

IDV   Individualism

MAS   Masculinity

UAI   Uncertainty Avoidance Index

LTO   Long-term Orientation

IND   Indulgence

ESN   Enterprise Social Network

CRM   Customer Relationship Management

RSS   Really Simple Syndication

API   Application Programming Interface

SWOT   Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

PESTEL   Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal

SOFT   Satisfaction, Opportunities, Failures, Threats

SMART   Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Time-bound

BSC   Balanced Scorecard

HQ   Headquarters

R&D   Research and Development

EMEA   Europe, Middle-East, Africa

APAC   Asia-Pacific

KPIs   Key Performance Indicators

1   Introduction

Before elaborating the topic of this thesis, the first chapter deals with the initial situation and challenge. The main company objectives and the thesis objectives are stated thereof. Furthermore, a frame of reference captures the core topics to visualise the structure and connections of the thesis.

1.1   Initial situation

Today, the effects of globalisation are showing its toll on everyday-business operation. Companies are growing rapidly, because they operate new subsidiaries, take over other businesses or expand through mergers and acquisitions. As a result, companies are facing tremendous market competition which may lead to manpower reduction or expansion of the workforce. These factors change the organisational structure, increase and reframe business processes and information flows due to bureaucracy (cf. Schick 2014, p. 1f.). Furthermore, not only the way of how companies operate changed, but also the way of how its employees work. On the one hand, storing documents, writing e-mails and having access to information from anywhere made work more efficient and streamlined procedures, but on the other hand, increased people's expectations in terms of response in time, accuracy and costs. Workplace communication and business relationships now depend on technology, which is per se no problem as long as companies use the right one in the right way (cf. Burg 2013; Nickson 2016). Thus, many businesses make use of a so called corporate intranet, but these traditional intranets primarily support one-way communication which is solely top-down and, due to the lack of interactivity, uncertainty is often caused among employees (cf. Lipiäinen/Karjaluoto/Nevalainen 2014, p. 280). As a consequence, they are driven by advanced technologies to identify opportunities for improvements (cf. Thomas/Kass/Davarzani 2013, p. 14). Organisations start to shift one-way to two-way communication by utilising a tool that functions as digital workplace to allow employees to communicate effectively by providing data from one source in real-time. This can be accomplished with social intranets that, moreover, enable a more interactive and transparent communication within the business and have a positive impact on the company's performance and the overall staff motivation (cf. Meier/Lütolf/Schillerwein 2015, p.18). These tools make it possible to save time and resources in different areas, leading to 55% fewer

e-mails, 39% shorter meetings and 28% faster decisions (cf. Ueberholz n.d.). However, several factors, such as costs, time, local sensitivities and the human factor, might hinder the implementation of such tools. The obstacles that international companies face at this stage are to coordinate internal communication (IC) and collaboration not only among different time zones and beyond geographical borders, but also between different languages and cultures. They have to deal with diversification and need the acceptance of all employees to implement a new communication tool that meets all requirements from company and user side (cf. Kameda 2005, p. 173 - 175; Mounter 2003, p. 268).

1.2   Problem statement

In the case of RECOM, troubles within the internal communication are being faced, but no efficient communication tool yet is used. At the moment, the company has a bewildering array of different tools to communicate and collaborate internally, due to historical business growth and previous decentralised organisation among subsidiaries. Moreover, the company has neither a Human Resources (HR) department nor personnel resources that deal with internal communication. As a result, employees with various responsibilities have preferred channels on which they often work simultaneously. They share their knowledge and materials only on these channels and groups with different information content occur. This affects the information flow and leads to incomplete information as well as unnecessary contact points and prolongs several company projects. Furthermore, RECOM is an international active company and runs offices abroad. Although the company already works with tools for worldwide use, the internal communication lacks in efficiency and employees have not the same level of knowledge in relation to projects or the company's performance (cf. Berger 2016a). Currently, the fast-changing technology provides many tools to support knowledge transfer and the exchange of materials within corporations. The number of different tools produces a mix of information, but due to multi-channels and longer information chains, the messages that need to be transcended through more levels may not only be miscommunicated or diluted, but also overlaps might exist. This could result in confusion and ambiguity within the organisation and could impact performance, as employees lose sight of their actual work (cf. Crump 2016; Slotosch 2016). That is why RECOM needs to focus on a centralised tool for barrier-free communication.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Company objectives

RECOM aims

- to shorten the contact points within the information chain from 5 to at least 3 points in order to receive information regarding the company itself or other relevant company projects by mid of 2019, and
- to provide at least 100 employees access to a collaborative internal communication tool by the end of 2018 (cf. Berger 2016b).

1.3.2 Thesis objectives

The primary goal of the thesis is to develop an international internal communication concept for RECOM with a focus on social intranets.

Sub-goals supporting the primary goal are:
- to identify the relevance and analyse the possibilities as well as limitations of internal communication considering the collaborative and international context.
- to analyse how a social intranet functions as international internal communication tool in order to promote two-way communication.
- to define the relevant aspects of an international internal communication concept with a focus on social intranets and two-way communication.
- to analyse the requirements and the acceptance of a social intranet from company and user end at RECOM with the aid of primary market research.

It is **not** part of the thesis:
- to implement a social intranet as collaborative internal communication tool.
- to assess or select any appropriate social intranet software.

1.4 Frame of reference
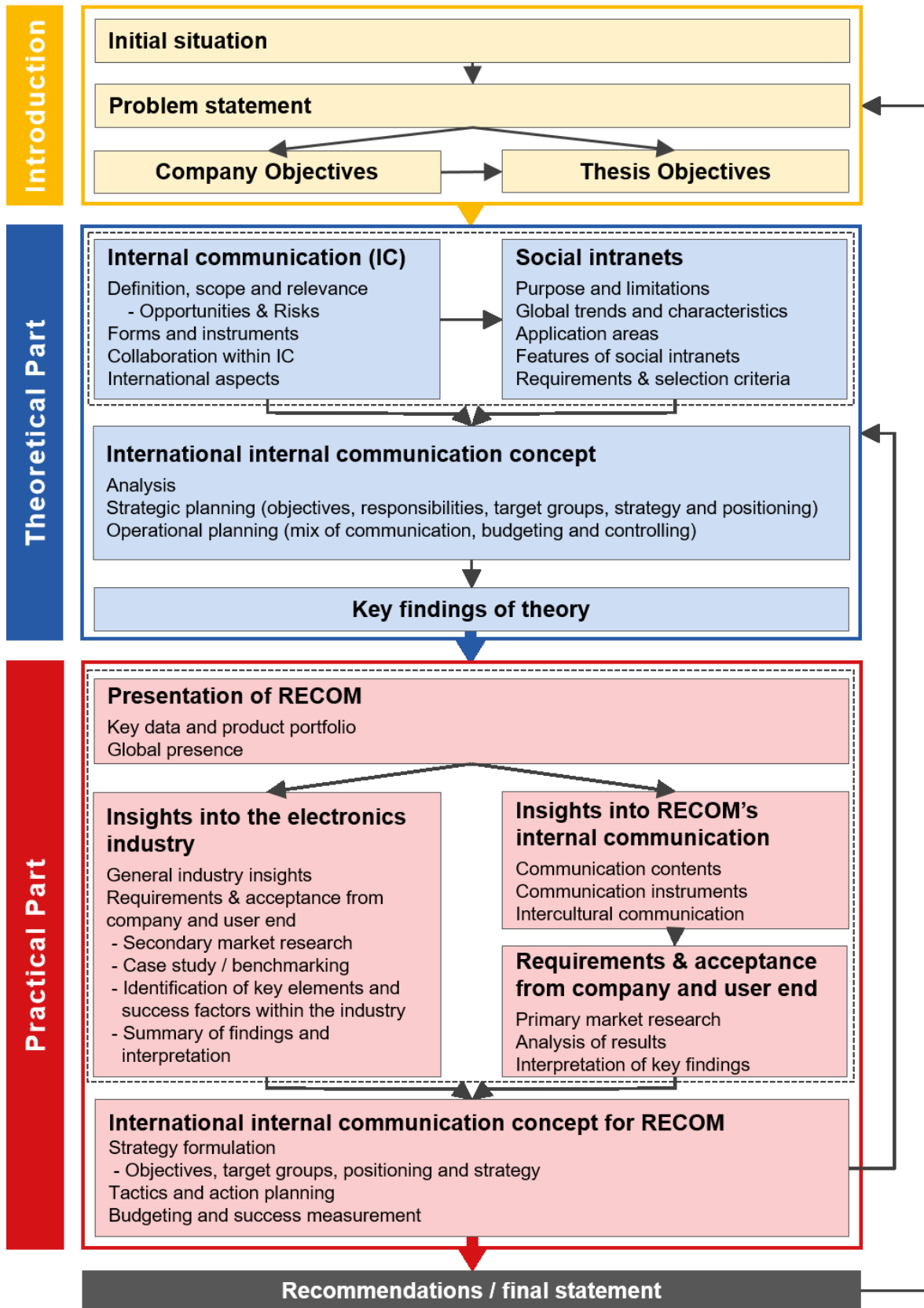
Figure 1: Frame of reference (own presentation)

2 Internal communication

The second chapter of the thesis in hand deals with internal communication in general to provide the reader with an overview of the term's definition and its importance. In addition, the areas, forms and instruments of IC are discussed, before the author connects the dots with collaboration and internationalisation.

2.1 Definition

Internal communication or employee communication is sub discipline of corporate communications (CC) and is targeted to plan and steer the communication of the people and stakeholders within the boundaries of an organisation (cf. Financial Times n.d.; Mazzei 2010, p. 221; Odermatt 2009, p. 4; Salzer 2011, p. 14).

Employee communication includes all communication processes taking place in a company to build relationships between individuals that make interaction possible. As a result, IC not only increases understanding, but also creates excitement and commitment between the company and its employees (cf. FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 7; Mast 2016, p. 263). Internal communication can be informal, like chat between employees, and formal, as managed communication, integrated in the company's communication at all levels, which means all employees, strategic management (e.g. CEOs), day-to-day management (e.g. supervisors), work teams and project teams (cf. Kalla 2005, p. 304; Welch/Jackson 2007, p. 178/184).

It needs to be stated that for the entire thesis the use of "stakeholders" is meant for a company's internal stakeholders, both employees and management.

2.2 Scope of duties

Having said that, IC needs to match the company's ultimate goals to support leadership and management in crafting messages, managing communication instruments and organising content. It also coaches employees in their understanding and makes a substantial contribution to the realisation of the organisation's vision, mission, objectives and strategies (cf. Verghese 2012, p. 18f.; Schick 2014, p. 9). However, these core tasks and goals can only be accomplished if the company sets a suitable framework and internal communication fulfils specific

conditions, as it is essential for the operation and achievement of objectives in companies (cf. Mast 2016, p. 269). Accordingly, internal communication needs to consider the following aspects:

- **Cooperation**: Employee communication enables to plan, steer, connect and develop communication processes. The role of IC is to provide employees with relevant information, paint the better picture and tell the fuller story that puts all this information into context.

- **Identification**: Employees need to understand the company's brand and direction to act as voice to the customers. IC increases identification by allocating the right information.

- **Reliability and trust**: IC has to work hard for reliability and trust through open and faithful continuous information, by using the right balance between formal and informal communication within the company.

- **Knowledge management (KM)**: IC contributes to knowledge management and supports management with processes of change, because only a convinced, informed and qualified employee is ready to change. Hence, IC is used to still employees' fears and minimise their uncertainty.

- **Motivation and satisfaction**: Additional formal and informal communication increases employee motivation, which positively affects performance efficiency and may lead to overall staff satisfaction.

- **Company culture**: IC supports the creation of common values in combination of its media, structure and guidelines. This positively influences the working atmosphere by encouraging employees to take more responsibility and self-initiative.

- **Reputation**: Good internal communication creates a positive reputation of the company in the eyes of the employees that can redound to the benefit of the external image and reputation (cf. Einwiller/Klöfer/Nies 2008, p. 227f.; Mast 2016, p. 269 - 271; Quirke 2008, p. XV; Schick 2014, p. 12).

2.3   Relevance of internal communication

The relevance of internal communication is obvious, as it is on its way to a "leading position" in many companies. IC is more than management of communication, due to the potential change and increasing importance of its scope of duties. Especially the changed position of employees in the company's communication structure

shows its toll on today's internal communication. Employees are scarce resources and companies are in a war for talents. Therefore, IC helps to hold onto good people making them feel good at work. IC also encourages employees to work harder on the right things and help people to say the right things by providing trust and purpose with the right information. This increases motivation, engagement and performance. In addition, IC is used to keep people informed if major changes are needed (cf. FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 11 - 16; Mast 2016, p. 266 - 268).

Furthermore, IC is basis for successful entrenchment of a company's brand. The information and knowledge that employees get inside the organisation not only shape their image, but also indirectly influence the external brand image (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2016, p. 302).

To be aware of the increasing relevance is very important for companies, as this leads to various opportunities, but also some risks in the field of internal communication.

2.3.1 Opportunities of internal communication

Internal communication entails a lot of opportunities for companies. It not only optimises internal processes, but also makes employees a strategic success factor by boosting their performance. For instance, the form of the message (information) and the speed of reaction is relevant for the practical execution of communication processes. The way of how people within an organisation interpret this information is decisive for their acting. Efficient IC leads to fast information processing and decision making, which accelerates the implementation of plans and projects and leads to a better performance. Having said that, IC entails competitive advantages in relation to performance efficiency and process optimisation (cf. Mast 2016, p. 263/266f.). Another opportunity of IC is to strengthen the communicative significance and employee engagement by building thought leaders. This is great chance for IC, as they influence the company's atmosphere, staff motivation and also internal processes. Thought leaders act as ambassadors and support to manage loss of control as well as to invest proactively into the company's reputation and relationships. Once those people are integrated into the internal communication structure, they advise HR and also leaders on strategies. In addition, they underline

the importance by championing internal communication (cf. Mast 2016, p. 267; Verghese 2012, p. 79). Anchoring IC as strategic function, particularly in large companies with many locations and different people, is also useful for further activities. As already mentioned, IC can create a culture of open communication that allows employees not only to understand the company values, but also provides a better understanding of their values in the team and the entire organisation. If people see that they are valued within the organisation, they see more purpose in their work which results in higher productivity. IC is prospect for a close connection with employees and supports to build an employer brand, because only continuous communication can craft and deliver suitable and strong messages to make a company an employer of choice. In consequence, IC is hard work, but pays off in the end (cf. Verghese 2012, p. 109; Wolf n.d.).

2.3.2 Risks of internal communication

On the downside, there are also risks regarding IC. The company's stakeholders not necessarily are always thought leaders who support and strengthen the internal communication process. They might also become a risk, due to poor IC by acting as so called whistle blowers. Whistle blowers are people who publicise secret company information or level criticism against the own organisation. Social platforms and other networks make it easier for them to spread their opinions. However, the extent to which they affect the organisation depends on leadership and the structure of IC (cf. Mast 2016, p. 267f.). Another risk that might occur is that IC creates conflicts between employees. They use internal communication in order to negotiate and argue with each other, which disrupts information flows, collaboration processes and prevents task completion. Conflicts can also be caused if employees do not feel valued and communication overlaps or closed and non-transparent communication exist. This negatively influences the overall performance (cf. Frenz n.d.). Moreover, a company's organisation might face information overload when internal communication provides too much information and less communication and, consequently, employees are unable to sort or dedicate messages and lose sight of their work (cf. Verghese 2012, p. 79). The worst thing that could happen is that IC does not fulfil its task at all by providing too much or less information. In doing so, IC creates information and communication that is primarily done downwards. This action increases the risk of lacking in

employee engagement, which means that employees, for example, are only asked for their opinions and suggestions in crisis management or for changes. Additionally, they suffer from incomplete information, because IC works without any system or information is not shared. In this case, IC demotivates people within an organisation, as the dialogue is missing, and increases the competitiveness between departments leading to worse company performance (cf. Wirtschaftswissen 2008).

2.4 Forms of internal communication

Communication is often distinguished between formal and informal communication. Both types are relevant for internal communication. Whereas formal communication represents more the formal and official style of professional settings and corporate meetings, informal communication does not follow official lines and is rather used to build relationships among people in the organisation and to find out staff grievances. However, for the present thesis the general forms of IC are more important. IC can be downward, upward and lateral. Thereby, downward communication is known as typical one-way communication from the top of the organisation to the people. It provides all relevant information to make two-way communication even possible. Upward communication is also one-way from employees to the management and is basis resp. starting point for lateral communication, i.e. people at same levels collaborate and cooperate, which can also be seen as two-way communication (cf. Notes Desk 2009a,b). This subchapter in addition focuses on one-way and two-way communication that impacts employee interaction and is needed for efficient IC.

2.4.1 One-way communication

The model of one-way communication can be demonstrated quite simple, as there is just a "sender" who provides information to the "receiver". In corporate communications it basically considers communication from the top-management to all employees, however, also can categorise information flows from subordinates to superiors. It can be advantageous as the communication process is very fast and the company or the person in charge has full control, but the feedback and interaction of the other internal stakeholders within the organisation are missing (cf. Flin/O'Connor/Crichton 2008, p. 71; Notes Desk 2009b; Welch/Jackson 2007, p. 186). Downward resp. upward communication is often criticised, because it is predominantly one-way (top-down / bottom-up). Yet it is unavoidable and necessary

in circumstances where consistent information is needed. One-way communication is very important for an organisation to inform people about the company's vision, mission, strategies and objectives. It contributes to building internal relationships and encouraging two-way communication by employee commitment and belonging. On top of that, one-way communication develops the awareness and understanding of employees which is needed for the organisation to evolve its direction and purpose in response to changes (cf. Welch/Jackson 2007, p. 186 - 188).

2.4.2 Two-way communication

In comparison to limited one-way communication, two-way communication is not about telling, but about employee interaction and integration. It is a two-way thing where information and communication flow back and forwards between people. It is fact that pushing messages is useful to create common sense and inform internal stakeholders of the company about what is important and what is valued. But to change attitude and behaviour, an organisation needs to influence and involve all employees. If employees see that they are valued, they are more cooperative and receptive to organisational change. Therefore, companies need to listen to their ideas, respect their opinions and take their reasonable and constructive feedback into account. Generally, two-way communication takes longer, which is the only disadvantage. However, organisations can benefit from two-way communication, as all people pull together. They share the responsibility for tasks and projects, strengthen their confidence by checking details and making correct judgements as well as work on mutual understanding (cf. FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 8f.; Flin/O'Connor/Crichton 2008, p. 72; Ruck 2015, p. 125). Two-way communication is a broad system that provides accurate, complete information and helps to eliminate misunderstanding, as both parties interact equally and frequently by exchanging information, sharing knowledge and giving feedback (cf. anon 2015a).

2.5 Instruments of internal communication

In general, there are a lot of instruments available for internal communication. Although all these instruments serve to achieve the objectives of IC, it is necessary to know which instruments are best for which communication duties and which information flow lies in the foreground. Having said that, internal communication instruments are used to inform, motivate and activate employees on the one hand,

and strengthen the dialogue and know-how transfer between them on the other hand. In addition, there are instruments with which several employees can be reached at the same time, whereas others concentrate on the individual appeal. An organisation can influence the communication process by providing information actively with "push" instruments, i.e. they deliver messages directly to employees. In the opposite they may also apply "pull" instruments if they want employees to call for action and seek information by themselves (cf. Grupe 2011, p. 201 - 203).

In order to get a comprehensible classification of all existing communication tools, they are traditionally differentiated into face-to-face, print and electronic IC instruments in the first steps. Due to the increasing importance of electronic information, print communication focuses on employee identification and the provision of information about the big picture, whereas electronic instruments provide the latest information in detail and real-time and, additionally, are used to promote interaction between the organisation's stakeholders. Thirdly, face-to-face communication is essential to motivate, wise up and integrate employees. With personal IC, organisations can do a lot of persuading and may build trust and reliability within the company (cf. Grupe 2011, p. 203f.; Schick 2014, p. 50f.).

The criterions of the systematisation of IC instruments are frequently extended through other dimensions that simplify the selection process. These dimensions and its corresponding characteristics are shown in Table 1:

Dimensions	Characteristics		
form	face-to-face	print	electronic
target group	individual person	project group	total workforce
periodicity	unique	regularly	irregularly
information flow	downwards	upwards	interactive
direction	one-way	two-way	
content	task oriented	context oriented	
degree of formalisation	formal	informal	

Table 1: Systematisation of IC instruments
(based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1165; Einwiller/Klöfer/Nies 2008, p. 238)

For productive internal communication complete actions need to be taken, which consider all expectations at all levels within the organisation. As a result, several criteria are admittedly relevant and help to choose the right communication instrument. However, the focus is on the information flow and the direction, as these dimensions define the exchange of information and the interaction between internal stakeholders (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1165).

Downwards directed instruments

Downwards directed instruments are the most developed tools for IC within companies, but are used with different intensity and systematisation. The more hierarchical levels exist in organisations, the more dominant is its top-down communication. Generally, downwards directed IC instruments are spread media with which companies attempt to distribute as much information as possible from one point to a large audience (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1166; Einwiller/Klöfer/Nies 2008, p. 239; Mast 2016, p. 281f.).

Upwards directed instruments

To clarify, upwards communication can be either bottom-up communication from subordinates to superiors and from the workforce to the management or a reaction to upstream top-down communication processes. The number of upwards directed instruments, which deliver information over different hierarchical levels to the top, is limited; due to the fact that employees hardly have any influence on decision making or the possibility to feed in data (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1178; Mast 2016, p. 282f.).

Interactive instruments

Downwards and upwards directed instruments are tendentially used for mass communication. A range of communication problems, such as company crisis and reorganisations, demand a more personal and interactive appeal. Interactive instruments make it possible for employees to eliminate their fears, give feedback and to make queries. These communication instruments also improve the reciprocal exchange of know-how, experiences and information. They provide managers and superiors with lots of valuable information to react on varying moods. Especially, social features resp. social media elements upgrade the internal communication between stakeholders (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1183; Mast 2016, p. 286). More details about social features are described in chapter 3.5.2 of this thesis.

The following table provides an overview of the most common instruments of IC, allocated in terms of "information flow" and "direction".

Downwards directed media	Upwards directed media	Interactive media
e-mails (newsletter)	employee surveys	team meetings
department meetings	superior assessments	personal interviews
traditional intranets	internal complaint management	discussion forums
notice boards	employee suggestion system	social intranets and networks
corporate TVs	internal social platforms	workshops and seminars
print magazines, brochures	staff meetings	informal communication
text messaging	evaluation programmes	events
audio-visual communication	calendar entries	instant messaging, storytelling
etc.	etc.	etc.

Table 2: Instruments of IC (based on Bruhn 2014, p. 1166; FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 104 - 111; Mast 2016, p. 282 - 286; Schick 2014, p. 53)

Other instruments of IC can also be workplace accessories, give-aways, incentives and internal competitions (cf. FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 111).

RECOM already applies some of the above mentioned IC instruments, albeit there is no clear communication structure implemented. In consequence, the theoretical deliberations of this thesis should help to develop a concept later on.

2.6 Collaborative internal communication

Internal collaboration in combination with efficient IC has a positive effect on the company's performance. Collaboration within the boundaries of the organisation let employees not only improve their communication, but also their productivity and self-initiative. In the past, communication instruments were primarily used to push information to people. Now, collaborative tools and social features make it possible for employees to share information faster and interact easier than before. Digital technologies have revolutionised internal collaboration and communication and have made it easier for employees to work together. Collaborative communication instruments have the same magnitude of influence on IC as e-mails and other traditional tools had in the past. They are key enabler of engagement by increasing the level of transparency and reducing hierarchy. Moreover, these instruments

enable cohesion and collaboration for international use. However, collaboration should not add extra workload to employees' already existing jobs, it should support them by making their work easier and more efficient (cf. Clarkson 2014; Morgan 2009; Smythe 2013, p. 50; Wood 2013, p. 8). What complicates this situation is that collaboration is driven by different factors; initiatives come from people from different departments, different approaches and objectives, different budgets and usages as well as different locations with diverse corporate cultures. Furthermore, three different types of collaborative resources exist that influence communication and cooperation, namely informational, social and personal resources. Whereas informational resources, like knowledge and skills, can be recorded and passed on, social resources require awareness, access to a network and action to help stakeholders working together. In this context, the peoples' own time and energy are seen as personal resources (cf. Cross/Rebele/Grant 2016; Morgan 2013).

As a consequence, it is necessary to create an environment that encourages collaborative internal communication. For this purpose *Jacob Morgan* of Chess Media Group has identified 12 habits resp. success factors, as shown in the following figure, that help to integrate collaborative IC into the company's culture (cf. Clarkson 2014; Morgan 2013).
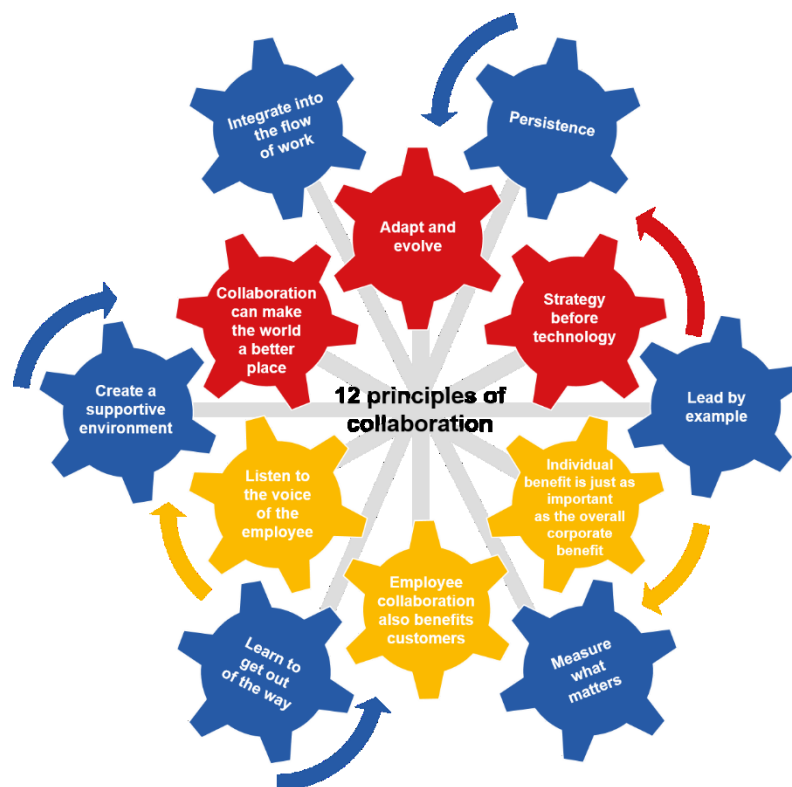
Figure 2: 12 principles of collaboration (based on Chess Media Group n.d.)

It is necessary that today's businesses adopt these common habits to promote and succeed in collaborative internal communication. As a result, the said principles, which are visualised in Figure 2, aim for the following:

- **Lead by example:** Companies have to support collaborative IC if they want their employees to do so.

- **Individual benefit is just as important as the overall corporate benefit:** Employees care and want to be valued; so collaborative IC has to meet their requirements and fulfil their needs.

- **Strategy before technology:** Every collaboration initiative is based on a strategy to answer the "why" before the "how", i.e. companies need a communication strategy, before they decide which tool to use.

- **Listen to the voice of the employee:** Collaborative IC requires the ideas, needs and suggestions of employees. If companies make them part of decision making, they can later use their feedback for strategies.

- **Learn to get out of the way:** Too many guidelines hinder the collaboration process. As a result, companies need to let their employees space to be creative.

- **Integrate into the flow of work:** Collaborative IC needs to be integrated into the employees work flow providing everything from one source in real-time.

- **Create a supportive environment:** A supportive environment is created if employees have the chance to develop further by training and education.

- **Measure what matters:** Employee engagement is very important for collaborative IC, because it shows how people are connected to a company.

- **Persistence:** If companies have decided on collaborative IC, there is no moving back. Hence, organisations have to connect employees and their information.

- **Adapt and evolve:** Collaborative IC is a never ending activity, as IC instruments and strategies for the workplace continue to emerge. As a consequence, organisations need to react on internal and external changes.

- **Employee collaboration also benefits customers:** Through collaborative IC, employees get insights into internal information and resources which can be used to provide a better experience and superior support to external customers.

- **Collaboration can make the world a better place:** Collaborative IC allows employees to feel more connected to their jobs and colleagues, makes their jobs easier and gives them more freedom. In general, it makes internal stakeholders happier people by reducing stress and positively impacts their lives at work and at home (cf. Morgan 2012; Morgan 2013).

2.7 International internal communication

Doing business globally requires to interact with people of different backgrounds. IC, therefore, is responsible to create an international environment that makes it possible to reach an organisation's employees worldwide. International internal communication is often described as both the creation and maintenance of the sustainability of internal relationships across countries, cultures and between parent companies and subsidiaries. However, the emphasis of global communication lies on the intercultural factor, as the communicators in international IC are the people inside countries and companies with diverse cultures, customs and languages. As a result, the so called intercultural communication defines IC activities that take place among people with different values, views and also different behaviour. With the knowledge of these mentioned differences, organisations are able to bridge the gaps through IC and make information and knowledge sharing more efficient (cf. anon 2015b; Apud/Apud-Martinez 2008; Ehrhart 2014, p. 1336; Kameda 2005, p. 173; Jonasson/Lauring 2012, p. 405; Spinks/Wells 1997, p. 287; Tilley/Fredricks/Hornett 2012, p. 179).

For the thesis in hand both terms "international internal communication" and "intercultural communication" are used to discuss the characteristics and difficulties of IC in international companies with regard to personal, cultural or other differences.

2.7.1 Balance between standardisation and adaptation

Having said that, people are not only affected by the culture of their company and their country, but also share commonalities that support IC processes. The question is to which extent strategies, concepts and further IC activities can be transferred resp. extended from a national to an international environment; and the short answer is - it depends, as there is no IC that fits all. Nonetheless, it does not mean in international IC that local attitudes are immutable. It is very important to take them into account and listening to local people will help organisations to understand local preferences, needs and expectations as well as support the company's aims (cf. Huck-Sandhu 2016, p. 423f.; Kameda 2005, p. 173; Mounter 2003, p. 268; Mounter 2016). In general, two main approaches exist, namely standardisation and adaptation. While standardisation attempts to push the entire IC process under one umbrella without considering local sensitivities, the adaptation approach is highly

oriented towards local responsiveness. However, the big challenge is to combine these approaches and find a balance between them. The so called standardised adaptation or differentiation approach focuses on a transnational integrated IC which applies as much standardisation as possible and as much adaptation as needed; it can be used to adapt parts of IC to be accepted entirely (cf. Huck-Sandhu 2016, p. 428f.; Morley 2002, p. 35; Mounter 2016). As a result to strike a balance for international IC between all parties involved, it is essential for an organisation to create coherence that depends on the requirements of the company and its people. This can be accomplished by the definition of IC standards and principles in the first step with regard to the IC's purpose, channels, contents, etc. When deciding on the degree of consistency and adaptation, it is important to engage employees from various locations to make decisions resonate with multiple demands (cf. Quirke 2008, p. 91 - 93).

2.7.2 Barriers for international internal communication

It is very likely that businesses doing intercultural communication are confronted with some differences and barriers (cf. Kameda 2005, p. 174). The probably most obvious barriers are geographical borders, different time zones and languages. People from different countries within an international company are not always awake or in the office at the same time. As a result, information and tasks have to be shifted, so that every employee progresses work and IC does not cause any delays. Furthermore, a lot of companies state English as their business language. However, only because of English is spoken by almost everyone, does not mean that everything is understood. People in different areas have different levels of understanding. In addition, employees may not be willing to communicate in English when they do not have linguistic confidence (i.e. they do not feel good to speak in a certain language) or any difficulties in expressing themselves. It is important that local meaning and local values are added to global messages to make a corporate understanding possible. One basic issue is to consider different time zones and the translation into local languages; translations should always be done in destination countries (cf. Quirke 2008, p. 89f.; Smith 2008, p. 121; Sriussadaporn 2006, p. 336).

Having said that, there exist other differences from country to country which affect the international internal communication. For instance, organisations have to be

aware of a country's access to communication technologies. Particularly the computer or internet access and access to mobile networks vary a lot; this might have political or legal reasons as well, e.g. in Asia several services are blocked (cf. Domm 2014, p. 362). Furthermore, aspects of intercultural communication problems can also be related to local communication habits, social mores, mentality and accountability, time management and relationships. The way of how people work and communicate with each other is diverse and, therefore, companies need to take care of several cultural differences providing a globally accepted communication environment; otherwise they will not be able to create open communication and satisfy local sensitivities (cf. Smith 2008, p. 121; Sriussadaporn 2006, p. 333 - 338).

Geert Hofstede, who is best known when it comes to intercultural aspects, identified six dimensions of national culture that allow companies to compare countries and identify cultural differences according to these parameters. His model of national culture consists of the dimensions "power distance index (PDI)", "individualism versus collectivism (IDV)", "masculinity versus femininity (MAS)", "uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)", "long-term versus short-term orientation (LTO)" as well as "indulgence versus restraint (IND)". The dimensions are described as follows:

- **PDI:** This dimension expresses the extent to which people within an organisation expect and accept inequalities among people.
- **IDV:** This dimension reflects if the people's self-image towards the organisation is more individualistic (I definition) or collectivistic (we definition).
- **MAS:** With this dimension drivers that motivate people can be identified; either people want to be the best (masculinity) or they like what they do (femininity).
- **UAI:** This dimension expresses the extent to which people feel uncomfortable and threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.
- **LTO:** This dimension shows if an organisation deals more with its past or with the challenges of the present and the future.
- **IND:** This dimension is defined as the extent to which people enjoy free gratification (enjoying life and having fun) resp. the extent to which gratification is suppressed by social norms (cf. itim, Hofstede Centre n.d.[a]).

In the case of RECOM, international barriers are also to be noticed, as the work force consists of diverse people from different locations around the world. As a result, Hofstede's dimensions can be applied to create an intercultural framework.

3 The social intranet as a tool for international internal communication

The third chapter of this thesis focuses on the social intranet as an interactive internal communication tool providing a definition and also outlining its significance, characteristics, the main areas of application and its (social) features. Moreover, it includes an overview about the requirements from company and user end as well as for the tool's implementation.

3.1 Definition and delimitation of "traditional" intranets

The intranet is one of the possible downwards directed instruments for IC. It is a web based tool that optimises internal processes and the exchange of information. The intranet is different from the internet a closed medium for internal use only. It is a self-service instrument that primarily offers employees to get top-down information independent of hierarchical barriers, geographical borders and different time zones. Intranets are often also described as pull medium, as employees have to select what they want to know about projects or the company. Although "traditional" intranets are not interactive, the usage ranges from information sharing to knowledge transfer (cf. Hoffmann/Lang 2008, p. 9 - 12; Mast 2016, p. 287; Murgolo-Poore/Pitt 2001, p. 235f.; Yeomans 2009, p. 332).

Whereas "traditional" intranets have the focus on one-way communication, social intranets concentrate on two-way communication emphasising the interaction between an organisation's stakeholders; in addition to common downwards or upwards communication. On top of that, the social intranet is a collaborative IC instrument that not only provides the opportunity to communicate and exchange information, but also gives employees the chance to discuss and collaborate. It can be seen as "virtual office", a platform on which people can find everything from one source in real-time. In theory other definitions for such platforms exist, namely Enterprise 2.0, Enterprise Social Network (ESN), Social Business, Intranet 2.0, etc. (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 8f.; Meier/Lütolf/Schillerwein 2015, p. 18). For the present piece of work the term "social intranet" is used, because this tool is described as an integrated platform for IC including the collaboration of teams, departments, project groups and other internal communities.

3.1.1 Purpose

In general, all intranets are used to store information and help employees gain knowledge about the company and other business related topics. In addition, they retain the knowledge if employees leave and make it possible to link geographically dispersed people. Intranets create a flexible and easy to use global knowledge sharing environment that encourages people within the organisation to take advantage of the system (cf. Begbie/Chudry 2002, p. 326f.). However, the major purpose of intranets is to increase employee satisfaction which may lead to better quality and more innovations. Intranets have a positive impact on the organisation's reputation, because they connect employees and foster cooperation across departments. These effects often result in increased productivity and higher performance that allow employees to complete more tasks, because they save time by using an efficient corporate IC tool (cf. Meier/Lütolf/Schillerwein 2015, p. 27f.).

While a "traditional" intranet supports already the optimisation of communication processes, the social intranet adds value to the general purpose. These social networking instruments have a unique status, because they allow organisations to shift "information gathering" to "information participation", which means they enable employees to work more efficient through enhanced IC. Another advantage is that professional and personal information can be updated and acquired in real-time (cf. Bennet et al. 2010, p. 139).

3.1.2 Limitations of "traditional" intranets

Traditional IC instruments that are based on face-to-face, but also on electronic communication, such as walking the floor and corporate intranets, have become difficult and at present are viewed as outmoded. They are not able to deal with today's knowledge-based economy, because the requirements of the modern employee to open two-way communication are not met. "Traditional" intranets are very limited in interaction. As their focus is on information exchange, the content remains most of the time in the hands of the owner and is updated on a daily basis at best. Despite the fact that today's work-based projects can change unexpectedly fast, "traditional" intranets do not enable employees to take part in knowledge sharing. With "traditional" intranets organisations primarily provide information and data, albeit not even from one source and in real-time. Consequently, these

intranets lack in collaborative IC, as they are not suitable for pooling information and knowledge of diverse people with different communicative behaviour (cf. Bennet et al. 2010, p. 141; Murgolo-Poore/Pitt 2001, p. 234).

3.2 Global trends and the necessity of social intranets

Following the general purpose of intranets and the limitations of "traditional" intranets, this subchapter presents the current global trends showing the need for social intranets, why companies should shift to interactive communication tools.

The working environment has become more and more a social place. Therefore, businesses shift their "traditional" intranets resp. other communication instruments to a more social variant of intranets, the social intranet. This platform can not only be used by organisations, but also other institutions like schools and universities as well as non-profit organisations. Today's social intranets are very important for IC, because they adapt the limited features making employees more productive and cooperative. The key point for companies is to know their internal users when implementing a social intranet software. They have to know their employees inside out, i.e. they know their needs, requirements, expectations and also their pain points. If doing so, every organisation has the ability to phase a social intranet launch and increase the stakeholder's collaborative effort (cf. Bynghall 2016; Rauv 2016).

Furthermore, a well-designed and almost tailored user interface as well as the integration of multiple processes are other big trends regarding social intranets. As user experience is important when working with an IC instrument, companies need to take certain attention to the social intranet's look; otherwise employees are unwilling to use it and inefficiency is caused. As a result, companies have to consider customisation that provides employees with the opportunity to create their own interface or dashboards. Additionally, the interface has to be flexible and dynamic. It is advantageous if companies integrate other processes into their social intranet. The platform can not only be used for open communication and collaboration, but also HR processes, project management tools, customer relationship management (CRM) and financial systems can be part of it. Aside from providing everything from one source, social intranets are also fully operational on mobile devices (cf. Eisenhauer 2015a).

An improved search in business networks and the use of social features are also drivers for efficient and accurate IC. The trend is to support employees in finding what they need, because no or slow search functions can add up to wasted hours and cause unproductivity. The ability to "like", "share", "comment" or even "tag someone" supports the process of getting information and keeping employees up-to-date. That is why companies should include social features like blogging, sharing, etc., of which more later, because they increase employee engagement and promote collaborative IC within the organisation. These trends related to social intranets not only enhance productivity, but also add social benefits for the company's internal stakeholders. Businesses have to be aware of them and once they are adopted, they have a positive influence on the overall productivity, employee satisfaction and company's development (cf. Rauv 2016).

3.3 Characteristics and benefits of social intranets

Social intranets are becoming more and more relevant at workplaces, because they can be used for recruitment, employer branding, project management and IC to engage the company's internal stakeholders. By offering social features, these IC tools create a dynamic environment for employees interaction that is advantageous for engagement and collaboration (cf. Sharma/Bhatnagar 2016, p. 16).

Thus, social intranets are strong strategic IC tools that empower people, what can be consolidated by the following characteristics: Social intranets make it easy for employees to create and share content. They can express themselves, present new ideas and also find support or solutions for already existing problems. Online collaboration supports this in a positive way, as social intranets connect people across the organisation at work, from home or elsewhere overcoming previously mentioned barriers like geographical distance and different time zones. In addition, social intranets provide conversations in real-time and promote transparency, as communities are also created from bottom-up, from people who are connected within internal networks (cf. Farkas 2007, p. 2 - 7; Sharma/Bhatnagar 2016, p. 17).

These characteristics allow the participation of a large diverse group in decision making and other IC related processes. Misunderstandings and problems can be resolved quickly, because every employee using the social intranet knows "who

knows what" and receives information etc. in real-time. As a result, no outdated information exists and the entire company's knowledge is at the same level. Also, social intranets target towards personalisation. On the one hand, it is essential that every employee knows what is going on, but on the other hand, it is necessary that every person can concentrate on individual work and interests. In consequence, social intranets make it possible to select and structure the available content to place the focus on the information and knowledge that is required and explicitly requested (cf. Farkas 2007, p. 2 - 7; Sharma/Bhatnagar 2016, p. 17).

In principle, the consequent benefits of social intranets can be categorised by three main classes:

- **Community:** The use of social intranets and their features to interact with other people within the organisation might attract considerable divergence of opinions, but follow on shared core objectives, strategies, values etc.
- **Collaboration:** The use of social intranets and their capabilities to connect people, information, knowledge and other resources support the internal collaboration process. The platform simply can be used as self-help tool, but also encourages employees to find solutions and solve problems together, or share and talk about information that is needed for progress.
- **Contribution:** The use of social intranets and their abilities allow boundary less knowledge based contribution. This means that employees from all over the world easily can contribute their ideas, expertise, concerns and preferences in the process of decision making or developing any organisational project (cf. Lange et al. 2008, p. 4f.).

The greatest benefit of social intranets is obvious. These tools give employees the opportunity to work together as one force. While engaging and building networks, the involvement in organisations increases, due to better spread information and knowledge; this also facilitates collaboration and communication between different departments. However, companies need to keep in mind that sharing knowledge cannot be forced, they need the employee's willingness and acceptance to do so (cf. Lundgren/Strandh/Johansson 2012, p. 34f.).

3.4 Areas of application

As already mentioned, it is very important to make a social intranet meaningful. If companies want to promote social networking, collaboration, ideation and problem solving, they have to integrate several work processes. As a result, employees see the relevance for their daily activities and start using it (cf. Manchester 2013; McConnell 2007, p. 24).

However, after defining all the trends, characteristics and benefits, it is necessary to show for which cases social intranets can be used. In general, four main areas of application can be classified:

- Case 1: Information and official communication
- Case 2: Projects and processes
- Case 3: User profiles and customised information management
- Case 4: Networking, communities and integration
  (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 10)

Information and official communication

Probably the oldest case of application in an IC tool is the transmission of news and information about the company, products and services, which has proven to be extremely effective in social intranets. Using these tools for IC allow companies to pass on information and latest news fast and in real-time. Without great effort, messages can be published at any time as soon as they are relevant for the company's internal stakeholders. This creates open and transparent IC. Moreover, it is possible to update and archive information. If any errors occur or any information is miscommunicated, this can be updated and revised immediately by the person in charge. In addition to this, messages can be archived and made searchable in any appropriate place. Although the transmission of company related information and the communication is primarily done "one to all", new forms like "one to many" are now possible. Social intranets enable organisations to pre-select the recipients of any information and messages. This means that it is possible with social intranets to steer careful information and avoid information overload, because everyone just receives relevant information (cf. Mirbach/Sthamer 2012, p. 190 - 192).

Projects and processes

Furthermore, social intranets are used to coordinate projects and processes. It is essential that all project members have the same level of knowledge and every necessary information is shared. Company projects and processes are often fast-moving. Accordingly, it is fundamental that every employee takes part in the collaboration and information exchange process. Therefore, social intranets provide so called project rooms, which can be used as information and documents platform on the one hand, but also as purposeful planning and steering tool on the other hand. These rooms include several functions, for example, project leaders have the possibility to assign and refuse permissions as well as relevant project roles. In addition, team members are always up-to-date, as they are informed about any changes; they can also see who did the amendment and when it was done. In fact, social intranets help employees to organise and keep track on updated information if they participate in more projects. As a result, the amount of project communication is reduced and also simplified; every project related information is transparent and everyone is aware of the current progress of the project. Social features buttress this area of application, because they make two-way communication and employee engagement in real-time possible (cf. Meier/Lütolf/Schillerwein 2015, p. 91f.; Mirbach/Sthamer 2012, p. 193f.).

User profiles and customised information management

Often relevant information about employees' expertise, experience and interests is not stored by businesses. However, using social intranets eliminate this issue, because user profiles are used to store and display this exact information on the IC platform. Having this knowledge allows everyone to search and contact the right expert or responsible person without any complications. In this case, social intranets motivate people, as they clear up all ambiguities and circumvent the need to go from department to department to find the right person for a specific topic. Besides that, it is possible to create an individual interface resp. dashboard that is linked to the attendant user profile. The company's employees, hence, can easily manage company information and communication according to their needs. They can decide on which news messages they want to receive and which activities they want to follow (cf. Claromentis n.d.; Grözinger 2015).

Networking, communities and integration

The recently described social intranet cases, like project collaboration and user profiles, create employee connections in a way that foster innovative teamwork and two-way communication between management and employees. While collaborating and communicating, people with the same preferences and interests get together, form communities in which they share their know-how and develop further in their special subject area. Thus, social intranets are not only used for sharing, but also creating knowledge. They create an efficient IC environment that makes employee integration possible (cf. Burrus 2010, p. 50; Magnier-Watanabe/Yoshida/Watanabe 2010, p. 911).

3.5   Features of social intranets

Some of the social intranet features have already been addressed. However, this subchapter provides an overview of all possible features, especially social features, and a critical reflection on the use of social features within international IC.

Intranets exist already a long time and they have always provided certain features to companies and their users. Today, these features are often seen as basic features and possible extensions. Social features, however, are relatively new and become more and more relevant since companies try to shift from just providing information to integrating employees into the company's information and knowledge structure as well as processes. For companies it is important to know which features are basically offered and for which activities they are good for, but this does not mean that intranets have to include all elements (cf. Diehlmann/Herzog/Fischer 2016, p. 16; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 27).

Table 3 provides an overview of frequently applied elements in corporate intranets.

basic features	extensions	social features
news	team and project rooms	communities and blogs
documents	wikis	dashboards and profiles
search	tasks	microblogging and news feed
meta data	calendar	activity streams
lists	forms	messaging and bookmarking
	work flows	commenting, liking, tagging
		sharing and rating

Table 3: Frequently used intranet features

(based on Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 27)

3.5.1 Basic features and extensions

Basic features and extensions are already used in existing intranets. The "real" basic elements primarily focus on the transmission of internal information with news and content pages. These pages allow employees to find latest news and relevant information. In addition, basic elements include documents sections and lists. Every intranet provides users with the possibility to store and share files to make them transparent and always available in the latest version. Intranet users can also define rules for each document, i.e. they can allot permissions to access, read, edit etc. To give users a complete overview, intranets make use of lists to structure data and the intranet's range. These lists often contain re-directed links to different pages and are connected to the search function and meta data. The intranet's search enables employees to find specific information, documents or users. Filters may be added to make the search even more efficient. However, the search speed and results accuracy depend on meta data, descriptive characteristics that are defined by users or the system. Furthermore, basic elements are extended by other features which positively affect collaborative IC. The intranet user can apply a calendar and task pages to be updated about project information, appointments and other information that might influence work (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 27 - 30). Thereby, forms and work flows support employees and optimise several processes by releasing information and contents as soon as they are of relevance (cf.

Matthews 2014). These activities and features can be bundled in so called team or project rooms in which only information about certain projects, topics or teams is exchanged. Team and project rooms are quite popular in modern intranets, as they facilitate collaboration within teams and enable efficient cooperation among departmental boundaries (cf. Diehlmann/Herzog/Fischer 2016, p. 32).

Besides the just mentioned elements of intranets that are rather self-explanatory, a special form of extended features is a "wiki" that probably needs further clarification. Wikis are a collection of corporate content pages on the IC platform. They show what employees have written and by clicking "edit" users can add text or change the content. This enables an easy documentation of ideas and keeps contents of IC always up-to-date. On top of that, wikis include links to main articles or related documents and, consequently, form a broad network of company information; an idea generation and discussion feature that enables every intranet user to participate (cf. Brain n.d.; Fischer 2006, p. 163; Williams 2014).

3.5.2 Social features

Today, the focus of social intranets is on its social features, because companies become more and more social. This means that employees are encouraged to share information, collaborate and work together at any time. Social features are essential, as these elements increase employee satisfaction and create open communication as driving force (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 32; Nielsen 2013).

Dashboards

An intranet dashboard is the place where people within the organisation can see what is going on. It can be seen as the internal homepage which navigates to all central solutions of the social intranet. By opening the dashboard everyone immediately sees what happened since the last access, for example, latest news, events, notifications, etc. A big advantage of social intranet dashboards is the possibility of customised configuration. The sections of the dashboard can be arranged according to the user's needs and interests (cf. Stunf B.V. n.d.).

Communities & forums

Communities create an environment for efficient discussions and communication. Employees can select forums about topics of their interest in order to collect ideas and opinions, give feedback and ask questions. In addition, online forums allow to solve any uncertainties and doubts that might arise during a process phase. These forums also provide users with the possibility to set up an own community to directly satisfy their personal information needs (cf. Camarero/Rodríguez/San José 2012, p. 570; Griesbaum et al. 2015, p. 2f.; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 32).

Blogs

Corporate blogs can be integrated into a social intranet functioning as an IC channel to share information and improve KM. Further usages of blogs are intended to reach the organisation's target groups more precisely and interact with them. They are used to communicate corporate topics and views, provide quick responses to change or in crisis management and support an organisation's vision, goals and strategies. Also, if employees are properly informed and educated, blogs encourage them to comment on blog-posts, share ideas actively and ask questions (cf. Baxter/Connolly/Stansfield 2010, p. 515f.; Koenig/Schlaegel 2014, p. 412).

Microblogging, news feed and RSS

Microblogs allow users to publish short text messages that may include useful files. Several contributions are shown chronologically in the news feed with the option to take reaction. Microblogging is best known and very popular on social media platforms, such as Facebook or Xing. However, microblogging can be widely used for a variety of purposes like IC, entertainment, e-commerce, knowledge sharing and expert support. Within companies microblogs enable fast communication; questions can be answered directly, links to important information can be shared, the main outcome of meetings can be presented, work groups and subsidiaries can be connected and the overall working atmosphere can be improved. To put it in a nutshell, microblogging supports the information exchange and knowledge sharing process (cf. Habicher 2011; Huang/Shiau 2015, p. 282; Mattscheck n.d.). Moreover, employees can make use of RSS feeds if they want to receive more information from different sources of the social intranet. These feeds aggregate content of requested topics and show it neatly arranged in a message board that can be added to the social intranet dashboard (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 35).

Social bookmarking

Social bookmarks work similar as bookmarks used for websites, but besides of only tagging pages, also other resource types, such as images, videos and other content, can be tagged on social intranets. Social bookmarking is the collection of content with the same tags, which can be made accessible and detectible for all employees. Thus, if employees have the opportunity to categorise and exchange their bookmarks, they can benefit from this collection saving time and effort when searching for "already tagged" information (cf. Prinz 2014, p. 11).

Like, comment, share and tag

If social intranets should engage employees and drive collaboration, they need to include features, such as commenting, liking, sharing and tagging. Users should be able to do so with one single click. This means if employees publish posts in the news feed, others should be immediately able to like, share or comment them to provide feedback. In addition, messages are more spread throughout the system, if organisations enable the share and tag function. Social tags, on the one hand, can be used to tag other users drawing attention, and on the other hand, to link posts to other articles and related information (cf. Cohen-Dumani 2016; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 35).

Instant messaging

While e-mails and other IC instruments are only able to deliver messages time-displaced, instant messaging denotes the exchange of text messages in real-time. As a result, instant messaging applications support companies to allow "live" two-way communication and reduce e-mail traffic. Furthermore, employees can share text, audio and video files through instant messengers. It is an important feature for international companies, as it can also be used for group chats or video conferences. However, it needs to be stated that the participants' willingness and online presence is unavoidable (cf. Ou et al. 2010, p. 193f.; Prinz 2014, p. 9).

Activity streams

An activity stream is a central component of social intranets which allows employees to see what is happening in a project room or throughout the intranet. It orders all status messages chronologically and creates transparency and clarity. On social intranets users are able to select and control their status information, i.e. they can

decide what they want to receive. In general, activity streams contain not only user alerts and notifications about new posts or edited/revised documents, but also information about comments, "likes", "shares" and "tags" of employees' own contributions (cf. Gatz 2014; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 34; Prinz 2014, p. 12f.).

3.5.3 Use of social features for collaborative internal communication

After outlining the characteristics, benefits, features etc. of social intranets, this sub section briefly sums up how social features enhance collaborative IC. Some of the opportunities of the use of social features are as follows:

The use of social features in business operations encourages the exchange of information, knowledge and experience across the entire organisation and, therefore, promotes employee engagement, collaboration and efficient IC. It supports the creation of a corporation-wide environment to transfer know-how and do project work internationally. In addition, social features foster open, transparent and simple communication which allows employees to exchange information more quickly and find experts within the organisation more easily. As employees perform as one unified team across time and space, organisations can make use of social features to speed up the integration of corporate messages, cultures and values. This builds stronger relationships, especially in international active companies, and improves project processes and work not only across countries and diverse cultures, but also across departments. Another opportunity is to capture feedback in real-time and develop further, because the use of social features enable employees to offer their ideas, experience and assistance when others are unable to make progress and need help (cf. Jue/Marr/Kassotakis 2010, p. 8f.; Schick 2014, p. 193f.).

3.5.4 Risks of social features in internal communication

In recent years, social media inspired communication resp. the use of social features in IC has been broadly discussed and the possibilities of new technologies and applications are enormous. However, social intranet communication also includes some risks and organisations need to take caution when using social features internally (cf. FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 99).

The primary risk that social features can create is the shift of the power balance between organisations and their employees. As the use of social features foster the content generation by employees, companies hardly have any or limited control of their behaviour and the user generated content, which may include positive and negative messages. Besides the low control, features, such as like, share, tag, etc., accelerate the spread of messages and information might get into wrong hands, which exposes another risk. Furthermore, dilution risk within the organisation might occur. For example, employees might pick up wrong information and re-publish it. As a consequence, messages lose their original purpose and unmodifiable information is spread. In addition, lines of discrimination and infringement on data might be crossed when using social features in IC. Despite the functionality and opportunities of social intranet communication, also risks with regard to intercultural behaviour and the international context exist. Employees may have difficulties in understanding how to work with social features, due to possible knowledge or language barriers. As a result, they still prefer to use traditional communication forms, for instance, e-mails and personal communication. IC features only become "social" if they allow interaction and employee engagement, however, social features like blogs, forums, etc. are not considered social unless users start to comment and interact; otherwise the application of these features carry the risk of creating additional types of one-way communication (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1061; FitzPatrick/Valskov 2014, p. 99; Lam 2016, p. 432; Razmerita/Kirchner/Nielsen 2016, p. 1239; Wheatcroft 2016, p. 16).

In terms of IC also other aspects like security and connectivity concerns, issues of trust and lack of resources need to be taken into account. But these factors are rather ascribed to the organisational level and do not describe risks that are directly related to social intranets and their features (cf. Verghese 2012, p. 138 - 140).

3.6 Requirements for social intranets

If a social intranet should be implemented to support collaborative IC, several factors have to be taken into consideration. These factors will lay the foundation on the performance of any communication process and build the requirements from company and user end. But also requirements of the implementation need to be considered. The social intranet requirements and their connections are visualised in

the following figure. The connections show that all requirements must create a "fit" to get overall acceptance (cf. Lewis 2014; Pütz 2012).
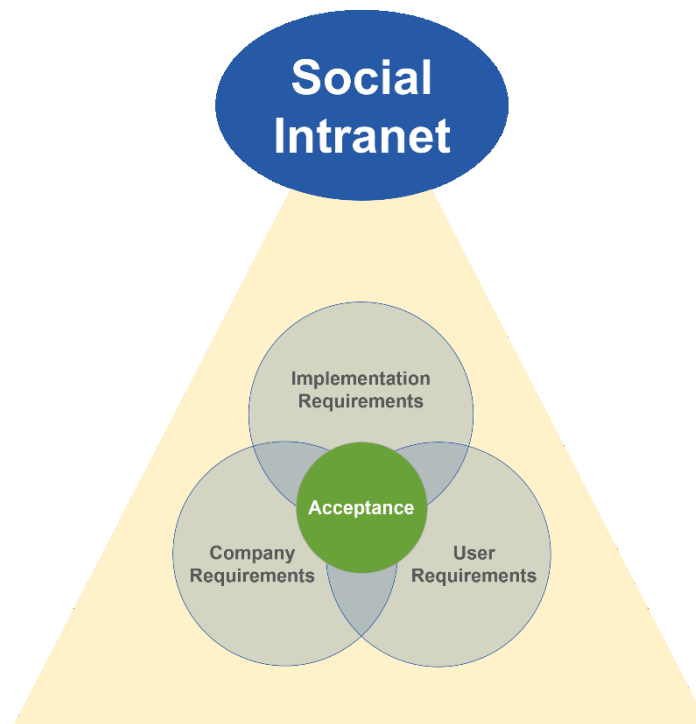
Figure 3: Social intranet requirements (own presentation)

3.6.1 User requirements

In order to know a social intranet's user requirements, the definition of the social intranet's audience is the first step organisations need to do. Only if they know who are the users, will help them later to select an appropriate intranet software. They have to know who is most likely to use the social intranet, because every department and single employee will have different requirements when working with a corporate-wide platform. If multiple teams take part in collaborative IC and use a corporate intranet, it is vital for companies to offer a solution that meets several requirements and can be used across departments and countries. Narrowing down the audience is the first step to detect user requirements and a focus. Furthermore, it is necessary to know what the users want. Companies have to investigate which purpose social intranets must fulfil for their employees. As the list can be quite long, it is important to know if employees strive for an information resp. document sharing point, a place to collaborate or a platform for process and project management. In addition, organisations should prioritise and rank intranet functions. As already mentioned, there is no need that all social intranet features (cf. chapter 3.5) are

included, but they need to know which features are most important to satisfy their users' needs (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 78f.; Johnson 2015).

However, companies have to involve their employees into decision making and conduct interviews resp. surveys. They have to ask as many internal stakeholders as possible for their opinions to breakdown the social intranet user requirements. The more answers they get, the better they can drill down the specifics, which may include

- improvement of information and document search,
- encouragement of employee engagement and collaboration,
- improvement of international cooperation and interaction,
- guarantee of open, complete and transparent information,
- better productivity and performance,
- management of tasks, events, dates, meetings, project collaboration and
- savings in time and other resources (cf. Eisenhauer 2014b).

3.6.2 Company requirements

Besides the needs of the social intranet users, other requirements are determined by the company end. Organisations need to define what they want to measure and for which application areas the corporate-wide platform shall be used. It makes a difference in choosing the right features and tools for the nationwide IC platform. Collaborative and efficient two-way communication requires other features than, for instance, the exchange of information. In addition, the organisation's objectives and decisions regarding what they want to communicate, which information they want to share and how they want to do it, influence the entire social intranet implementation and performance. In principle, the company requirements are constrained by three cardinal factors: scope, cost and schedule. These factors not only influence each other, but also have an impact on the implementation requirements. For example, if companies want to save money, they have to sacrifice on other needs. Also, company requirements in combination with user requirements define the schedule, as their scope directly affects the cost and time for the implementation as well as integration of all needs (cf. Eisenhauer 2014b; Elcom 2012).

3.6.3 Implementation requirements

The implementation requirements primarily depend on the requirements from company and user end. In addition to them, the already existing communication structures and tools are relevant for a frictionless implementation and migration of data resp. processes. The build or buy decision is the one companies need to make in the early stages, which mainly depends on the company requirements concerning cost. Furthermore, they have to decide on whether a cloud based or on premise social intranet solution should be used. In this case organisations often have to decide between a rather flexible and customisable social intranet software or a one-size-fits-all intranet (cf. Eisenhauer 2014a,b; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 141 - 143).

Having said that, the implementation requirements must be outlined by the IT department resp. the responsible social intranet provider. Especially, they have to deal with the pros and cons of the following possible self-hosted or cloud based requirements:

- security and control
- need for customisation vs. standardisation
- integration and availability of existing data
- cost and legal aspects (cf. Eisenhauer 2014a; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 144-146)

3.7 Selection criteria for social intranets

This subchapter deals with the selection of the appropriate social intranet platform by providing selection criteria which can be the basis for further specification paper.

1. Purpose: The appropriate social intranet platform must fit to the purpose and strategic direction of the social intranet itself (cf. Schillerwein 2014).

2. Social intranet features: The right social intranet platform enables companies to adapt its features to various business processes (cf. Eisenhauer 2012).

3. Usability: To make sure that the social intranet is easy to use, its features and feasibility should be analysed in a trial version beforehand (cf. mixxt 2015, p. 5f.).

4. Responsiveness: As a lot of working professionals need access to the social intranet platform also from mobile devices, the social intranet must be responsive (cf. Eisenhauer 2015b).

5. Data security: It is important to check all social intranet security precautions provided by the vendor; depending on the use of a cloud-based or on premise solution (cf. mixxt 2015, p. 7).

6. Technical specifications: Companies need to decide whether they want to implement a cloud-based or on premise (locally installed) social intranet solution (cf. Manchester 2012).

7. Extra services: It is necessary to know additional services, like technical support, that may be needed before, during or after the purchase (cf. mixxt 2015, p. 8).

8. Experience: Due to several years of research and development, companies should check the experience and quality of the social intranet provider for best results (cf. Eisenhauer 2014c).

9. Availability of APIs: When the social intranet is to be connected with already existing software, it is necessary to clarify if appropriate application programming interfaces (APIs) are available (cf. mixxt 2015, p. 9).

10. Budget: The social intranet's overall costs are decisive for the final decision and, therefore, play a crucial role for the selection of the most appropriate platform (cf. Manchester 2012).

4 Development of an international IC concept with a focus on social intranets

Often the reason for inefficient and unsatisfactory IC is a missing communication concept. Although the methodological discussion with this topic is very important, missing concepts lead organisations to neglect and underestimate the potentials of internal communication (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1128). This chapter of the thesis deals with the development of an international IC concept and outlines all steps to be included in order to develop an international internal communication concept with a focus on social intranets for RECOM in the practical section.

A communication concept includes different strategic and creative approaches that are combined with the planning of the instruments, features and resources to be used. Consequently, a communication concept consolidates all communication activities and allows companies to capture all necessary phases and processes with regard to their international IC tool. Having said that, a concept for communication basically has four main functions: strategic decision making, practical line of sight, economic planning basis and motivating stimulant. On the one hand, it makes communication relations transparent and provides new impulses in decision making, and on the other hand, it is an instruction manual for all communication participants or a tangible planning basis for those responsible. In addition, a communication concept is a motivating stimulant, as it inspires and lets everyone pull together (cf. Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 13 - 16).

In literature there exists a range of quite similar but still different definitions and approaches for communication concepts. For example, *Bruhn* conceptualised eight stages of communication processes, whereas *Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte* defined nine and *Schick* six steps. Also, *Pepels* came up with an eight-step-process that has a totally different focus to the others. Relative to international communication other approaches exist and have to be considered though. While *Czinkota/Ronkainen* developed seven stages, especially for promotional campaigns, *Herbst* just takes four general steps into account (cf. Bruhn 2015, p. 53f.; Czinkota/Ronkainen 2007, p. 577; Herbst 2003, p. 47f.; Schick 2014, p. 38f.; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 34, Pepels 2001, p. 45). However, most of the different approaches, including the aforementioned ones, cover the same core elements of a communication concept.

These core parts can be found in each concept, namely problem analysis, strategy development, strategy execution and check whether the problem is solved (cf. Bentele/Nothhaft 2014, p. 609). Figure 4 shows the essential steps which are discussed in this thesis and build the basis for the practical concept development.
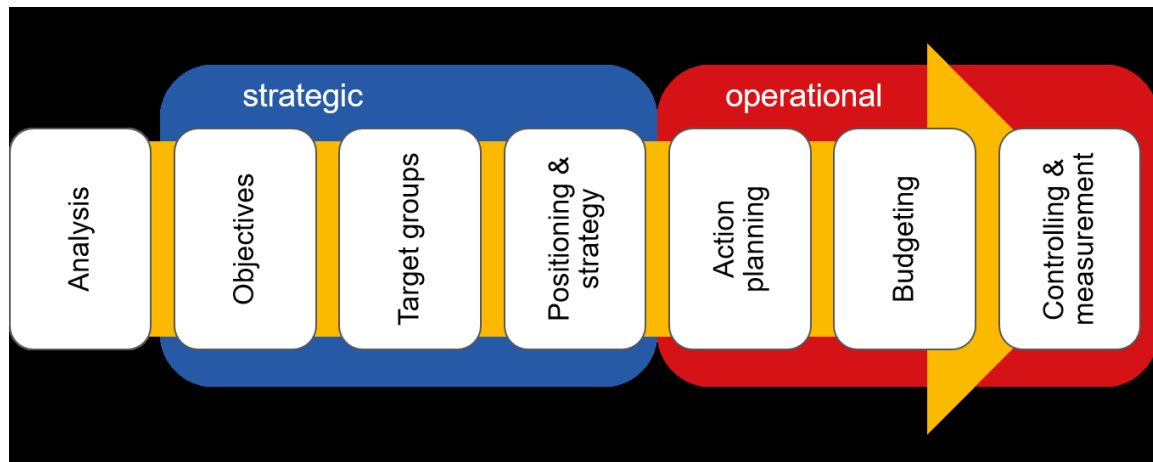
Figure 4: Communication concept steps

(based on Bruhn 2015, p. 53f.; Leipziger 2009, pos. 195; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 34)

4.1 Analysis

The starting point for the communication concept is a clear in-depth analysis which provides a focussed description and explanation of the initial situation. It is important for organisations to be informed about the current situation and trends to be regarded in the planning and conceptualisation process. The analytical procedure requires time and instant-analyses often lead to blurred, distorted or even wrong conclusions. Therefore, all necessary information has to be gathered, reduced and compressed to a few central statements. The analysis is nothing but a solution-oriented order. A multitude of relevant information is filtered, weighted and assorted to obtain clear structures (cf. Fuchs/Unger 2007, p. 55; Leipziger 2009, pos. 301; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 87f.).

The detailed problem analysis mainly includes the analysis of influencing factors, e.g. hierarchies and internationalisation, the analysis of opportunities and threats, like the development of communication technologies, and the analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses, such as the employee structure or state of awareness (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1134 - 1137). With the focus on social intranets, companies not only need to analyse their existing IT infrastructure and their already used IC tools, but also their company culture and their communication status. For later steps it is

essential to know which communication features are applied and which hierarchies or other cultural aspects influence the communication process. Organisations need to consider their means of communication, the way of communicating and the current collaborative IC activities (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 73).

In order to facilitate the analysis process, a variety of established methods and models can be used. These methods help companies to present clear and realistic structures. One of the most common analysis method is the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis allows organisations to consolidate the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in one matrix. It is the basis for the strategic planning process and makes a transparent presentation possible (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1138; Schawel/Billing 2014, p. 246f.). Also, the PESTEL approach is a tool that allows companies to create an overall picture of its surrounding. It gathers and analyses information about political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors. Afterwards it is identified which of these factors represent opportunities or threats and, consequently, influence the company's intentions in a positive or negative way (cf. Jurevicius 2013). Furthermore, own-built models can be based on the mentioned approaches. For instance, *Führmann*, a communication agency, used the SWOT analysis as inspiration to develop the SOFT analysis. The SOFT analysis is an easy-to-use approach and planning tool to improve IC by analysing the satisfaction (strengths), opportunities, failures and threats of the company in relation to its IC. It also examines both positive and negative aspects, but replaces the internal resp. external view by concentrating on present and future factors (cf. Führmann 2014).

4.2 Strategic planning

The strategic planning defines accurately the goals, target groups, positioning and strategy as part of the communication concept which are indicatory for the operational planning, particularly for the IC activities (cf. Leipziger 2009, pos. 1284).

4.2.1 Objectives

An objective is something that has not yet been achieved and organisations crave for. They deal with the intended result and not with the procedures that are necessary to reach them. In general, the objectives of an IC concept need to be

derived from the superior marketing and company goals in order to avoid goal conflicts (cf. Leipziger 2009, pos. 1302; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 128; Smith 2005, p. 72). They are linked to the previous research and are stated explicit with a focus on the outcome. By making objectives SMART, **s**pecifically (What is the outcome?), **m**easurable (How to quantify?), **a**ccepted by all stakeholders, **r**ealistic (Is it doable?) and **t**ime definite (When is the goal to be achieved?), they become more tangible and allow monitoring at the end. It is important that every employee is aware of the defined objectives, so companies get overall acceptance. Independently, companies have to define goals precisely and make sure that everyone understands them (cf. Hettl 2013, p. 97; Smith 2005, p. 73f.). To get also the acceptance of stakeholders abroad, objectives of an international IC concept need to be defined consistently and approved by the regional headquarters (cf. Czinkota/Ronkainen 2007, p. 579).

Communication targets can be divided into either economic, e.g. cost reduction, or non-economic objectives (cf. Mast 2016, p. 128). Thereby, economic objectives strongly depend on the achievement of non-economic goals, which can further be differentiated into cognitive, affective and conative targets. Whereas cognitive-oriented communication objectives concern knowledge (e.g. increase of information or knowledge level), affective-oriented goals describe emotions (e.g. increase in interest) and conative-oriented goals changes in behaviour. In addition to the three main psychological goals also social-oriented communication objectives with regard to personal relationships can be classified (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1140f.; Kroeber-Riel/Gröppel-Klein 2013, p. 51 - 54). If a social intranet is to be implemented, strategic and operational intranet goals can be derived thereof. Strategic intranet objectives (e.g. effective knowledge management) visualise the contribution that a social intranet should make to the company's success, while operational objectives (e.g. less e-mails or traceability of experts) facilitate the definition of priorities and the allocation of resources (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 42 - 44).

4.2.2 Target groups

After the definition of the objectives, the communication concept deals with the identification of target groups. It orientates towards existing or creating groups which are often characterised by socio-demographic, geographic, psychographic as well

as behavioural aspects (cf. Leipziger 2009, pos. 1564; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 111). A clear target group selection allows organisations to address internal groups more effectively. That is why a company needs to decide whether all employees symbolise the target group or if sub-target groups are necessary. For example, employees from abroad, from different departments, from other locations, or of different age can form special sub-target groups (cf. Schick 2014, p. 56).

Internal audience segmentation supports organisations to identify their target groups and to know relevant elements; it helps to cluster and address them. Accordingly, they know their primary target group and who else should have access to the IC tool. The target group's knowledge and previous communication patterns can easily be described and companies are aware of the next steps to take (cf. Block 2003, p. 30; Suh/Lee 2016, p. 453). Different requirements and expectations have to be considered. It is important to identify all employees, who should use the social intranet for collaborative IC, according to specific criteria. As a result, companies need to know who are the stakeholders (IC target group), how strong are they involved (IC relevance), which information content is important to them (IC needs) and how do they get to this information (IC architecture). If companies have defined their target groups and integrate them directly into decision making, they will benefit from active two-way communication and make a social intranet successful (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1144f.; Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 78; Kennedy 2007, p. 56f.; Mast 2016, p. 119f.).

4.2.3 Positioning & strategy

The definition of a clear positioning, of how IC should be conveyed to a company's stakeholders, as well as the definition of the appropriate strategy are the main parts of the concept development.

Positioning

Similar to the positioning of a product or brand, it is also necessary to include the positioning in an IC concept. In principle, it is mandatory for organisations to make IC and its possibilities attractive to its employees. In this case, a long-term orientation allows to face information overflows and inefficient communication. Communicative positioning must be used over a longer period of time to leave an

impression among the stakeholders (cf. Fuchs/Unger 2007, p. 142). The view of the actual and target position is also important in this context. Whereas the actual position defines the status quo, the target position describes the position that IC should play in the future. This results in four main types of strategic positioning, namely repositioning, change positioning, evolutionary positioning and anchoring positioning. On the one hand, if an environment for IC, particularly a communication tool, does not yet exist, it can be positioned without any constraints (repositioning), but on the other hand, it might be necessary to change a position within the scope of a relaunch if IC is already applied consciously (change positioning). While a new position may be also required due to changes on the market and different or changed requirements of the target group (evolutionary positioning), organisations may be pleased with a position and just want to improve and fine-tune the previous one (anchoring positioning). Nevertheless, when deciding on a positioning it is vital to keep the overall objectives and target groups in mind (cf. Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 148f.).

Strategy

Thereafter, a communication strategy bundles all elements, such as the target group and positioning, to define the framework for achieving the communication targets; regardless whether multiple or only one IC instrument resp. tool is used. However, companies have to develop their own communication strategies based on their corporate strategies (cf. Barker/Angelopulo 2005, p. 357f.; Esch n.d.).

In literature, four main communication strategies exist according to Bruhn. The information strategy focuses on the deployment of information and knowledge, whereas the dialogue strategy aims to promote two-way communication and interaction between top-management and employees. Other types are the change strategy whose task is to inform employees about long-term and abrupt changes, and the staff retention strategy aiming to create an emotional bond of the employees to the company. For each strategy a company has to choose the most appropriate and most effective IC instruments that best support its positioning and the achievement of previously defined objectives (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1157 - 1160).

In addition, strategy tools, like the Ansoff matrix, can be used to translate different strategies into concrete, operational measures by specifying the direction of impact

and monitor them in their implementation (cf. Schawel/Billing 2014, p. 21). Although the Ansoff matrix is rather product and market oriented, it is still applicable to communication. In order to get an impression of the possibilities in theory, the following table shows a modified Ansoff matrix for collaborative IC.

		Internal communication instrument	
		existing	new
Communication direction	one-way	**Communication penetration strategy**: improve IC with existing instrument(s) and better one-way communication; help employees to exchange information more efficiently	**Instrument development strategy**: attempt to improve existing one-way communication with upgraded or new IC instrument(s) to meet user requirements more precisely
	two-way	**Communication development strategy**: attempt to shift one-way to two-way communication by using existing IC instrument(s); encourage employees to interact	**Diversification strategy**: application of new IC instrument(s) to promote collaborative two-way communication; encourage employees to take part in the making of decisions and IC structures

Table 4: Internal communication matrix (based on Schawel/Billing 2014, p. 21f.)

Besides the positioning and strategy, the determination of core content messages is necessary for IC. *Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte*, therefore, provided an explanation of how to structure resp. define these topics. Firstly, the IC concept outlines relevant subject areas to delimitate communication content. Secondly, core messages define the central statements for different communication content, before partial messages are used to interpret core messages for diverse target groups etc. Thirdly, IC messages need to be buttressed through storytelling to gain in authenticity and impact. Fourthly, it is also necessary to draw up guidelines how to convey IC messages (tonality). Having said that, organisations will be able to get greater acceptance of all stakeholders if they put attention to the content making process (cf. Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 155).

4.3 Operational planning

In the operative part of the concept, the communication activities are described which realise the developed strategy (containing objectives, target groups, etc.). The operational planning is kind of a realisation system that includes action planning, budgeting as well as controlling and measurement (cf. Leipziger 2009, pos. 2087).

4.3.1 Action planning

After the strategic planning, action planning is the first step of the operative part. The main difference between strategy and action planning is the maturity. While action planning is tactical and rather short-term oriented, the strategy is long-term oriented and defines fundamental principles and structures. If organisations change their strategy, they change their entire direction, but if they replace measures, usually nothing happens (cf. Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 181).

In general, action planning starts with the decision of which actions to be taken. Thereby three principle directions can be considered. It is important to think of all measures that are possible to realise the strategy. In addition, it has to be clear how to organise resp. direct these measures effectively and how connections between the measures can be established. The basic prerequisite for the resulting action plan is a functional structure, wherefore all relevant measures need to be organised. It is important to show which possible feature or activity should serve which purpose. Therefore, measures are principally divided in action fields and the action plan is structured by a certain aspect. Several aspects are available to structure the plan, for example, instruments, features, time, target groups, objectives and regions (cf. Leipziger 2009, pos. 2119; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 181 - 183).

Thereafter, the most feasible measures need to be selected according to the most important strategic criterions for the choice of actions, as follows:
▪ appropriateness for target groups and transport of core messages
▪ support of communicative objectives
▪ fit of the measure and the positioning
▪ connectedness with and support of other measures
▪ possible consequences of overlaps between different measures (cf. Fuchs/Unger 2007, p. 159; Schmidbauer/Knödler-Bunte 2004, p. 184)

The entire communication channel influences the ways of communication. All IC instruments (cf. chapter 2.5) need to be checked according to their possible success. Ideally, a mix of different communication instruments is used to achieve objectives and to react on diverse communication needs (cf. Schick 2014, p. 50f.). With regard to social intranets, news feeds, blogs, social bookmarking and

microblogging are possible measures, as elaborated in chapter 3.5 (features of social intranets). As part of the action planning it is necessary to find out about the functionalities a social intranet needs to provide and satisfy target groups. Application scenarios may support the process of defining actions to be taken. Moreover, these scenarios increase the acceptance for the social intranet. Only if the platform offers actions that help employees to do their work better and more efficient, they will make use of it. That is why it is important to identify all relevant social intranet features (measures) in order to meet the overall objectives and motivate target groups to take interaction (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 90; Kennedy 2007, p. 62).

4.3.2 Budgeting

The second step of the operational planning, namely budgeting, is also important for the communication concept, as it links the set objectives with its measures and control decisions (cf. Czinkota/Ronkainen 2007, p. 579).

The communication budget encompasses all financial resources which are provided and needed for the entire company communication. As a result, a company has to quote the budget for IC separately as one part of the overall communication budget (cf. Fuchs/Unger 2007, p. 349f.). Often companies set a lump-sum budget without defining purposes explicitly and what exactly should be covered with the money (cf. Guhl/Steffenhagen 2016, p. 352). Albeit organisations can make use of four different approaches to define their communication budget, viz. percentage of a reference parameter, size of profit planning (all you can afford), alignment at competition or target-measures calculation. The budget calculation as percentage of a reference parameter defines the amount percental, for example, as measured by the sales volume of the previous year, whereas the budget amount is the result (remaining value) of the annual profit planning by applying the "all you can afford" method. Another approach is to define the available budget in alignment at the strongest competitor, but then companies disregard all effects of communication. The for companies "most expensive" budget calculation is the target-measures calculation. This method considers the cause-effect-context and the sum of all communication activities to reach certain aims is set as the budget (cf. Aerni/Bruhn 2012, p. 107f.).

With regard to the internal communication budget, it is very common to calculate one-time costs beforehand; including personnel costs for the planning, conduction and evaluation of market research as well as acquisition costs, e.g. for the social intranet tool. Furthermore, budgeting needs to allocate financial resources to follow-up costs. This includes expenditures for managing IC, updating IC measures resp. instruments; to put it another way, costs for extension, personnel, development, maintenance, etc. (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1163f.; Fuchs/Unger 2007, p. 349f.).

4.3.3 Controlling & measurement

The final step of the operational planning is to make considerations about the success measurement and controlling of the communication. The core task of communication controlling is to check the communication planning targeted at objectives. It is important to measure both the effectiveness and efficiency of IC measures, i.e. have objectives been achieved and have IC activities contributed to the objectives' achievement (cf. Arnaout 2005, p. 125; Bruhn 2014, p. 1199; Rolke 2016, p. 42; Rolke/Zerfaß 2014, p. 872).

In the case of a social intranet it is also of interest how employees use it in order to determine the success and to monitor its features. For instance, the number of employee profiles, active users, mobile accesses, click rates and the extent to which specific social features are used can be decisive for the tool's extension and development (cf. Gröscho/Eichler-Liebenow/Köhler 2015, p. 283).

The measurement of the effectiveness is related to the results achieved by IC activities among target groups (motivation, satisfaction and attitude), while the measurement of the efficiency is used to assess IC activities by cost-benefit comparisons (evaluation of measures). Efficiency controls compare the quantitative or qualitative success with cost factors, such as software fees and costs for hardware, personnel, implementation etc. The resulting benefits can be attributed directly or indirectly and can show up as improved IC processes or higher identification of employees (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1200 - 1202).

In addition, communication controlling can be expressed with the dimensions output, outcome and outflow. Output describes the availability and range of IC messages

as well as the accessibility of IC services for target groups. Outcome demonstrates the impact by the stakeholders. It shows the usage, perception and understanding of IC content as well as its influence on knowledge, opinions and attitudes. Outflow is the economic effect and outlines the contribution of IC to the company's value added by supporting its service provision as enabling function (market-oriented) and building intangible values (resource oriented), like reputation, brands and corporate culture. The effect of communication can again be determined quantitatively and qualitatively (cf. Zerfaß 2008, p. 440).

Having said that, companies can make use of several tools to control and measure its internal communication. For example, companies can apply different survey and observation techniques to determine quality of interaction resp. its communication (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1200). Furthermore, they can conduct audits which allow to monitor, control and readjust several communication processes (cf. Schick 2014, p. 19). Also, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a tool that can be used for controlling. The BSC systematises a company's strategy development and control of goal achievement. Therefore, it can be used as a basis to derive communication targets and demonstrate communication strategy (cf. Schick 2014, p. 25).

5   Key findings of the theoretical part

When it comes to IC, new technologies changed the communication structure enormously. While one-way communication was necessary to provide employees with information, today knowledge sharing is more transparent and employees have unlimited access to information worldwide. As a result, they become more powerful and want to be integrated into IC. Accordingly, organisations are forced to shift one-way to two-way communication by allowing their employees to participate actively. Despite traditional face-to-face communication, several IC instruments are available that support companies to do so. On the one hand, they can make use of tools to share content, and on the other hand, they can use them for collaboration. However, employees strive for tools that offer everything from one source in real-time and this trend makes the entire IC process more complicated for international companies, as they have to adapt all IC activities to meet local needs by considering differences in terms of borders, language, culture, behaviour, etc.

Having said that, social intranets function as a centralised international IC solution. These instruments are relatively new and overcome the restrictions and limitations of traditional instruments. Social intranets not only make use of new technologies, but also social features. This means that they provide functionalities to enhance IC by applying social features that encourage employee engagement. IC, therefore, focuses on efficient two-way communication and replaces the rigid one-way approach which not only saves time and money, but also motivates people and increases employee satisfaction. Companies need to define which information and communication content should be accessible for whom. Thus, they have to regard all needs in relation to the social intranet platform, namely the requirements of the user, the company and for the tool's implementation. Only if organisations can ensure to meet all requirements, they will receive overall acceptance.
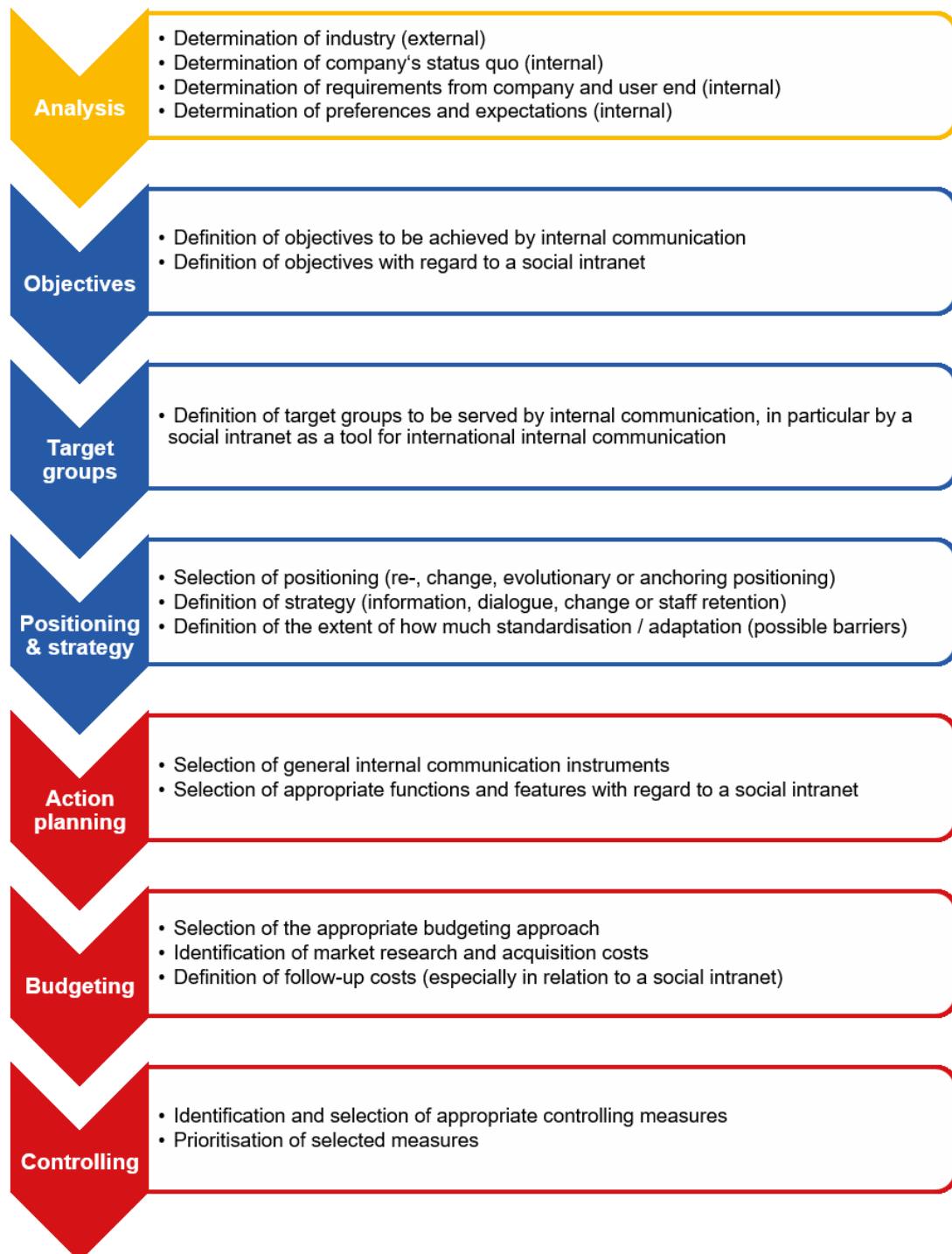
The development of an international IC concept can support companies to structure the requirements for a social intranet. The IC concept includes the analysis, strategic and operational planning. The analysis defines the initial situation and outlines the status quo of all IC activities with regard to used instruments, communication direction and also cultural differences. As a result of the analysis, organisations will be aware of possible opportunities and limitations that will influence their further

planning. Both the strategic and operational planning are divided into three steps. The first step of the strategic part is to define all communication objectives, before the target groups can be identified. As soon as the company knows their target groups and their expectations, it can transfer this knowledge to the positioning and set up a long-term strategy. Thereafter, the operational planning starts with the creation of an action plan. All measures are structured and the features that are required by the company and user end are defined. It is essential to know exactly what employees need to do their work efficiently. That is why it is often necessary to enquire this information with the aid of primary market research. The final two steps of the operative part are the budget calculation and measurement. Budgeting has to make sure that all costs caused by IC are covered and targets are reached. In order to measure the effectiveness and efficiency, companies need to apply controlling techniques. Therefore, the impact dimensions can be expressed with either quantitative or qualitative indicators. A well-developed IC concept helps companies to assess the overall IC success.

In the case of RECOM, the latest trends and new technologies also affect its IC processes. As there is hardly any structure, the company is required to create an environment in which employee communication can take place. Employees need a centralised source from which they can get information. Furthermore, the way of communicating differs a lot. Especially in the electronics industry, due to the fact that a lot of diverse people with completely different educational background and attitudes work together. On the one hand, organisations employ engineers who are essential for the development, testing and innovation of the products, and on the other hand, the typical organisational functions like Accounting, Marketing & Sales, Purchasing, etc. are needed. In addition, international active companies face geographic, language, behavioural and cultural barriers. Therefore, the company has to provide all relevant features that allow employees to collaborate in the most efficient way. The variety of different features that can be used for IC has to be reviewed and the ones that are most applicable for RECOM need to be chosen. As a result, an analysis and research needs to be done, which is the main topic of chapter 7. The knowledge of what employees demand, helps the company to develop further. The author of this thesis, consequently, provides RECOM with an international IC concept that can be applied to structure its IC and to boost internal collaboration. It focuses on the use of a social intranet outlining all features that are

most suitable for improving and promoting IC at RECOM. Besides the action plan included in the concept, the author provides recommendations in the end, which should support the company in understanding and organising its internal communication activities resp. processes.

The following figure summarises the whole IC concept to provide a good overview.

Analysis
- Determination of industry (external)
- Determination of company's status quo (internal)
- Determination of requirements from company and user end (internal)
- Determination of preferences and expectations (internal)

Objectives
- Definition of objectives to be achieved by internal communication
- Definition of objectives with regard to a social intranet

Target groups
- Definition of target groups to be served by internal communication, in particular by a social intranet as a tool for international internal communication

Positioning & strategy
- Selection of positioning (re-, change, evolutionary or anchoring positioning)
- Definition of strategy (information, dialogue, change or staff retention)
- Definition of the extent of how much standardisation / adaptation (possible barriers)

Action planning
- Selection of general internal communication instruments
- Selection of appropriate functions and features with regard to a social intranet

Budgeting
- Selection of the appropriate budgeting approach
- Identification of market research and acquisition costs
- Definition of follow-up costs (especially in relation to a social intranet)

Controlling
- Identification and selection of appropriate controlling measures
- Prioritisation of selected measures

Figure 5: IC concept overview (own presentation)

6 Presentation of RECOM

6.1 Key data

The company RECOM was founded in 1975 in Germany and is today a global leading brand within the electronics industry which develops, produces and sells converters, switching regulators and LED drivers. In 2014, the company moved its headquarters (HQ) to a new campus-like building in Gmunden, Austria, as shown in Figure 6. The headquarters accommodates the company's central departments, namely R&D, Quality, Test and EMC Lab, Application Engineering, Corporate Marketing, Logistics and the Finance Centre (cf. RECOM Power GmbH 2016).

Figure 6: RECOM Headquarters (RECOM Power GmbH n.d.)

The RECOM group currently employs 385 people and consists of eight independent companies worldwide:

- RECOM Power GmbH - Austria
- RECOM Engineering GmbH & Co KG - Austria
- RECOM Electronic GmbH & Co. KG - Germany
- RECOM Asia Pte. Ltd. - Singapore and China
- RECOM Power Japan K.K. - Japan
- RECOM Technology Co., Ltd. - Taiwan
- RECOM Manufacturing Co. Ltd. - Taiwan
- RECOM Power Inc. - United States (cf. RECOM Power GmbH 2016)

6.2   Product portfolio

The product portfolio of RECOM includes AC/DC converters, DC/DC converters, switching regulators and LED drivers with more than 30,000 products. The company introduces about 30 new product series per year and also offers customisation. The main industries are industrial automation, transportation, medical engineering and energy. In 2015, 9.2 million converters were manufactured and an order volume of USD 60 million was reached. Having said that, RECOM's products are distributed globally to more than 60,000 customers (cf. RECOM Power GmbH 2016).

RECOM products carry worldwide certifications which are tested by a team of highly qualified engineers utilising the new technologies and testing methods to develop world-class high efficiency parts. All prototypes are being tested in a climate chamber prior to their release and tests are repeated frequently to ensure reliability and consistency (cf. Aichinger, RECOM Power GmbH 2015).

6.3   Global presence

In order to provide worldwide product availability, the company is positioned globally and operates in several locations. The locations of RECOM are strategically planned, as it is very important to be close to the customers, understand their needs and produce relevant products. As mentioned already, RECOM's HQ is situated in Gmunden, Austria, where the central functional departments are accommodated. There are two regional headquarters established. One of them is situated in Singapore to cover the APAC economic region, which functions as full-flex office with Sales, Marketing, Accounting and a logistic centre. The Asia offices are very important for RECOM, because APAC is an emerging economic area, and it allows the company to be close to customers and its factories in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The other regional HQ is located in Arvada, Colorado, the upcoming Silicon Valley in the United States. This office provides sales and technical services for the American market. Moreover, the company has sales offices in Vienna/Austria, Neu-Isenburg/Germany (main sales office of EMEA), Shanghai and Tokyo (cf. Cai 2016).

To achieve wider reach, RECOM has built a worldwide distribution network and serves its customers through several sales channels, for example, local distributors and catalogue partners (cf. RECOM Power GmbH 2016).

7 Insights into the electronics industry and RECOM's internal communication

This chapter mainly covers all necessary topics and information that are needed for the development of RECOM's international internal communication concept in the next chapter.

7.1 General industry insights

The electrical and electronic engineering industries are very popular in Europe, and, for instance, the second biggest industrial employers in Austria. A large number of companies like RECOM are involved in international activities and locate their (regional) headquarters in countries, where a lot of know-how is available (cf. ABA n.d.; European Commission n.d.). Therefore, efficient internal communication is essential to be competitive, as the electronics industry is a fast-moving sector and emerging resp. developing markets grow. For example, China is one of the major competitive markets for electrical or electronics products worldwide and is expected to represent half of the global market soon. Consequently, investment in foreign production increases and results in many factory expansions that create new challenges (cf. Investopedia 2015). Challenges that are faced by the electronics industry are employment levels, labour productivity and additional costs. Also, loss of skilled labour is an issue, because companies want to cut costs and relocate production, product development and research to Asian countries. In particular, this means organisations to loose highly educated electronic engineers and high-skilled personnel in advanced technologies. Furthermore, investments in R&D are important to compete with international players, but to get access to financial credits is the problem companies need to overcome (cf. European Commission n.d.).

Having said that, the development of the electronics industry is indirectly influencing the international IC. The industry is moving fast and competition increases enormously. Hence, the entire workforce needs to collaborate efficiently, so that no knowledge spill-overs occur. Organisations must develop further and be innovative. Moreover, the company has to deal with a lot of information and know-how of diverse people in different locations, who can easily become competitors. As a result, companies need to create an environment for efficient IC and allow further progress.

7.2 RECOM's communication content and used instruments

This subchapter deals with RECOM's current communication contents and the way of how these contents are delivered to all employees within the organisation. In addition, it is described how people communicate with each other and how collaboration looks like.

As already mentioned in the initial situation and problem statement of this thesis, RECOM now uses a bewildering array of different communication tools. This results in unstructured IC and overlaps within the entire communication. Furthermore, the communication is primarily done one-way, which means that no real or active interaction and know-how transfer takes place. Also, there is not really a regularity of information sharing noticeable; the only IC instrument that is published regularly is the company's newspaper with contributions from employees worldwide, but again only communicated one-way. One of the most severe problems at RECOM is the varying access to its IC instruments among all stakeholders. Hence, employees who communicate and collaborate with each other might experience that they need to switch IC tools, because not everyone has access to the same tools at the various locations of RECOM (cf. Berger 2016a; Berger 2017). In consequence, the present thesis provides the company with information of a tool that allows to structure IC and promote collaboration within the organisation internationally.

Communication content

Even if there exists no "real" communication architecture at RECOM at the moment, employees have to communicate and get things done. Several communication topics need to be concluded and a lot of diverging communication tasks come up in the course of IC, especially whilst different company projects and team work. The following communication content is currently faced at RECOM:

- **Documents:** Every process and every work only can be finished if documents are available and provide necessary information. Several tools are used to share documents, especially for international use, as also employees from abroad need access to diverse documents to be updated and to finish their work accordingly.

- **Information:** Beside sharing documents, another "huge" communication content at RECOM is the sharing and provision of any information. Information is needed to get things done, to know the direction and to be informed about the next steps.

At RECOM all tools are used to share and provide any kind of information, namely information about projects, information regarding work instructions, information about the company and its performance as well as information about any business related topics apart from the actual working tasks.

- **Knowledge:** Even if knowledge is not shared actively at the moment, there is a lot of know-how in circulation, which is shared and communicated via several different IC instruments at RECOM.

- **Decisions:** The existing instruments for communication are also used for discussions and negotiations. They are used for sharing responsibilities and making decisions in terms of company projects or further progress, so every employee knows what to do and what is going on (cf. Berger 2017).

Instruments in use

In general, RECOM applies already some of the IC instruments, as described in chapter 2.5 of the thesis. Therefore, the company uses several tools like Microsoft Outlook and SharePoint, Skype, Facebook, GoToMeeting, Polycom, TeamViewer, Fabasoft and WhatsApp. However, the main IC takes place in form of e-mails and meetings that are primarily handled on MS Outlook and Skype, as well as sharing information and documents on Fabasoft (cf. Berger 2017; Sulejmani 2017a). The following table provides an overview of all used IC instruments, their communication content and RECOM's applied tools.

IC instruments	Communication content	Tools
E-mails	Documents, Information, Knowledge, Decisions	MS Outlook
Text-messaging	Documents, Information	Skype, Facebook, WhatsApp
Department meetings	Information, Knowledge, Decisions	GoToMeeting, Polycom, Skype
Team meetings	Information, Knowledge, Decisions	Skype, (personal)
Company magazine	Information	MS Outlook
Employee suggestion system	Information, Knowledge	MS Outlook
Calendar entries	Information	MS Outlook
Seminars	Information, Knowledge	Skype, GoToMeeting, Polycom
Events	Information	MS Outlook, Facebook

Table 5: IC instruments used at RECOM (own presentation)

As the focus of the present thesis is on the social intranet as a tool for international internal communication, the existing tools and their corresponding IC instruments are described in more detail:

MS Outlook

The software from Microsoft is used for several communication topics. On MS Outlook calendar entries are shared among teams and departments, company events are announced and the entire e-mail correspondence takes place on this platform. E-mails are used for sharing information and documents and for arranging anything which is necessary for the daily business. To enable a targeted reach, RECOM has set up several e-mail groups in order to define the recipients of any shared information and documents (cf. Berger 2017). In total, RECOM's e-mail network consists of 100 active users and around 241 mailboxes (cf. Sulejmani 2017b). Moreover, the company magazine is send out via e-mail and the employee suggestion system works with a definite e-mail group. Even if e-mails as a way of communication are primarily one-way, signs of two-way communication are visible in forms of e-mail discussions, feedback enquiries and negotiations (cf. Berger 2017). However, employees at RECOM face various issues using e-mails as the main communication instrument. The inefficient "carbon copy (cc)" culture within e-mails makes it difficult for people to identify contact persons or any responsibilities. In addition to this, employees are often confronted with information overload and bombed with too many e-mails, which are often not relevant for their actual work. This phenomenon leads to inefficiencies in communication by prolonging projects and extending deadlines (cf. Berger 2017).

Skype

The company uses Skype as a tool for non-documented and fast communication. This means that there is no need to find previous communication afterwards. As a result, text-messaging, information and document sharing is primarily done on a day-to-day business basis. Unfortunately, there is some lack in (data-) security, because RECOM does not use Skype for Business at the moment. Every employee owns a private account with which conversations are joined, and even he/she would leave the company, shared information and files are still accessible. However, Skype is applied for further communication activities; screen sharing, short conference calls and ad hoc project discussions are some of them (cf. Berger 2017).

<u>*GoToMeeting / MS SharePoint*</u>

The possibilities of GoToMeeting and Microsoft SharePoint are not yet exhausted. Whereas GoToMeeting could be used for any kind of meeting or (video) conference call, RECOM mainly uses it for oversea meetings with other locations in the means of overseas discussions and knowledge sharing. Besides, MS SharePoint could have been used as "traditional" intranet in order to provide company and project related information more often. Nevertheless, just the media planning is done with the tool by only one user (cf. Berger 2017).

<u>*Fabasoft*</u>

A tool particularly for document sharing is Fabasoft. The software allows people to upload, download and distribute files and any kind of document information. In addition, the owner can define rights and assign permissions to read, share and edit documents. Furthermore, this tool enables employees to create specific project groups and team rooms, which only members have access to and in which just project related information is shared. Unfortunately, Fabasoft does not meet the company's needs as it is not really user-friendly and does not work in real-time. This also means that just one user can open a document and revision control is not available. Moreover, the software is not connected to RECOM's server and, consequently, duplications of folders and files might be produced; in total around 70% of existing files are not used and rated as out-of-date (cf. Berger 2017). Another drawback is that RECOM only owns 73 licences and cannot provide access to the tool to all white-collar workers who should be integrated into the IC process and take part in all IC activities (cf. Sulejmani 2017a).

Status quo of RECOM's internal collaboration

At RECOM, IC is not integrated into the entire company structure and information about the company is generally only received if it is really shared in form from one-way communication from the top-management to the employees. This means that push communication is predominated. Also pull communication is mainly done one-way, as everyone is responsible to get any information that is needed, however, can result in two-way communication by triggering off a discussion or conversation. The "real" two-way communication instruments that contribute to the knowledge of and encourage internal collaboration at RECOM are the company's meetings on GoToMeeting, webinars and e-mails within the mail group "product-ideas". The

webinars are internal seminars for know-how transfer and include all locations worldwide. Employees talk about innovations and share knowledge. In addition to this, the mail group "product-ideas" functions as feedback forum to gain ideas for new products, but also to receive feedback for improvements regarding existing products. The overall collaboration process would be different if RECOM would have a centralised solution; a tool that bundles every company information and know-how in real-time by promoting two-way communication (cf. Berger 2017).

7.3   Intercultural communication framework

Within internal communication several stumbling blocks may occur, as explained in a previous subchapter 2.7.2 "Barriers for international internal communication". However, this subchapter deals with one of the greatest challenges that companies need to pay attention to, namely cultural differences, because these differences affect an organisation's IC in terms of values, attitudes, motivation and behaviour.

Also, several intercultural aspects exist among RECOM's different locations. As a result, the company has to consider all differences to meet the requirements of all employees equally. To get a better understanding of the cultural differences and its influences, Hofstede's dimensions are used to create an intercultural framework. The following figure shows the peculiarities of the six cultural dimensions at RECOM in comparison of its international locations.
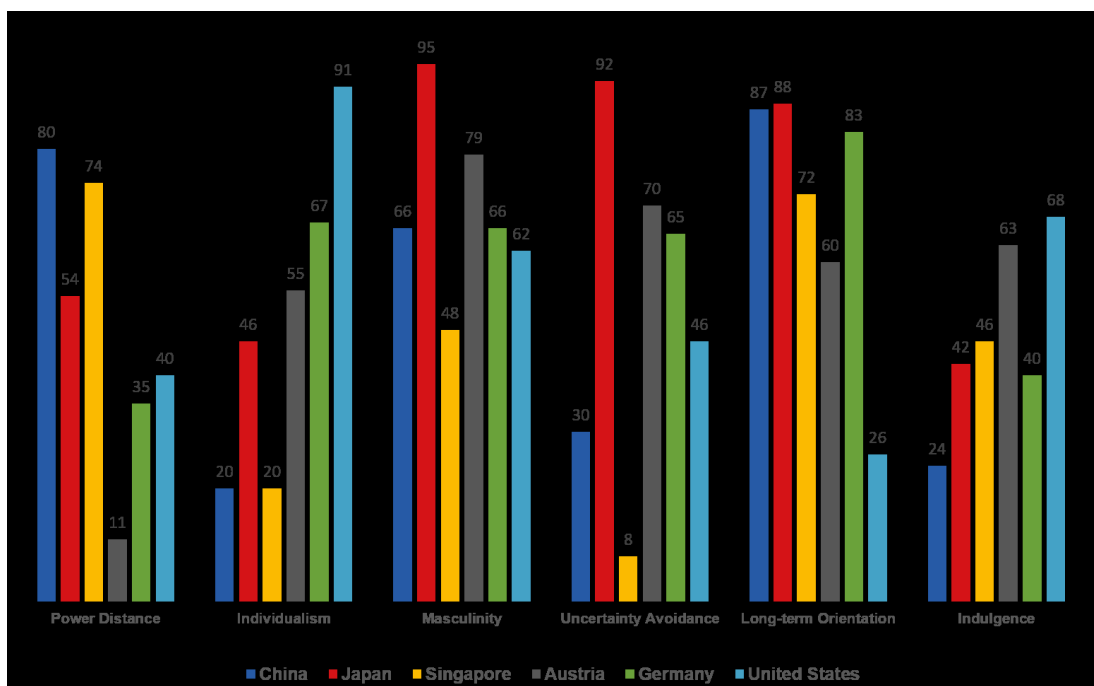
Figure 7: Cultural dimensions of RECOM locations (based on itim, Hofstede Centre n.d.[b])

The peculiarities are quite steady among the regional territories (Americas, APAC and EMEA). Nevertheless, there are some aberrations that might be decisive for decisions about RECOM's internal communication architecture. Having said that, it has to be stated that a full comparison and description of all existing and possible cultural differences is not possible within the thesis' framework. That is why the author concentrates on the aberrations linking them to potential impacts on IC. As a result, the scores are interpreted based on Hofstede's country description and the experience of the author and other employees within the Marketing department.

Obviously, there are cultural differences among RECOM's locations. When it comes to power distance, the scores of the Asian countries are higher than the others. This means that these cultures are driven by one-way resp. top-down communication. Whereas these countries would accept that not everyone has access to an IC tool, the other countries would consider this as unfair activity. Moreover, the most of RECOM's locations are quite individualistic countries. Employees from these cultures prefer direct and honest communication. They want to get as fast as possible to the information they need and an IC tool should definitely support this. Consequently, a social intranet needs to provide individual user dashboards and let people select whatever they want. In addition, the company's locations are mainly masculine societies. This means that they are very success oriented and driven. People within these societies mainly "live to work", are very task-focussed and competitive. With regard to IC and employee engagement, RECOM has to make sure that the company performance depends on the entire workforce and competition has no place within communication; otherwise no collaboration and interaction among employees and teams is possible. This can be accomplished by setting guidelines and encouraging two-way communication. Furthermore, the scores of the uncertainty avoidance index vary a little. Most of the locations are scored relatively high, while China and Singapore are scored quite low. This knowledge is very important if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM, as most of the people within the high-scored countries would have a quite critical view on the implementation and changed communication activities. Only people from China and Singapore are more likely to welcome the change process, because they like innovations and new development. As a result, the company needs to provide as much information and support as possible in order to reduce the uncertainty and fear of the high-scored countries. When it comes to Hofstede's fifth dimension, the

picture is comparatively clear. All countries are rather long-term oriented and strive for future development and growth. The unity within this dimension helps the company to receive overall acceptance and achieve conformity for the social intranet's implementation, provided it clearly points out the benefits and how it will improve the company's IC making it more efficient and successful. The last dimension is two-minded. One half of the countries is more indulgent and the other half more restraint, which means that it is a combination of more optimistic and also more pessimistic cultures. The knowledge of these two different sides may be very helpful. People within optimistic societies just need to receive as much information as possible in order to support the company's intention and pull together, whereas the organisation needs to motivate and provide more detailed information to the rather pessimistic people, so they become optimistic and do not hinder the project.

As demonstrated, a company can retrieve a lot of useful information out of the six cultural dimensions. These thoughts support to create an efficient IC environment and help to decide who, when and why to integrate into the planning process.

7.4   Requirements & acceptance from company and user end

This subchapter deals with the requirements and acceptance from company and user end, as it is essential to investigate the needs and expectations if a social intranet is to be implemented as a centralised solution. In consequence, the focus is on the data and information generation with regard to social intranets, which is later relevant for developing RECOM's international IC concept.

7.4.1 Framework conditions of the market research

In principle, there are two possibilities to do research. On the one hand, a primary market research can be carried out, and on the other hand, secondary market research may be applied. Whereas primary market research is also called "field research" and seen as a survey for an unsolved problem or an upcoming, currently existing issue, secondary market research is called "desk research", due to the usage of already existing data. Desk research does not specifically consider the present case, but uses internal and external data sources to question the problem. Internal data sources include all in-house documents, records, statistics, e.g. client databases and calculations from the accounting, while external data sources are

publications, statistics, etc. mainly provided by third parties like Eurostat or the chamber of commerce. Secondary market research is often favourable, because it requires less effort, time and cost. However, primary market research is recommended in order to get precise results in high quality and close to reality (cf. Berekoven/Eckert/Ellenrieder 2009, p. 39f.; Kirchgeorg/Wübbenhorst 2013, p. 164; Kuß 2012, p. 42f.). Furthermore, secondary market research can be used and carried out for a following primary market research. It may be the basis for the field research to facilitate its preparation and amplification. For instance, organisations may regard "best cases" of other companies that were successful in implementing a social intranet or those that have efficient IC; in the means of so called benchmarking. In this context, a desk research is supplement to primary market research (cf. Kuß 2012, p. 43). Consequently, a secondary and primary market research are conducted to underline the key findings and get practical insights.

7.4.2 Secondary market research

As RECOM wants to examine the requirements from company and user end to get overall acceptance for a social intranet that is to be implemented as centralised IC platform, a secondary market research is carried out beforehand. Hence, a best practice example in relation to the use and implementation of a social intranet as international IC tool is analysed to identify key elements, facts and factors for success that provide ideas and are regarded for the development of the IC concept. Therefore, the author makes use of the case study of Conrad Electronic SE. The case study is very useful for the present thesis and was selected, because Conrad Electronic operates within the same industry and is partner resp. distributor of the RECOM group. As a result, the author carried out desk research and combined data that was available online and provided by the company. Additionally, the author got in contact with Conrad's project leader to get deeper insights into the entire social intranet case and to clarify the collected data. Consequently, the best practice study was desk research that was collateralised by a 30-minute telephone call.

The company Conrad Electronic SE successfully launched its social intranet in 2013 for international use. Conrad Electronic is a technology and electronics specialist for over 90 years and employs only in Europe more than 4,000 employees among 14 different subsidiaries (cf. mindsmash n.d., p. 1f.).

Similar to RECOM's situation, the organisation was in need of a tool to reach all its employees and to promote interaction and collaboration. With regard to the social intranet platform, the company aimed to inform, communicate and cooperate by providing a strategic supportive tool within the entire Conrad group. The tool was used to give advice and support to employees during the change management process. It was also required, due to the ongoing change in the people's mindset. In addition, the platform supported the company's transformation from an almost solely catalogue supplier to a multi-channel retailer. Having said that, Conrad Electronic implemented a white label product as "Conrad INSIDE" and offered a range of features known from private use (cf. mindsmash n.d., p. 2f.; Schott 2017).

For the conceptualisation and implementation phase it was very important that the top-management supported the project, even if higher costs occurred or delays took place. The project initialisation was done by a small and glib project team, which was able to make independent and quick decisions. Also, a key conclusion was that it was not an IT project, but a corporate project for the company's development. Accordingly, mainly the company's requirements were considered. In the case of Conrad Electronic, the top-management strived for an innovative platform at reasonable costs, which can be applied within change management and covers information, communication and collaboration. Due to the fact that the company had intense pressure of time and did not carry out an employee survey, it was essential to seek for the overall employees' acceptance to implement a social intranet. Hence, Conrad planned several activities to achieve conformity. At first, it also obtained best practice examples of external companies. Furthermore, roadshows, support centres and workshops were organised for the organisation's different departments, divisions and at its different locations (cf. Schott 2017).

In principle, Conrad Electronic focuses on two communication contents. Firstly, company news from the top-management are very important to keep all employees updated about performance, strategy, etc. Secondly, content is generated by so called intranet experts, who are people from different departments and who inform people about news and motivate them to read and interact. These positions were created within the course of the implementation process in order to produce content for the social intranet platform. An intranet master steers all intranet experts and requests content if continuous inactivity is noticed (cf. Schott 2017). More

concretely, the company introduced various features to communicate that should make communication more efficient and facilitate cooperation. Employees have profiles which are maintained by themselves and enable the search for experts and responsibilities. Additionally, each department was introduced to provide an overview of tasks and its scope of work. Thereby, extra workspaces allow collaboration across departments on a national and international basis that simplify and accelerate projects and their completion. Furthermore, all social intranet features are accessible at home, so every content, knowledge can be accessed convenient at home by every employee (cf. mindsmash n.d., p. 5; Schott 2017).

At Conrad Electronic the social intranet implementation was great success. Not only the single login supports the organisation's employees and increase their work efficiency, but also the connections to other services, e.g. Skype and CRM tools, make corporate life easier. Having said that, the single login can be described as follows: employees just need to login once to their dashboard from which they can access every feature and all services. In addition, the social intranet is cloud based. This means that employees can work on documents simultaneously and the versioning is done automatically. As a result, no old files and records exist anymore and the overall folder structure is neatly arranged. Conrad's social intranet provides everything from one source in real-time simplifying work, making it more attractive to the user, fast and flexible. Moreover, the platform offers different system languages, allows multilingual content creation and enables employees to select what they want to receive and read (cf. Schott 2017).

The following key success factors can be identified:
- create one voice to the internal stakeholders: a company needs to set up one contact point that provides employees with everything they need.
- use combined efforts to make the tool successful: a company needs to connect the know-how that is available within the organisation.
- clearly communicate change: a company has to tell its employees what needs to be changed, so that they can give support and do not feel left-behind; this can be accomplished by utilising the right instruments resp. tools for IC.
- make it a corporate valuable project: a company needs to follow clear strategy.
- leverage synergies: a company needs to make the most of it by integrating all employees.

7.4.3 Study design of the primary market research

After the conduction of the secondary market research, this subchapter frames the conditions of the primary market research, as a field research is needed to listen to the company's employees and to solve the present IC challenge at RECOM.

Therefore, several elements need to be clarified and defined, before the research can be carried out. As a result, it is necessary to state the aims of the research and reveal the information deficiency. Furthermore, the study design includes the chosen research method, the size of the sample - number of people to be asked, possible hypotheses, the way of questioning (research instrument), the timing of the field work and eventually incurring costs (cf. Hague et al. 2016, p. 30f.).

Survey aims

The primary market research is carried out to examine the main requirements from company and user end that need to be satisfied when implementing a social intranet as international IC tool in order to get the acceptance from all users.

Consequently, the main aims of this primary market research are
- to figure out the employees' attitude towards RECOM's current IC,
- to investigate the employees' knowledge of, experiences with and attitudes towards social media inspired technologies and communication features, and
- to find out the employees' attitude, opinions and expectations if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM.

Information deficiency

The aforementioned research aims serve to address the information deficiency that is of great interest for the present thesis. It is covered in the course of this field research and is also basis to design the survey instrument in the most effective way.

The main paucities of information are:
- How satisfied are employees with the current internal communication?
- What are the main issues with the current internal communication structure?
- Which communication resp. information content is shared by the company and which content is requested by employees?

- Which communication tools are used and how do employees collaborate?
- According to the employees, would a corporate platform improve the situation? (meaning a centralised social intranet would improve the internal communication and collaboration process)
- Are employees familiar with social features? If yes, which ones?
- Which social features are required to improve international interaction and active participation in decision making and collaboration?
- Are RECOM's employees willing to use a social intranet as collaborative international internal communication instrument?
- Do employees think that a social intranet with its features would make the company's performance better and their work more efficient?
- Are employees willing to focus on the centralised platform and minimise their number of other communication tools to reduce contact points?
- Are any local sensitivities or global adaptations needed? (special expectations)

Survey method

In order to conduct a targeted survey of new specific data, the primary market research can make use of two different methods: the qualitative and the quantitative research (cf. Hague et al. 2016, p. 10; Kastin 2008, p. 17 - 20). The quantitative market research is concerned with the measurement of data and in most of the times extrapolating it from a sample to the general population, whereas the qualitative market research is concerned with the diagnostic understanding rather than simple measurement. The qualitative research is used to generate subjective and qualifiable data like values, motives and attitudes (cf. Hague et al. 2016, p. 10f.).

The qualitative research can be done with individual explorations, expert interviews and focus groups. These survey methods mainly question small samples to collect unconscious motives, attitudes and desires (cf. Weis/Steinmetz 2012, p. 37 - 43).

In quantitative market research, fundamentally three methods are distinguished: observation, experiment and interview (cf. Oberzaucher 2012, p. 15). The observation is an ideal method when it comes to the measurement of different behaviours and reactions of people. The experiment is used to investigate causal relations dealing with isolated change from one factor and its effect on another (cf. Koch 2012, p. 68f.; Oberzaucher 2012, p. 21 - 23). The survey method, which is

most relevant to this thesis, is the interview resp. survey. An interview is conducted to collect people's opinions, attitudes and behaviour. Through various means of communication, interviews can be conducted personal, in writing, via telephone or online (cf. Oberzaucher 2012, p. 15; Pfaff 2005, p. 66f.).

For the present primary market research a qualitative and quantitative research is carried out. The qualitative research is conducted through individual explorations outlining the attitudes to share specific company information. Moreover, the motives and values for the need of collaborative internal communication are investigated. It is to be mentioned that no comprehensive qualitative research is carried out. The conducted interviews are used to frame the requirements from company end, which are needed in the development of the international internal communication concept. Besides the individual explorations, employee interviews are conducted to collect quantifiable statements in order to question and answer the information deficiency. The interviews are conducted through an online survey, because this allows a fast, low cost and efficient surveying. Online surveys are more accepted, perceived and answered by employees. Furthermore, all employees are reachable via e-mail, have a computer with internet access and the method fits to the company culture. Also, the online survey enables an international conduction irrespective of time and place (cf. Theobald 2017, p. 25/124).

For clarification it has to be mentioned that the outcome of the qualitative individual explorations have no direct influence on the conduction of the quantitative research. The qualitative and quantitative surveys are conducted simultaneously and are needed, on the one hand, to identify the requirements from company end, and on the other hand, to frame the requirements from user end. Consequently, they can be seen as two separate researches.

Survey sample size

After deciding on the survey method, the sample size needs to be chosen and the whole population has to be defined at first. The whole population includes all elements (employees) which are of interest for the present survey. Thereafter, it can be decided if all elements or just a part of them should be interviewed. In case of full surveys all subjects are questioned, while in the case of partial surveys only parts are interviewed. Partial surveys make use of a sample that is to represent a reduced

image of the whole population. For these surveys two general selection procedures are provided, namely the unconscious random or conscious sampling. Despite the potential advantages of partial surveys that are often stated in literature, a relatively small population and heterogeneous traits may be decisive to conduct full surveys instead of creating samples (cf. Berekoven/Eckert/Ellenrieder 2009, p. 45; Hague et al. 2016, p. 113; Oberzaucher 2012, p. 35f.; Raab/Unger/Unger 2004, p. 44).

RECOM employs in total 385 people who would normally represent the whole population. However, as the company just wants to integrate white-collar workers into the communication process (cf. Berger 2016b), all blue-collar workers need to be deducted. This decision was made by the top-management, due to cultural and organisational reasons. All blue-collar workers will be integrated into the IC communication process at a later stage, as soon as the IC among all white-collar workers is efficient. As a result, the whole population shifts from the entire workforce to the number of white-collar workers, because only this group of employees is of interest for the international IC at RECOM. Having said that, 267 blue-collar workers, who are employed in production, are deducted. In addition, it has to be remarked that six other employees are on maternity leave and have also been excluded. Accordingly, the new population consists of 112 employees. Table 6 shows the composition of the whole population that is relevant for the present surveying.

Locations	Number of employees
Gmunden, Austria	61
Vienna, Austria	2
Neu-Isenburg, Germany	22
Arvada, United States	8
Singapore	10
Shanghai, China	6
Tokyo, Japan	3
Whole population	**112 employees**

Table 6: Whole population (based on Cai 2017; Hillinger 2017; Viehmann 2017; Wolf 2016)

It is decided that all elements of the population are surveyed within the quantitative market research, as all white-collar workers are of interest for RECOM's IC and should get access to the centralised platform.

Similar to the quantitative research, it is also necessary to determine the population and samples for the qualitative research. In general, two main procedures can be applied. The data-driven procedures determine the composition of the sample results during the examination process, whereas the theory-driven procedures define the samples at the start of the investigation (cf. Oberzaucher 2012, p. 39f.; Schreier 2011, p. 247 - 249).

For the development of the IC concept it is also necessary to know the main requirements from company end for which a qualitative research is conducted. As these requirements are especially determined by the company's top-management, the three heads of the territories and the global CEO are surveyed. Consequently, a theory-driven procedure is used, as the sample is selected consciously, due to the criterion who best represents the company end.

Underlying hypotheses

In general, hypotheses are statements or assumptions with respect to a particular question, which must be falsifiable, exactly formulated and verifiable by statistical test methods. The decisive factor for the formulation of hypotheses is a predefined problem for which market research is carried out. It is often assumed that there is a link between the problem and the information deficit, so it is necessary to verify or falsify hypotheses. A distinction is particularly made between a null and working hypothesis. The null hypothesis (H0) represents the falsified condition and is formulated contrary to the working hypothesis (H1). The working hypothesis states the assumed coherence and is to be proved. The null hypothesis is just rejected if the evaluated data has a very low significance level; accordingly the working hypothesis and assumed coherence are valid (cf. Kamenz 2001, p. 53 - 55).

Hypothesis 1:
H0: There is no coherence between locations and the current levels of satisfaction.
H1: Employees from different locations have different levels of satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2:
H0: There is no coherence between locations and available IC content.
H1: Employees from different locations have different IC content available.

Hypothesis 3:

H0: There is no coherence between age and willingness to use social features.

H1: Employees of different age are differently willing to use social features.

Hypothesis 4:

H0: There is no coherence between the willingness to use social features and the employees' opinion that a social intranet can help to improve IC.

H1: Employees who are willing to use social features also think that a social intranet can help to improve IC.

Hypothesis 5:

H0: There is no coherence between the willingness to use social features and the employees' knowledge of them.

H1: Employees who are willing to use social features know more about them.

Survey instrument

In market research, instruments are distinguished for qualitative and quantitative surveys. Whereas in quantitative research questionnaires are used to interview people, qualitative research makes use of a so called conversation guide. Both instruments are designed to guide through the interviewing process and obtain the best answers. In case of the questionnaire it can be further distinguished between "semi-structured" and "structured" interviews. Semi-structured interviews primarily consist of open-ended questions and probing instructions, while structured interviews direct a series of questions to each subject according to a fixed schedule (=standardised survey). As a result to standardised surveys, people are asked exactly in the same way, which may be decisive for the overall survey research. Having said that, the questionnaire and conversation guide can be described as communication medium between two people, albeit they do not have to communicate directly in terms of the questionnaire which is especially used in quantitative research (cf. Brace 2008, p. 2 - 5). The online questionnaire, which is most relevant and used for the present primary market research, offers a wide range of asking questions. Mainly two categories are differentiated, namely open and closed questions with the possibility to reply spontaneous or prompted. Open or closed questions depend on whether or not the answer can come from a finite number of possible responses. If the answer is spontaneous or prompted, depends

on whether people are asked to reply with own words or choose out of a given number of options (cf. Brace 2008, p. 45).

To sum up, the qualitative survey is carried out with a conversation guide that includes only open-ended questions (recorded verbatim) in order to investigate the requirements from company end. The quantitative survey is done with standardised interviews using an online questionnaire with a mix of all possible questioning options that fit best to the asked content and required result. As the findings should be measurable, the use of too many open questions is to be avoided.

Survey scheduling

According to the project plan, the survey scheduling includes the work packets preparation, pre-test as well as the collection and evaluation of the data. The following table gives an overview of the time schedule for the qualitative and quantitative survey, as outlined in the thesis' project plan.

Work packets, as in the project plan	Start	End
Brainstorming for questionnaire / conversation guide	10.01.2017	10.02.2017
Preparation of questionnaire / conversation guide	28.01.2017	24.02.2017
Arrangement of dates for individual explorations	30.01.2017	03.02.2017
Pre-test of online survey	24.02.2017	26.02.2017
Information to employees and send-out of questionnaire	27.02.2017	13.03.2017
Interview 1 (representing Americas)	27.02.2017	27.02.2017
Interview 2 (representing Global)	08.03.2017	08.03.2017
Interview 3 (representing EMEA)	28.02.2017	28.02.2017
Interview 4 (representing APAC)	14.03.2017	14.03.2017
Evaluation of survey, explorations	14.03.2017	23.03.2017
Transcription of interviews	14.03.2017	05.04.2017
Research analysis and interpretation	26.03.2017	02.04.2017
Implementation of survey results	26.03.2017	09.04.2017

Table 7: Time schedule for primary market research (own presentation)

There is no budget required for the conduction of the primary market research, because used resources are for free or already paid and provided by RECOM; so are the transcriptions paid by RECOM and done by its translation agency.

Synopsis of the study design (simplified)

The following table provides an overview of the created study design:

Aim:	Investigation of the requirements from company and user end
Method:	Qualitative: individual explorations Quantitative: online employee survey
Sample size:	Qualitative: 4 (heads of territories, global CEO) Quantitative: 112 (white-collar workers)
Hypotheses:	1) There is no coherence between locations and the levels of satisfaction. 2) There is no coherence between locations and available IC content. 3) There is no coherence between age and willingness to use social features. 4) There is no coherence between willingness to use social features and the opinion that social intranets improve IC. 5) There is no coherence between willingness to use social features and the knowledge of them.
Instrument:	Qualitative: conversation guide Quantitative: online questionnaire
Timetable:	As referred to the project plan from January 10 to April 9, 2017.

Table 8: Synopsis of study design (own presentation)

7.4.4 Analysis of primary market research results

This subchapter includes the results of the primary market research, both the quantitative and qualitative survey, albeit the main focus is on the findings of the online employee questionnaire. The author primarily deals with the answers and statements that are of great interest for the development of the communication concept in the next chapter. Further evaluation data is provided in chapters 1.3 and 2.2 of the appendix to get comprehensive insights of the survey results.

Statistical data of the primary market research

The quantitative online employee survey was conducted at all locations of RECOM. Based on the data provided by those responsible for personnel, the survey was sent to 112 employees. In total, 87% (namely 97 of 112) white-collar workers participated in the survey. Whereas all employees of the United States and China participated, 92% of Austria (58 of 63), 64% of Germany (14 of 22), 90% of Singapore (9 of 10)

and 66% of Japan (2 of 3) took part. The participants' majority works in EMEA, as the most people are employed in this region. Most of the participants are aged between 25 and 35; the mean is 37 years. In addition, 64% of the respondents are male and only 36% female. For the short individual explorations four top managers were interviewed, namely the heads of the territories (Americas, APAC and EMEA) and the CEO of the entire RECOM group.

Statements about the satisfaction and the current internal communication

After some statistical data, the first part of the results analysis is about the people's satisfaction and the current IC at RECOM. It is worth to mention that 72 of 97 (74%) employees are (very) satisfied with RECOM's communication. The main reasons for their satisfaction are direct and clear information as well as fast communication and an easy access. However, still a quarter of the respondents is (very) dissatisfied (25 of 97; 26%). They mainly criticise that there is no structure within RECOM's IC and a lack in information sharing. As a result, 65% of all surveyed employees feel to be informed, but still one third thinks that RECOM provides limited or no information. The opinions of the top-management are split similarly. Although most of them are quite satisfied in relation to the amount of communication, they also criticise the overall structure that often causes information overload and inefficiency (cf. appendix chapters 1.3 and 2.2).

Furthermore, issues and challenges are being faced among RECOM's internal stakeholders, as visualised in the following figure.
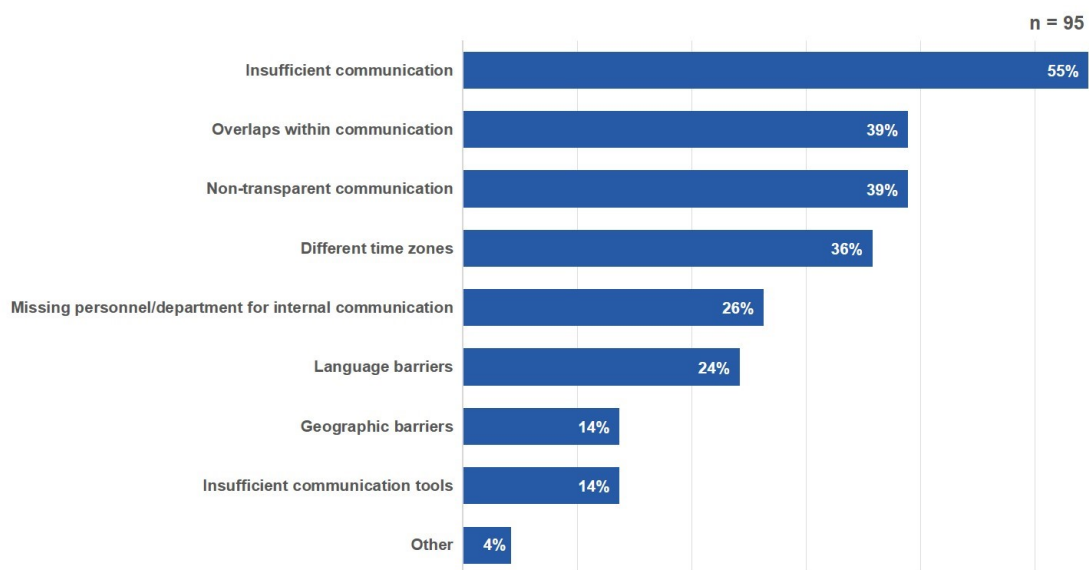
Figure 8: Issues regarding RECOM's IC (own presentation)

More than half of the respondents (55%) named insufficient communication as the biggest challenge for RECOM's internal communication, followed by overlaps within communication and non-transparent communication (each 39%). Besides these main issues, people face also challenges with regard to different time zones (36%), missing personnel/department who deals with IC (26%) and language barriers among employees (24%). The top-management also mentioned overlaps and different time zones as well as missing structure as the main challenges that the company needs to face and improve.

Statements about the information content and ways of communication

The next part deals with the information and communication content. Therefore, employees were asked which content is already shared resp. available. On average every employee mentioned about six different topics among 555 responses. Thereby, 14% of all responses were related to information about products or services, 12% to the company's performance, each 11% to information about internal company events and marketing initiatives and 8% to the company's strategy and positioning. Key customer information (5%), company values and guidelines (5%), issues and trends affecting the business and industry (4%) as well as employee profiles (3%) were not often mentioned. Consequently, these topics are rarely shared or available.
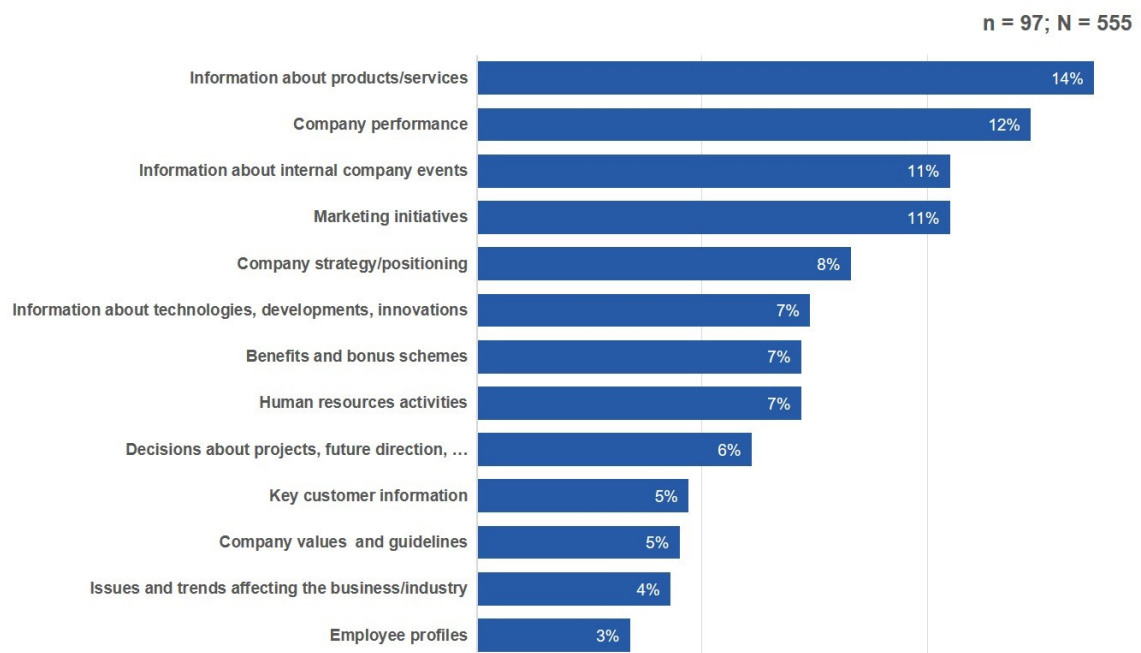
Figure 9: Existing information and communication content (own presentation)

It is interesting that two topics that belong to the top 5 most important information and communication content are not ranked among the top 5 of the already shared and available content. 67% (65 of 97) of all participants mentioned decisions about projects, future direction, … as the most important information and communication topic. Also, information about technologies, developments and innovations was ranked higher (cf. appendix chapter 1.3). Having said that, company performance, strategy and values is key communication content for the surveyed top managers.

Taking a closer look at the communication instruments through which the content is shared, it is noticeable that e-mails are mostly used for internal communication; for 96 respondents (99%) and also for the top-management this is the most used way of communication at RECOM. E-mails are followed by team meetings and phone calls (each 66%), the company magazine resp. feedback newsletter (47%) and department meetings (44%). In addition, figure 10 shows all other instruments that are used.
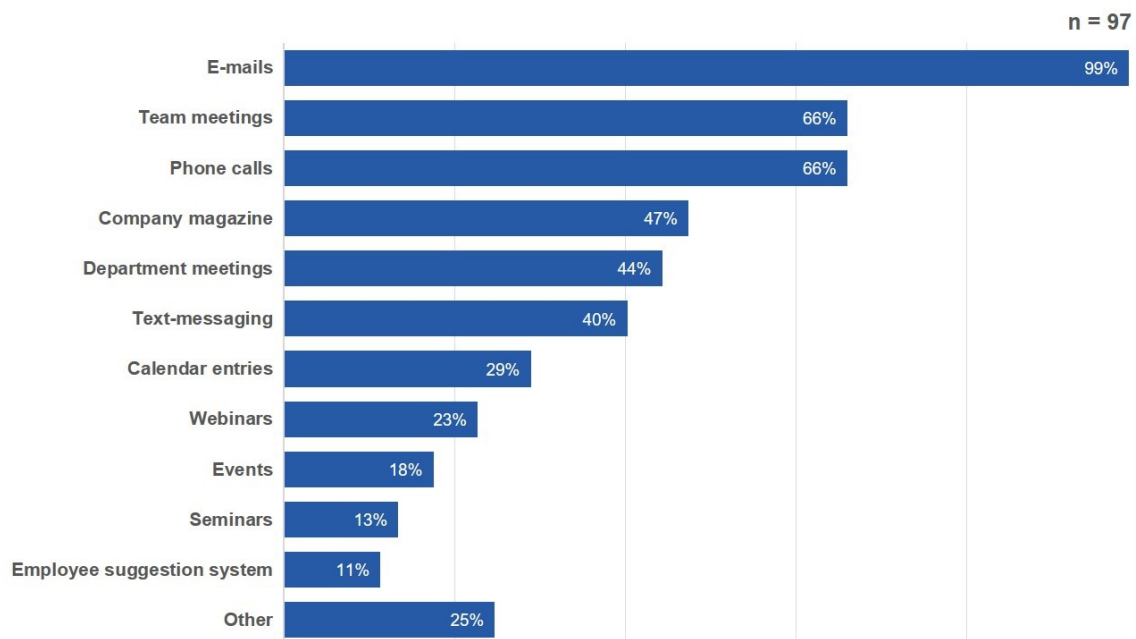
Figure 10: Currently used IC instruments (own presentation)

Moreover, the research also investigated the satisfaction with the tools available for internal communication, which are used to share information, documents and knowledge. Most of the respondents are very satisfied with Skype (47%) and Microsoft Outlook (44%). Less satisfaction is perceptible with the main document sharing tool Fabasoft (7%) and least with Microsoft SharePoint (1%) (cf. appendix chapter 1.3).

Statements about social features

As the thesis' focus is on social intranets, the questionnaire was designed to gain insights about the employees' knowledge of, experience with and attitudes towards social features. In general, it can be stated that the company's stakeholders are aware of the existence of several social features, even if the usage is quite different. The following figure illustrates the knowledge of different social features. With 77% (74 of 97) the blog is the best known social feature followed by communities & forums (75%), social media inspired technologies such as like, comment, share and tag (69%) and instant messaging (67%). It is surprising that employees are not really familiar with user dashboards (42%) and news feeds (30%).
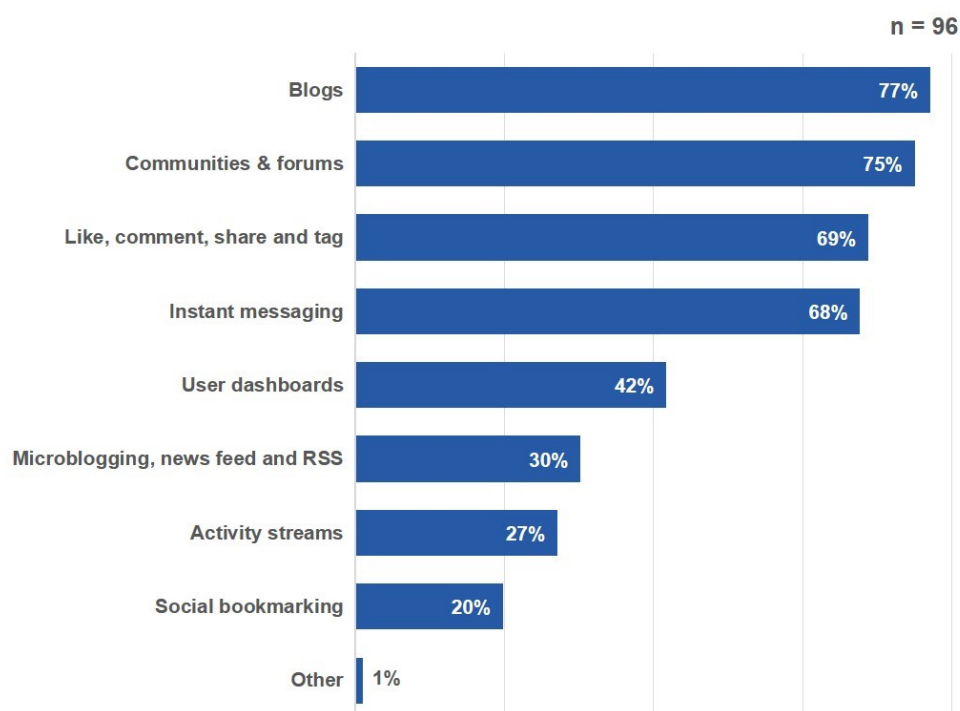
Figure 11: Knowledge of social features (own presentation)

Regarding the usage of these social features in private context it can be stated that not a lot of them are used daily. Only instant messaging is applied daily by more than half of the respondents (53%); all other social features are used on a more frequent and fluctuating basis (cf. appendix chapter 1.3).

However, 78% (76 of 97) of employees can imagine to use social features for their daily business. The following figure shows which of the social features they are willing and more likely to use.
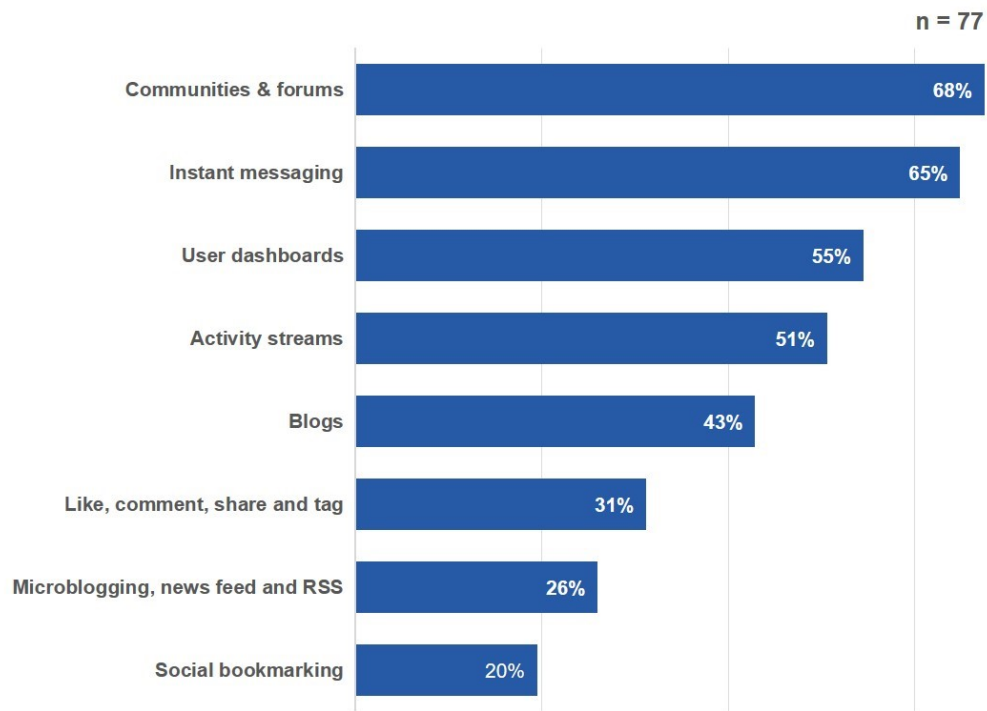
Figure 12: Social features for business context (own presentation)

More than 48 of 97 surveyed employees can imagine to use communities & forums (68%), instant messaging (65%), user dashboards (55%) and activity streams (51%). This image almost identically represents the employees' opinion of which features could improve internal collaboration and interaction among employees. The social features' ranking with regard to their level of contribution is demonstrated in the following table.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Ø	R
User dashboards	11.3	13.4	11.3	17.5	9.3	14.4	11.3	11.3	4.5	4
Communities & forums	17.5	21.6	17.5	8.2	14.4	9.3	7.2	4.1	3.6	2
Blogs	9.3	7.2	5.1	17.5	15.5	11.3	19.6	14.4	5.1	5
Microblogging, news feed and RSS	3.1	7.2	12.3	15.5	19.6	15.5	14.4	12.4	5.1	5
Social bookmarking	5.2	4.1	14.4	9.3	13.4	14.4	22.7	16.5	5.4	8
Like, comment, share and tag	8.2	9.3	10.3	8.2	9.3	12.4	13.4	28.9	5.4	7
Instant messaging	35.1	19.6	13.4	7.2	5.2	12.4	3.1	4.1	3.0	1
Activity streams	10.3	17.5	15.5	16.5	13.4	10.3	8.2	8.2	4.1	3

Table 9: Social features ranking according to their contribution (own presentation)

Also with regard to the top managers' answers, they think that social features could make internal collaboration and interaction more efficient; which depends on the structure and the way of how it is communicated (cf. appendix chapter 2.2).

Statements about social intranets

The final section of the survey was dealing with the social intranet as a corporate platform for internal communication and collaboration. It is an outstanding result that 86% (83 of 97) of all respondents think a social intranet could improve RECOM's IC situation. Furthermore, more than two third of the employees, namely 80% (78 of 97), can imagine to concentrate on a social intranet as one centralised solution for IC by reducing the use of currently applied tools (cf. appendix chapter 1.3).

Nevertheless, the company's employees have expectations that need to be met if a social intranet is to be implemented in order to seek their acceptance. Figure 13 demonstrates a range of social intranet characteristics that are required by the participants of the online survey.
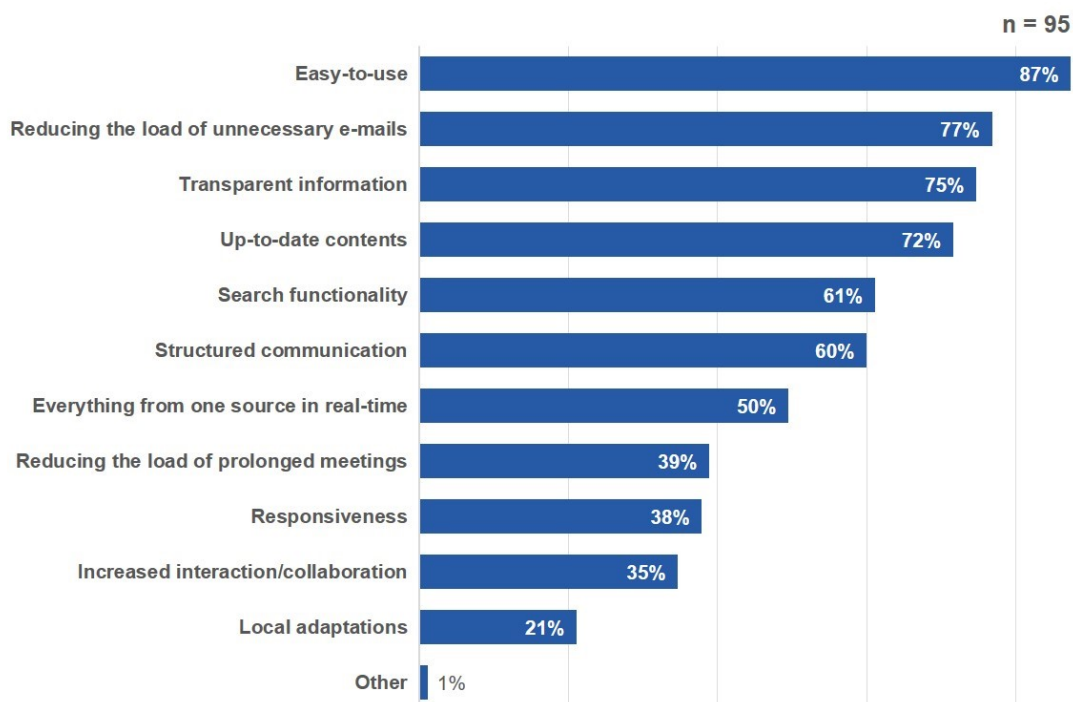
Figure 13: Expected social intranet characteristics (own presentation)

If a social intranet is to be implemented, 87% of the respondents expect that the tool is easy to use, 77% expect a reduction of e-mails, 75% transparent information and 72% up-to-date contents. Compared to the importance of these social intranet

characteristics, the image changes slightly and the overall order of expectations differs a bit, as shown in the following figure.
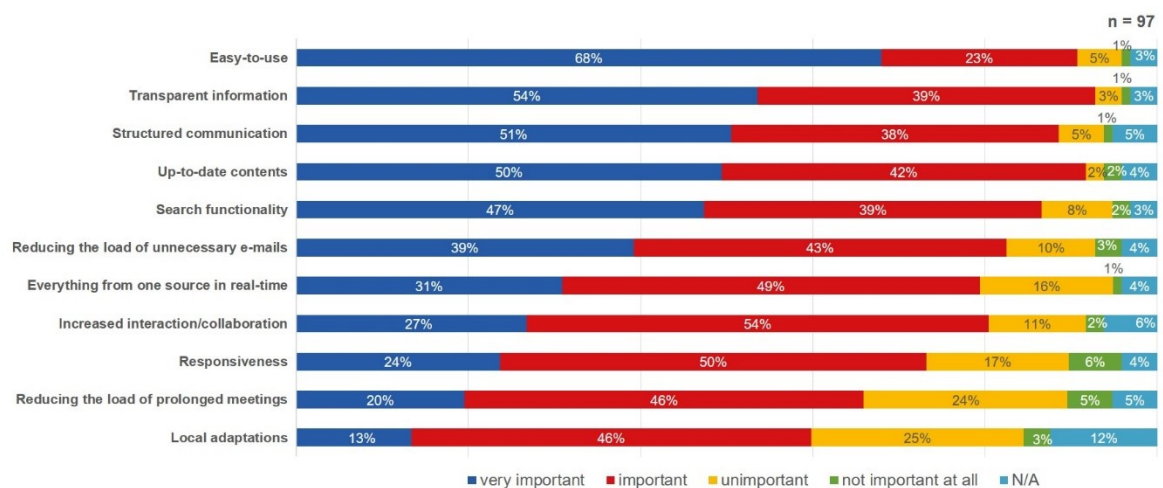
Figure 14: Importance of social intranet characteristics (own presentation)

Easy-to-use, transparent information and structured communication are the most important social intranet characteristics. In this context it has to be stated that if the categories are compressed, the order of importance would again change slightly (cf. appendix chapter 1.3). The usability and up-to-date contents are most important for the top-management. A special look and feel is a nice add-on, but not of greatest relevance (cf. appendix chapter 2.2).

With regard to social intranet characteristics it is surprising that local adaptations are in fact important, but not really expected by the respondents (only 21%). If local adaptations are taken into account, localisation in terms of language and content is mostly required. This is also noticeable within the answers of the four top managers (cf. appendix chapter 2.2).

Additionally, it is obvious that employees do not only have requirements towards a social intranet, but also expectations against the company. As shown in Figure 15, 68% (66 of 97) of the company's employees require continuous information on the project progress as well as technical support. Also, more than the half (60%) expect seminars and workshops in relation to a social intranet implementation. Not so important seems to be the integration into the strategy development (42%) and a pilot project (35%) that is to be done before global roll-out.
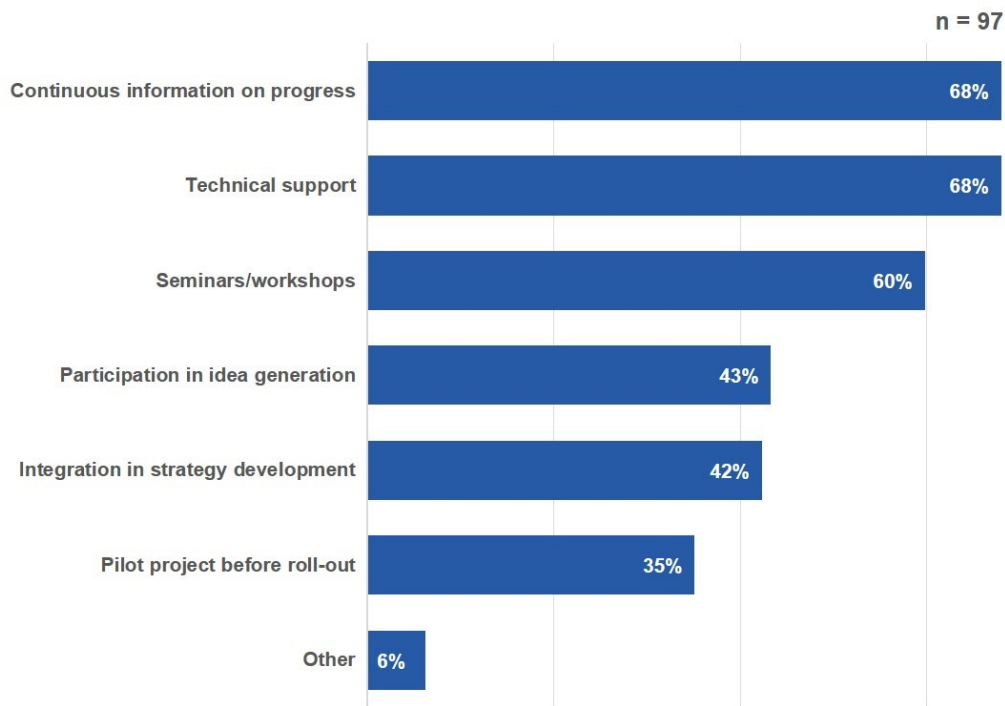
Figure 15: Expectations against RECOM (own presentation)

With consideration to the answers of the individual explorations, RECOM's top-management would support the employees in all kinds if a social intranet is to be implemented, independent of any subject, for example, if the support relates to the introduction of the idea, the possibility to give feedback or other relevant topics. Having said that, the first action they would take and show all of their internal stakeholders is to use the social intranet platform by themselves; in order to seek for their support and acceptance (cf. appendix chapter 2.2).

Falsification and verification of hypotheses

After analysing the most relevant results of the survey, it is also necessary to check the hypotheses that were formulated for the primary market research, based on the actual information deficiency. Again, detailed results of the crosstabs and underlying evidence can be found in chapter 1.3 of the appendix.

Hypothesis 1: with a contingency coefficient of 0.182 the first hypothesis shows little or no connection between RECOM's locations and the actual satisfaction with its internal communication. However, the data is statistically invalid and also expected counts are below 5. As a consequence, it is assumed that there is no correlation between locations and the current satisfaction with IC. In addition, it can be noticed that there is no huge difference between the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

among EMEA, Americas and APAC if the results of the locations resp. economic areas are compared. The figures only allow the assumption that employees in APAC and Americas seem to be a little bit more satisfied than in EMEA. This is shown in the following figure.
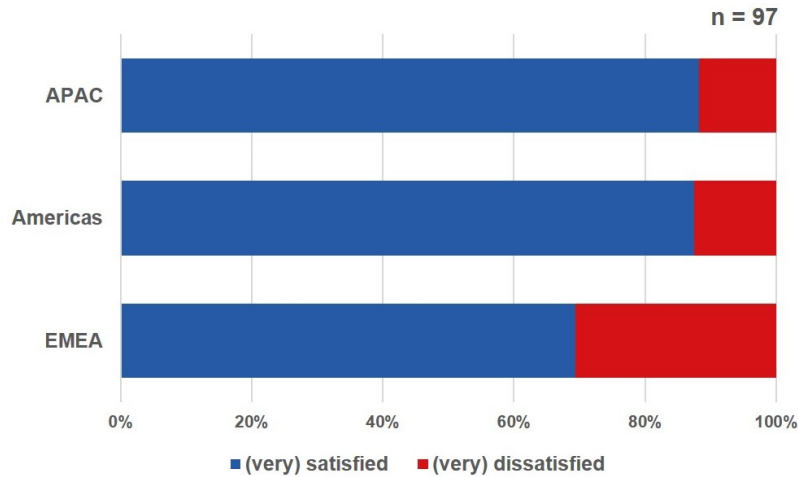
Figure 16: Satisfaction according to locations (own presentation)

Hypothesis 2: unfortunately, it is not possible to make statistically significant statements for the second hypothesis. The questioning results were generated with a constant and that is why no evaluation through a crosstab can be done. Nevertheless, a comparison between the currently shared resp. available IC content and RECOM's locations can be made, as illustrated in Figure 17.
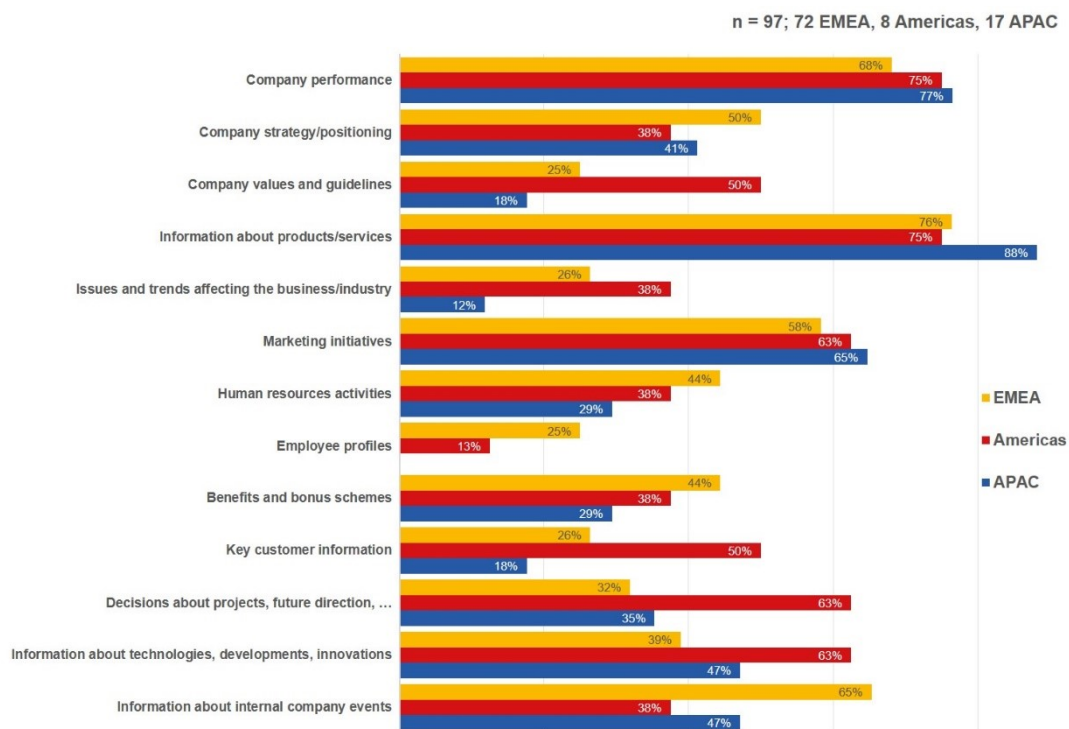
Figure 17: IC content according to locations (own presentation)

The first impression of the diagram is that almost all prompted contents are shared with employees. Only in the APAC area no employee profiles are available. But if a closer look is taken, it is noticed that IC content is differently shared or made available at RECOM's locations with regard to the respondent's assessment. For example, it is assumed that people from Americas have better access to information about technologies, developments, innovations and key customer information as well as decisions about projects, future direction, … are shared more often. The level of content availability seems to be varying among the locations; probably due to different management focus. As a result, it can be expected that there is a connection between locations and the currently shared resp. available information and communication content at RECOM.

Hypothesis 3: although two of the expected counts are at the minimum (below 5), the significance level is within the tolerance, and with a contingency coefficient of 0.282 it is assumed that there is little coherence between the employees' age and their willingness to use social features for their daily business. The crosstab (cf. appendix chapter 1.3) also shows that younger employees are more likely to use these features to improve internal communication.

Hypothesis 4: a similar condition is due for the fourth hypothesis; just one expected count is at the minimum and below 5. With a contingency coefficient of 0.391 and high approximate significance this evaluation shows a mean correlation. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be said that there is coherence between the willingness to use social features and the employees' opinion that a social intranet can help to improve IC.

Hypothesis 5: for the last hypothesis no statistically valid statements can be generated. Again, no crosstab can be created, as the prompted question is a constant. But if the question about the employee's knowledge is compared with their willingness to use social features for daily business assumptions can be ascertained. According to the following figure, it is assumed that those employees, who have more knowledge of respectively are more familiar with different social features, are more willing to use them for their daily business in order to improve internal collaboration. Whereas 45% of the people willing to use social features know user dashboards, only 29% of those, who cannot imagine to use them, have

already heard about this feature. Similar assumptions can be undertaken, however, it needs to be stated that this does not mean that there is a significant coherence between the employees' willingness and their knowledge. Hence, the null hypothesis is to be accepted.
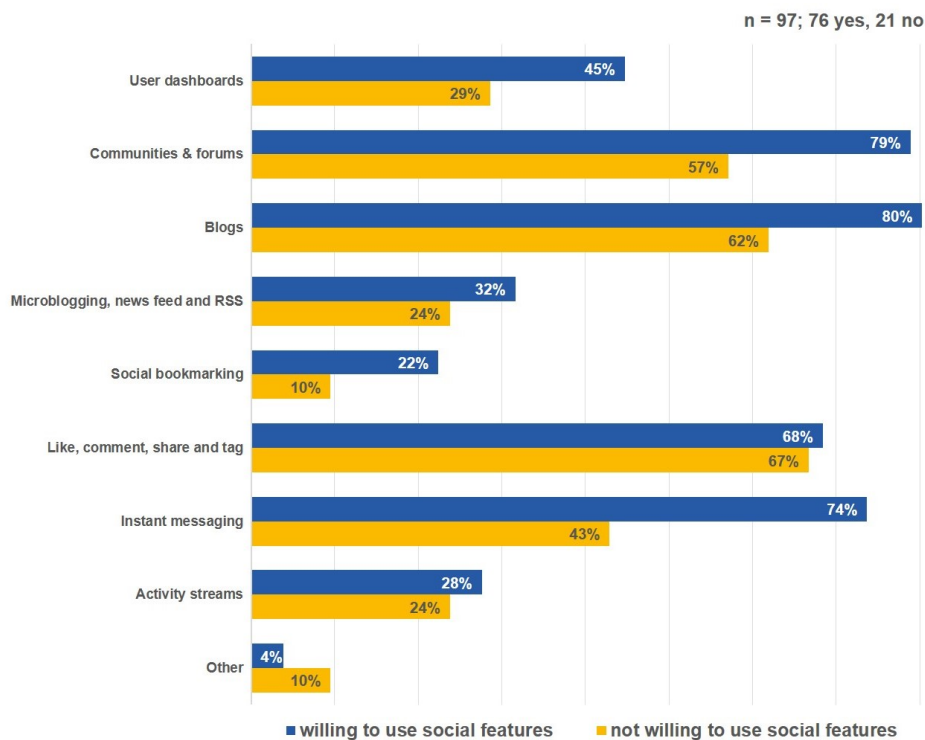
Figure 18: Knowledge of social features according to willingness to use them (own presentation)

7.4.5 Interpretation of primary market research results

In general, the majority of RECOM's employees is satisfied with the current IC and feels informed resp. knows what is going on. However, still a quarter is not satisfied. Those people feel not really informed, and their dissatisfaction might lead to inefficiency within the communication and might impede the overall progress and affect the company performance. Dissatisfied employees additionally might hinder internal collaboration by prolonging company projects. Consequently, deadlines are not met and tasks are not fulfilled. It is important that dissatisfied employees will be turned to satisfied ones. According to the results, this could be achieved by creating a structured environment for IC or employing personnel resp. making someone responsible for IC activities. To increase the level of satisfaction at RECOM, it is necessary that every employee from every location is integrated into the IC architecture. Hence, the company can make sure that everyone receives and has the same level of information.

At the moment, a lot of information and communication content is shared and available within RECOM's IC. This shows that the amount of communication is not the problem, rather the structure and accessibility to it. Also, the shared content does not always coincide with the employees' requirements and expectations. They feel to receive a lot of content that is not relevant or important for them. In this context the so called e-mail "cc structure" can be mentioned. People receive a lot of e-mails and information that is not directly dedicated to them, which costs a lot of time creating overlaps within communication and making employees lose sight of their actual work. In addition, it has been analysed that people from different locations have different information and communication content available. As a result, the completion of company projects might be delayed or the IC and overall company performance might be influenced, due to different levels of knowledge. Ergo the availability of same information is inevitable and RECOM needs to make sure that the same amount of information and the same content is shared among all employees; regardless if the content is relevant for them or not.

To get access to all the information shared, employees use a lot of ways for communication, especially traditional ones such as e-mails, team meetings and phone calls. These IC instruments are probably the most used ones at RECOM, as they are used since the company's existence. Nevertheless, employees are open to use a mix of different IC instruments, showing that they are not rigid of just using always the same way. Accordingly, this could be an opportunity if a social intranet is to be implemented. Also, the people's satisfaction with the existing communication tools can be advantageous. Whereas employees are quite satisfied with Microsoft Outlook and Skype, they are not so happy with some other tools that are provided for IC. For instance, the majority of RECOM's employees is pretty dissatisfied with Fabasoft, which is one of the main tools for sharing documents and creating team resp. project rooms. Furthermore, the application of many different tools might again cause inefficiencies and overlaps within the entire communication process.

The next interpretations can be derived of the results to take a closer look at the thesis' focus on social intranets. In principle, RECOM's employees have a good knowledge of the variety of social features. Even if not everyone is familiar with all available features, they use some of them already in their private life on a regular basis. It is assumed that this knowledge mainly has been acquired by the use of

social media platforms and smartphone applications. Anyway, as almost all of the respondents answered that they can imagine also to use social features at/for work, this is a great opportunity for the company if a social intranet is to be implemented. Having said that, it is essential that the people's requirements and expectations not only with regard to the tools usability, look and feel, but also to various social features are considered within the communication concept, as for them each feature differently contributes to the possible improvement of RECOM's IC. Moreover, it can be noticed that those who are more familiar with social features are more willing to focus on a social intranet for their daily work. They have the opinion that a centralised solution for IC can improve the entire situation at RECOM making communication and collaboration more effective and efficient. But fact is, that all employees would seek for support in all kinds if such a tool is to be implemented. Fortunately, it was analysed that RECOM's top-management would provide a lot of resources and would do everything that is needed to receive the acceptance and also support of its employees.

To sum up, a lot of communication exists at RECOM, however, a lot of actions need to be taken to make the entire process more structured and efficient. The company has to enable barrier-free communication taking all employees' requirements and intercultural aspects into consideration. It is important to get rid of communication overlaps, prolonged projects and a bewildering array of too many communication tools. If a social intranet is to be implemented, the company needs someone responsible for IC to create an environment, where structured communication can take place. Obviously, there are sceptical employees, who need to be convinced that such a tool can improve the organisation's IC and collaboration. An increase in their satisfaction can positively influence the implementation project and also the overall company performance. In addition, the people's support and interest in more structured communication is perceptible. They are open for change and would definitely not put any obstacles in the way.

Nevertheless, a social intranet implementation can be risky if employees do not accept the company's movements. Thus, further research is needed to overcome the pitfalls of internal communication. All employees must be informed adequately and every step has to be planned carefully to make a trouble-free implementation possible; otherwise the company risks to establish another tool that is not used.

8 Development of an international IC concept with a focus on social intranets for RECOM

Based on the detailed elaboration of the theoretical section and the research that is described in the previous chapters, this chapter includes all necessary elements of an international IC concept for RECOM. As the concentration of the entire thesis, the concept development also focuses on social intranets tailored to meet all requirements from company and user end.

8.1 Analysis

In general, every concept starts with an in-depth analysis, as already described in the theoretical part. The research findings of the present thesis are included in the previous chapter 7. This subchapter only provides an overview of the main internal and external influencing factors, which are consolidated in a SWOT analysis, as shown in the following figure.

Figure 19: SWOT analysis (own presentation)

RECOM has a great amount of communication and a lot of relevant knowledge. Unfortunately, no clear communication infrastructure yet exists and responsibilities are not clear for everyone. In addition, insufficient IC tools complicate open and clear communication. Hence, new technologies, like a social intranet, make it possible to

structure and redefine IC processes making communication more efficient and the company performance better. On top of that, RECOM's employees are willing to change and to use a centralised solution for IC. Nevertheless, the company needs to pay attention to possible effects on data security and the entrance of potential stakeholders if a social intranet is to be implemented.

8.2   Strategy formulation

Before the operational, especially the action planning can be done, the strategic objectives, target groups, positioning and strategic direction need to be defined.

8.2.1 Objectives and target groups

As the company has a lot of unstructured communication and information content, the strategic objectives, which are derived from the company aims, have a more affective, conative and social character. RECOM should encourage employees to interact actively and build internal relationships. In addition, the company needs to influence their behaviour if a social intranet is to be implemented, because all employees should focus on one centralised corporate platform on which internal communication takes place. Therefore, the following communication targets can be defined that support the company's goals achievement:

- Increase of employee satisfaction and motivation within IC
- Increase of employee engagement and commitment
- Reduction of tools available for IC
- Creation of open and more transparent communication
- Creation of efficient knowledge management, processes and workflows

A social intranet contributes to the achievement of the aforementioned targets by fulfilling the following operative social intranet objectives:

- Reduction of internal e-mails
- Acceleration of the discovery/search of documents and experts
- Easy accessibility to information and knowledge
- Integration of employees into decision making and know-how transfer

Having said that, it is necessary to provide appropriate IC instruments and features to reach these goals; by meeting the target groups' requirements.

Target groups

In principle, the target group of RECOM's internal communication includes all 385 employees. However, in the case of a social intranet implementation the target group is narrowed down to all people who should get access to the IC tool. In total, the company aims to provide at least 100 (out of 112) employees access to a social intranet. Thereby, the main target group consists of white-collar workers and members of the company's top-management. As a result, the target group of the social intranet platform is mainly divided into two groups, namely the company (top-management) and its users (employees). It is important to define several access rights among the target groups. On the one hand, people from the top-management and so called social intranet masters will receive admin rights, and on the other hand, general social intranet users will receive rights to read, edit, etc. Nevertheless, the target groups and access rights change again if the social intranet provides team rooms or anything similar. Thus, it needs to be stated that for the concept development only the social intranet's main target groups are considered. This includes the company's top-management and all intranet masters, who are primarily responsible for providing and monitoring content, and all users, who are dependent on this content in order to continue with their work and get things done.

Having said that, the research results show that the target groups have different requirements with regard to a social intranet implementation, although they pretty much match in order to achieve the overall objectives.

Main requirements from company end:

- Accessibility to structured information (up-to-date)
- High usability at reasonable costs
- Reduction of unnecessary content by clarifying responsibilities
- Possibility of local adaptations

The requirements from company end are the primary results of the short individual explorations. The application of structured IC instruments and a centralised tool can support to meet them. Therefore, the company needs a detailed project resp. implementation plan to keep in mind the costs by selecting the most appropriate social intranet software. All other requirements indirectly influence this decision. Furthermore, a centralised tool can help to structure the company's content. The

use of employee profiles show experts and their specialist areas. To meet the requirement for local adaptations, it is unavoidable to carry out further research. However, this may be important to get the company's overall acceptance.

Main requirements from user end:
- High usability (easy-to-use)
- Transparent and structured IC content (up-to-date)
- Search functionality
- Reduction of e-mails
- Technical support and workshops

The requirements from user end are the primary results of the online employee survey. The implementation of a social intranet can support their achievement. Therefore, it is important that the company gives an explanation of how IC is structured and the tool is used. RECOM needs to provide any kind of support to get the users' acceptance. The integration of employees (esp. though leaders) into the planning process may help to meet their expectations.

8.2.2 Positioning and strategic direction

The way of how RECOM's IC is positioned within the corporate communication structure can be decisive for its performance and the users' motivation to participate in IC processes. Thus, the appropriate positioning is to be selected to make IC more attractive to internal stakeholders. Thereafter, all strategic elements are bundled and the strategic direction in relation to IC is determined.

Positioning

With regard to literature, RECOM will have a positioning mix when implementing a social intranet. It is not only the structured and efficient communication tool that does not exist, but also the changed requirements and expectations of its target groups. Consequently, the characteristics and elements of a repositioning and evolutionary positioning are to be combined in the company's social intranet positioning. With the implementation of a tool for barrier-free communication, RECOM needs to reposition its entire IC infrastructure and culture. As outlined in the secondary research, it is necessary that the company creates one voice to all its stakeholders by combining

efforts and leveraging synergies. This makes the social intranet implementation a corporate valuable project and leads all in one direction. To get the acceptance of all people who work with RECOM, it is unavoidable to clearly communicate these changes and to meet all requirements of the stakeholders. As a result, it could be very helpful not only to give the company's intentions a voice, but also to give the new centralised tool a face. On the one hand, this could be achieved by an appealing and modern look & feel of the platform itself, and on the other hand, by creating a logo with a claim for the repositioned IC architecture.

For example, the company can make use of its existing logo combined with images that allow people associate it with international internal communication. Moreover, a claim could be established which is conveyed to everyone and immediately shows the strengths and opportunities of a newly structured IC. Again, a clear change communication and information about all benefits is essential in this context. However, it is not necessary to create a logo resp. slogan from scratch, also the company name can be used and, for instance, adapted to the following message:

RECOM CONNECTS - **R**eliable & **E**fficient **C**ommunication **O**f **M**asterminds

Strategy

After the successful definition of the new IC positioning, it is required to determine the strategic direction taking all objectives and target groups as well as the prior defined positioning into account. The strategy formulation is crucial for the IC architecture's presentation; with the focus on the new corporate platform, a social intranet that is to be implemented. Also, it is decisive for the underlying core content messages and the action planning, because the strategic direction determines the set-up and introduction of the social intranet and its features at the same time.

According to Bruhn's strategy types, the present situation cannot be assigned to only one strategy. It is rather a combination of three types which forms the IC strategy for RECOM. Firstly, the information strategy is needed, because the company wants to provide everyone with comprehensive and transparent information. This can be achieved with a one-stop platform to which every employee has access. Secondly, the dialogue strategy is applied not only to promote interaction and strengthen cooperation between top-management and employees, but also to foster interaction among employees. In addition, the company needs to

follow the change strategy, as the entire IC activities are to be redesigned which is only possible with the effort and support of its stakeholders. As a result, the present situation can be described as diversification strategy, as it is an attempt to shift one-way to two-way communication by applying a brand-new IC tool and repositioning the entire IC structure. RECOM's internal stakeholders should get access to relevant information, knowledge and should have the possibility to interact and participate actively within IC. Thus, it is important for the action planning to select instruments resp. features with the following characteristics:

- Instruments/features that distribute information with high coverage
- Instruments/features that enable two-way communication and allow interaction
- Instruments/features that enhance internal resp. personal relationships
- Instruments/features that create trust and credibility

The major part of the strategy realisation can be done standardised and no local adaptations are needed. However, differences among RECOM's locations exist, as revealed within the intercultural communication framework (cf. chapter 7.3). It is essential to take them into consideration in order to hedge discrepancies. Also, the survey results show that there are notable preferences for local languages, content and involvement. In general, it is necessary to leave room for individualisation, e.g. to give employees the possibility to select content and make user interface settings on their own. Furthermore, people from worldwide locations need to be addressed differently with regard to their cultural behaviour and attitudes.

Core content

With regard to the research findings, the following communication and information content has to be included in RECOM's internal communication:

- Company positioning, strategy and performance
- Information about products and services
- Information about technologies, developments and innovations
- Decisions about projects, future direction, etc.
- Company values and guidelines

Principally, it is recommended to define recipients and determine guidelines of how to distribute aforementioned content. Moreover, it can be helpful to wrap important messages in a story by framing the big picture in an easy way.

8.3 Tactics and action planning

Based on the findings of the theoretical section, research and previous chapters, the tactics and action planning is the core part of the concept development. Within this chapter the main communication activities are defined and a framework for IC is designed. In addition, it demonstrates all necessary functions resp. features if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM.

At RECOM several IC instruments are already used to communicate and collaborate with each other. But the availability and accessibility of information resp. knowledge is rather on demand, i.e. employees need to request information to receive it. The company has no platform on which efficient IC and interaction can take place and people receive everything - at least all essential information and documents - from one source in real-time with almost no constraints. As a result, the author highly recommends to implement a centralised solution, such as a social intranet.

With regard to the existing IC instruments and tools that are applied for IC at the moment, it has to be stated that some of these channels are needed though in order to make the most of RECOM's internal communication. Accordingly, they can be categorised into three groups to achieve the goals of the information, dialogue and change strategy. By means of literature and survey results, it is proposed to focus on the following IC instruments.

Instruments to fulfil the purpose of the information strategy:
- E-mails
- Company magazine

The information strategy primarily uses downwards directed media to supply employees quickly with the latest news and information. Nevertheless, a personal appeal with the possibility of queries is relevant (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1157). An information flow from top-down is also needed at RECOM. Therefore, the company should continue using e-mails and a company magazine to inform its internal stakeholders about important news that suddenly pop up and are not accessible immediately.

Instruments to fulfil the purpose of the dialogue strategy:

- Phone calls resp. face-to-face communication
- Team and department meetings

The aim of the dialogue strategy is to promote continuous interaction between top-management and internal target groups. As a consequence, it makes use of media that enables two-way communication and considers the needs and feedback of employees (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1158). At RECOM, face-to-face media as well as already held team and department meetings still need to be applied. Thus, it makes IC a two-way thing with interaction and knowledge creation among stakeholders.

Instruments to fulfil the purpose of the change strategy:

- Internal company events
- Seminars and workshops

The change strategy is targeted to provide employees with information about upcoming change processes. Thereby, the success depends on the inclusion and contribution of all internal stakeholders. The intensive practice of events, workshops and information forums support this strategy type (cf. Bruhn 2014, p. 1158). These IC instruments are not commonly used at the moment. Consequently, it is suggested that RECOM boosts internal events and workshops to integrate employees into change communication.

In terms of usability, it was already mentioned that RECOM uses a bewildering array of different communication tools at the moment. In this context, it is definitely necessary to reduce the number of tools by focusing on the most used and most important ones. Having said that, the survey results show that the company's employees are quite satisfied with Microsoft Outlook and the tools for video/audio conferencing (Polycom and GoToMeeting). Also, Skype by Microsoft is very popular and used very often. Nevertheless, the majority of RECOM's stakeholders is not really convinced by the other existing tools. As a result, it is suggested to reduce the number of tools by at least eliminating Microsoft SharePoint and Fabasoft. Although Microsoft SharePoint could be customised, it is hardly used by anyone and does not really fulfil the requirements for a social intranet according to literature. Furthermore, Fabasoft is only used, because it is needed for international document sharing.

However, people are not satisfied with both tools and a social intranet could improve this situation, as it combines functionalities, such as team rooms, documents, etc.

A lot of features can be applied that facilitate IC and improve interaction and collaboration. In order to satisfy the requirements from company and user end with a social intranet, the below mentioned features are to be included. They are either already applied within communication (provided by existing tools) or are expected by RECOM's target groups. Due to the employees knowledge of, experience with and attitude towards social features, it can be stated that not all functions are required; for them not all social features can contribute to the improvement of the company's IC.

Basic features:

The social intranet has to provide document sharing. According to their rights, all employees have access to this area. Documents are always up-to-date (latest version) and local drives are not needed.

The search functionality is needed to give employees the chance to search for content and also experts if they have any queries about projects, etc. This feature speeds up work and reduces unnecessary correspondence.

Extended features:

The social intranet must also provide the already existing team rooms which can be used for any projects and team work. They make sure that every member is up-to-date about what is going on. Team rooms simplify the creation of specific knowledge and, moreover, prevent that other employees are not bombed with irrelevant information.

The social intranet should also include a section where employees can guide and monitor their individual tasks. This allows them to keep on track and record their progress. Whithin this section employees should also have access to additional forms, for example, the request for time off, travel expense reports or any other relevant documents.

The option of calendar entries is also to be included. It makes the coordination of schedules possible. Thus, employees can organise holidays, project and any other meetings as well as deadlines. To have all dates in one picture supports them not to loose sight of their actual work.

Social features:

A news feed on the social intranet's home page is essential to share latest news and important information. This feature can also be used to inform employees about the company performance and keeps everyone fully informed about what is happening at RECOM.

The integration of communities and forums is a great opportunity to collect ideas and opinions, give feedback and ask questions about specific topics. These features promote the creation of knowledge as well as drive innovations and future developments.

Instant messaging is a feature to communicate with others in real-time and, therefore, is to be used at RECOM for ad-hoc and pop up communication, for which no documentation is necessary. In addition, instant messaging allows people to interact actively.

The social intranet should inlcude so called user dashboards. These dashboards give every user a profile, detemine responsibilities and make it possible to find experts. Accordingly, employees know who is part of which department and who is responsible for what topic. In addition, user dashboards allow people to select content according to their interests and customise their interface individually.

Activity streams are unavoidable, as they summarise the entire social intranet traffic and let employees know what is going on. This feature makes work easier by informing people about updates, changes and connections. For instance, employees get immediately notified if files have been updated or something has been posted in a team room.

The like, share, tag and comment features are nice to be included in a modern social intranet. These features not only increase employee engagement, but alos positively influence and drive discussions. With like, share, tag and comment, employees can make someone aware of certain topics and expand the reach of IC content.

In the first step it is recommended to focus on common and known features. Nice to have features, but not really relevant are blogs and wikis at the moment. However, the social intranet can be continually improved and extended by features as well as new technologies. Nevertheless, further research is needed to determine the layout and style of how these features are implemented.

The aforementioned traditional IC instruments combined with a social intranet, as a tool for international communication, will constitute great improvement for RECOM's IC. The said instruments and features enable employees not only to communicate and share information, but also to collaborate and take part in the whole process.

8.4   Budgeting and success measurement

This subchapter deals with the final steps of the communication concept. It mainly demonstrates how the IC budget can be defined and how the success of the company's IC can be evaluated, especially the success of a social intranet that is to be implemented.

Budget

At the moment the company does not explicitly dedicate any budget to internal communication, because apparently no personnel resp. department is responsible for this business area. The licence fees and costs for the instruments and tools, which are currently used for IC, are covered by the budget of the IT department. A cost reduction for the actual IT budget can be achieved if said tools (SharePoint and Fabasoft) are eliminated. However, to think ahead it is necessary for RECOM also to set a budget for IC including all costs for technology, personnel and generally all planned IC activities. As no reference budget is available, the following calculation is only a rough cost estimation provided by the author if a social intranet is to be

implemented at RECOM. Having said that, as soon as the company has made a decision about its IC activities, a detailed budget plan must be made.

Within the first years it may be advantageous to set the IC budget according to a reference parameter, for example, in relation to the external communication budget. Thereafter, the target measures calculation could give the best indication of the IC activities' necessity and cost impact. In the present case, budgeting describes the most relevant IC costs and concentrates on a social intranet. In principal, the focus is on one-time and follow-up costs for the tool's implementation and development.

The following one-time costs have to be considered within the budget plan:
- Personnel costs: the human labour one-time expenses include personnel costs for the IC planning, implementation and possible market research.
- Acquisition costs: this cost centre includes all one-time expenses needed to purchase the social intranet technology and associated implementation costs.
- External costs: all expenditures are to be included if it is not possible to do everything in-house and external service providers are needed, for instance, for the conduction of a survey or the conceptualisation of technical specifications.

In addition, the follow-up costs include the following elements:
- Personnel costs for the IC resp. social intranet maintenance, development and also for support, seminars and workshops with regard to the one source platform.
- Licencing and support costs that need to be paid to the software provider on a regular basis.
- Market research costs if it is either necessary to monitor and develop IC actions or the usability and functionalities of the social intranet.

According to said one-time and follow-up costs, the following table provides a rough cost estimation if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM. The estimated prices are randomly selected from the social intranet providers Coyo, Just Social and Flying Dog. It is estimated that the company will employ one manpower responsible for IC and additionally need one employee part-time to support the social intranet project. Furthermore, the author thinks that external agencies are needed for about 100 days in the implementation year, and thereafter 50 days p.a.

Cost centre	Cost description	2018	2019
Personnel	One-time costs for planning and execution; follow-up costs for maintenance and development. (based on an annual salary of EUR 60,000.-)	EUR 90,000.00	EUR 60,000,00
External	One-time costs for agencies and extra costs for follow-up support, seminars, research, etc. (based on an hourly rate of EUR 75.-)	EUR 60,000.00	EUR 30,000.00
Software	Costs for the tool's acquisition and implementation; annual licence fees and costs for support. (based on statements on the website of the aforementioned software providers)	EUR 18,000.00	EUR 4,500.00
IC cost estimation		**EUR 168,000.00**	**EUR 94,500.00**

Table 10: IC cost estimation (own presentation)

Table 10 shows that the total costs can be estimated at EUR 168,000.- for the business year 2018. Thereafter, the costs will decrease as less manpower is needed. However, it has to be emphasised again that the creation of a detailed budget plan is unavoidable, because this cost estimation only focuses on a social intranet to be implemented and does not consider additional internal communication costs that are needed for IC activities directed to the company's target group.

Success measurement

After the social intranet implementation, it is necessary to monitor and control IC activities in order to measure and determine their success. Therefore, the company can make use of already mentioned tools, such as audits and surveys, to redefine the overall communication strategy and measures. In the case of RECOM's IC it is important to control if the restructuring was successful and if the social intranet is accepted and used. Furthermore, the success measurement includes the control of set objectives. The following indicators and measures are suggested to control the communication and social intranet success.

a) To determine the overall success of the company's IC, an employee survey can be carried out. The survey can aim to investigate again the people's satisfaction or can also be targeted to find out the transparency and knowledge of distributed information and communication content.

b) Besides the more qualitative approach with surveys, several KPIs (key performance indicators) can be defined. The following table shows possible KPIs for success measurement.

KPIs for IC (in general)	Description	Source
Employee satisfaction index	Level of employees satisfaction with IC	Survey data of previous year
IC tools	Number of tools used	Data from IC / IT department
KPIs for the social intranet	**Description**	**Source**
Employee profiles	Number of complete profiles	Social intranet tracking
Clicks	Click rates of pages, …	Social intranet tracking
Realised workflows	Number and quality of realised workflows	Data from IC & management
Storage capacity	Comparison intranet/e-mails	Data from IC / IT department

Table 11: KPIs for success measurement (own presentation)

c) The company may also apply the output, outcome and outflow approach. Therefore, key performance and impact indicators are compared to receive the strategic success contribution. For example, the number of team rooms is compared with its page views and the resulted ideas. This approach allows IC managers to interpret findings and create appropriate KPIs for own internal use.

Concept visualisation

Figure 20 shows the elaborated IC concept:

Objectives
- Increase of employee satisfaction and motivation within IC
- Increase of employee engagement and commitment
- Reduction of tools available for IC
- Creation of open and more transparent communication
- Creation of efficient knowledge management, processes and workflows

Target groups
- Company's internal stakeholders
  - Top-management (company end)
  - Employees (user end)

Positioning & strategy
- Repositioning of the entire IC architecture by giving it a voice and a face (interface)
  - RECOM CONNECTS - Reliable & Efficient Communication Of Masterminds
- Applying a diversification strategy:
- Information strategy to provide everyone with transparent / clear information
- Dialogue strategy to promote two-way communication
- Change strategy to get the overall acceptance (by communicating change)

Action planning
- Focus on e-mails, company magazine, phone calls, meetings, events & seminars
- Social intranet implementation by at least providing docs, search, team rooms, tasks, calendar, news feed, communities, instant messaging, user dashboards and activity streams.

Budgeting
- Cost estimation year I - EUR 168,000.00
- Cost estimation year II - EUR 94,500.00

Controlling
- Different employee surveys
- KPIs for IC and the social intranet
- Output, outcome and outflow approach

Figure 20: RECOM's IC concept (own presentation)

9   Recommendations and final statement

First, a clear IC structure can be decisive for the company's performance to achieve its goals. Thus, the employment of someone responsible for IC or the assignment of IC activities to an existing employee of the HR or Marketing department should be the first action to take. It is essential that someone deals with this topic entirely leading it to a successful business function. This person has the main duty to set an IC structure that enables interaction, monitor and improve all IC processes.

Secondly, the implementation of a social intranet can help to create an appropriate IC environment. By the application of its features the tool supports the reduction of unnecessary correspondence. It facilitates the entire IC and allows employees to become more productive. Therefore, it is suggested that an IC architecture with a focus on two-way communication is set up and the requirements from company and user end are met. Furthermore, it can be advantageous if some local adaptations are provided, especially local languages and local content. The top-management totally has to support all new IC activities and act as role model. By doing so, the company will get the overall acceptance and IC will become more efficient.

Furthermore, specification paper can be based on this thesis that give information about the appropriate IC structure at RECOM. The newly involved IC responsible, therefore, has to connect the dots and plan accordingly to achieve the best possible result. Also, further market research needs to be carried out to investigate the application, style and implementation of the social intranet and its features more in detail. The company's IC will be a never ending resp. ongoing process and has to be developed further; always adjusted to changing market or technology trends as well as to the requirements from company and user end. By doing so, RECOM's internal stakeholders are ready to concentrate on a centralised corporate platform and contribute to an efficient two-way IC process.

Finally, it is highly recommended to integrate thought leaders into the project, before the tool's selection process will be started. This allows RECOM to investigate all requirements that are necessary for efficient IC by making it a corporate valuable project and integrating employees from day one.

Bibliography

Books:

Aerni, Markus/Bruhn, Manfred (2012): Integrierte Kommunikation, Grundlagen mit zahlreichen Beispielen, Repetitionsfragen mit Antworten und Glossar, 2nd Ed., Zurich: Compendio [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=lxW_8WyDUzsC [28.12.2016]

Barker, Rachel/Angelopulo, George C. (2005): Integrated Organisational Communication, Cape Town: Juta [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=D7rkS-Q-mYUC [27.12.2016]

Berekoven, Ludwig/Eckert, Werner/Ellenrieder, Peter (2009): Marktforschung, Methodische Grundlagen und praktische Anwendung, 12th Ed., Wiesbaden: Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-8267-4 [03.01.2017]

Block, Carl H. (2003): Das Intranet, Die neue Informationsverarbeitung, Renningen: expert verlag [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=kbXR_p_jGa0C [27.12.2016]

Brace, Ian (2008): Questionnaire Design: How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research, 2nd Ed., London: Kogan Page [online] http://dlx.bookzz.org/genesis/344000/137695BEDA8031A58793BBF7B0740A16/_as/[Ian_Brace]_Questionnaire_Design_How_to_Plan,_Str(BookZZ.org).pdf [07.01.2017]

Bruhn, Manfred (2014): Unternehmens- und Marketingkommunikation, Handbuch für ein integriertes Kommunikationsmanagement, 3rd Ed., Munich: Vahlen

Bruhn, Manfred (2015): Kommunikationspolitik: systematischer Einsatz der Kommunikation für Unternehmen, 8th Ed., Munich: Vahlen

Czinkota, Michael R./Ronkainen, Ilkka A. (2007): International Marketing, 8th Ed., Ohio: Thomson, South-Western

Farkas, Meredith G. (2007): Social Software in Libraries, Building Collaboration, Communication, and Community Online, New Jersey: Information Today [online] http://dlx.bookzz.org/genesis/652000/881ccff102f945bb30c2b864dbf6e905/_as/[Meredith_G._Farkas]_Social_Software_in_Libraries(BookZZ.org).pdf [08.12.2016]

Fischer, Tim E. (2006): Unternehmenskommunikation und Neue Medien, Das neue Medium Weblogs und seine Bedeutung für die Public-Relations-Arbeit, Wiesbaden: DUV [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8350-9195-5 [10.12.2016]

FitzPatrick, Liam/Valskov, Klavs (2014): Internal Communications, A manual for practitioners, London: Kogan Page

Flin, Rhona/O'Connor, Paul/Crichton, Margaret (2008): Safety at the Sharp End: A Guide to Non-technical Skills, Hampshire: Ashgate

Fuchs, Wolfgang/Unger, Fritz (2007): Management der Marketing-Kommunikation, 4th Ed., Berlin Heidelberg: Springer [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-540-69274-4 [26.12.2016]

Gröscho, Steffi/Eichler-Liebenow, Claudia/Köhler, Regina (2015): Willkommen in der neuen Arbeitswelt, So erwecken Sie ein Social Intranet zum Leben, Berlin: SCM

Grupe, Stephanie (2011): Public Relations, Ein Wegweiser für die PR-Praxis, Berlin Heidelberg: Springer [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-642-17827-6 [27.11.2016]

Hague, Paul/Harrison, Matthew/Cupman, Julia/Truman, Oliver (2016): Market Research in Practice, An introduction to gaining greater market insight, 3rd Ed., London: Kogan Page [online] http://dlx.bookzz.org/genesis/1501000/c88407ba7e41cf54f7986db0d283beb9/_as/[Paul_Hague,_Julia_Cupman,_Matthew_Harrison,_Olive(BookZZ.org).pdf [06.01.2017]

Herbst, Dieter (2003): Public Relations: [Kommunikationsziele ermitteln, umsetzen und überprüfen; Kommunikation mit Mitarbeitern und Journalisten; PR rundum: von Aussendung bis Zeitung], 2nd Ed., Berlin: Cornelsen

Hettl, Matthias (2013): Mitarbeiterführung mit dem LEAD-Navigator®, Erfolgreich und wirksam führen, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-00100-1 [27.12.2016]

Hoffman, Claus/Lang, Beatrix (2008): Das Intranet, 2nd Ed., Munich: UVK

Jue, Arthur L./Marr, Jackie A./Kassotakis, Mary E. (2010): Social Media at Work, How Networking Tools Propel Organizational Performance, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=jsnzrblYY9wC&pg [11.12.2016]

Kamenz, Uwe (2001): Marktforschung: Einführung mit Fallbeispielen, Aufgaben und Lösungen, 2nd Ed., Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel

Kastin, Klaus S. (2008): Marktforschung mit einfachen Mitteln: Daten und Informationen beschaffen, auswerten und interpretieren, 3rd. Ed., Munich: Dt. Taschenbuch-Verlag

Kirchgeorg, Manfred/Wübbenhorst, Klaus (2013): 333 Keywords Marktforschung, Grundwissen für Manager, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-03541-9 [03.01.2017]

Koch, Jörg (2012): Marktforschung, Grundlagen und praktische Anwendungen, 6th Ed., Munich: Oldenbourg [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=3T8GJid5wHsC [06.01.2017]

Kroeber-Riel, Werner/Gröppel-Klein, Andrea (2013): Konsumentenverhalten, 10th Ed., Munich: Vahlen

Kuß, Alfred (2012): Marktforschung, Grundlagen der Datenerhebung und Datenanalyse, 4th Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-3853-4 [03.01.2017]

Leipziger, Jürg W. (2009): Konzepte entwickeln, Handfeste Anleitungen für bessere Kommunikation, 3rd Ed., Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Allgemeine Buch [online Kindle]

Mast, Claudia (2016): Unternehmenskommunikation, Ein Leitfaden, 6th Ed., Munich: UVK

Meier, Stefanie/Lütolf, Daniel/Schillerwein, Stephan (2015): Herausforderung Intranet, Zwischen Informationsvermittlung, Diskussionskultur und Wissensmanagement, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler

Morley, Michael (2002): How to Manage Your Global Reputation, A Guide to the Dynamics of International Public Relations, 2nd Ed., Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan UK [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1057/9780230512191 [30.11.2016]

Oberzaucher, Astrid (2012): Marktforschung für die praktische Anwendung, Wien: Linde

Odermatt, Sven (2009): Integrierte Unternehmenskommunikation, Systemgestützte Umsetzung der Informationellen Aufgaben, Wiesbaden: Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-8219-3 [04.11.2016]

Pepels, Werner (2001): Kommunikations-Management: Marketing-Kommunikation vom Briefing bis zur Realisation, 4th Ed., Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel

Pfaff, Dietmar (2005): Marktforschung: wie Sie Erfolg versprechende Zielgruppen finden, Berlin: Cornelsen

Quirke, Bill (2008): Making the Connections, Using Internal Communication to Turn Strategy into Action, 2nd Ed., Surrey: Gower

Raab, Gerhard/Unger, Alexander/Unger, Fritz (2009): Methoden der Marketing-Forschung, Grundlagen und Praxisbeispiele, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-8230-8 [06.01.2017]

Salzer, Eva (2011): Quintessenz der Unternehmenskommunikation, Wie Sie Ihre Ziele im Dialog mit Ihren Stakeholdern besser erreichen können, Berlin Heidelberg: Springer [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-642-21689-3 [04.11.2016]

Schawel, Christian/Billing, Fabian (2014): Top 100 Management Tools, Das wichtigste Buch eines Managers Von der ABC-Analyse bis Zielvereinbarung, 5th Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-4691-1 [26.12.2016]

Schmidbauer, Klaus/Knödler-Bunte, Eberhard (2004): Das Kommunikationskonzept, Konzepte entwickeln und präsentieren, Potsdam: UMC

Smith, Ronald D. (2005): Strategic Planning for Public Relations, 2nd Ed., New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates [online] http://dlx.bookzz.org/genesis/223000/a7dbf64e481b96b320612e1259076e8a/_as/[Ronald_D._Smith]_Strategic_Planning_for_Public_Re(BookZZ.org).pdf [27.12.2016]

Smith, Lyn (2008): Effective Internal Communication, 2nd Ed., London: Kogan Page [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=m1yBGeqzIIkC [05.12.2016]

Smythe, John (2013): The Velvet Revolution at Work: The Rise of Employee Engagement, the Fall of Command and Control, Surrey: Gower [online] https://books.google.at/books?id=PL3XCQAAQBAJ [27.11.2016]

Schick, Siegfried (2014): Interne Unternehmenskommunikation, Strategien entwickeln, Strukturen schaffen, Prozesse steuern, 5th Ed., Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel

Theobald, Axel (2017): Praxis Online-Marktforschung, Grundlagen - Anwendungsbereiche - Durchführung, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler [online] http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1285842&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_C1 [06.01.2017]

Verghese, Aniisu K. (2012): Internal Communications, Insights, Practices, and Models, New Delhi: SAGE

Weis, Hans C./Steinmetz, Peter (2012): Marktforschung, 8th Ed., Herne: Kiehl

Compilations and handbooks

Arnaout, Ali (2005): Controlling auch für die Kommunikationspraxis?, in: Piwinger, Manfred/Porák (ed.): Kommunikations-Controlling, Kommunikation und Information quantifizieren und finanziell bewerten, Wiesbaden: Gabler, p. 121 - 132 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-322-84415-6 [28.12.2016]

Bentele, Günter/Nothhaft, Howard (2014): Konzeption von Kommunikationsprogrammen, in: Zerfaß, Ansgar/Piwinger, Manfred (ed.): Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation, Strategie - Management - Wertschöpfung, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 607 - 632 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-4543-3 [02.04.2017]

Ehrhart, Christof E. (2014): Internationale Unternehmenskommunikation, in: Zerfaß, Ansgar/Piwinger, Manfred (ed.): Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation, Strategie - Management - Wertschöpfung, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 1333 - 1347 [online] http://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-8349-4543-3 [04.11.2016]

Einwiller, Sabine/Klöfer, Franz/Nies, Ulrich (2008): Mitarbeiterkommunikation, in: Meckel, Miriam/Schmid, Beat F. (ed.): Unternehmenskommunikation. Kommunikationsmanagement aus Sicht der Unternehmensführung, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Gabler, p. 221 - 260 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-9883-5 [04.11.2016]

Esch, Franz-Rudolf/Eichenauer, Sabrina (2016): Bedeutung der Internen Kommunikation für die Unternehmenskommunikation, in: Bruhn, Manfred/Esch, Franz-Rudolf/Langner, Tobias (ed.): Handbuch Instrumente der Kommunikation, Grundlagen - Innovative Ansätze - Praktische Umsetzungen, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 301 - 324 [online] http://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-658-04655-2 [15.11.2016]

Guhl, Daniel/Steffenhagen, Hartwig (2016): Kommunikationsbudgetierung: Analytische Ansätze, in: Bruhn, Manfred/Esch, Franz-Rudolf/Langner, Tobias (ed.): Handbuch Strategische Kommunikation, Grundlagen - Innovative Ansätze - Praktische Umsetzungen, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 345 - 376 [online] http://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-658-04706-1 [28.12.2016]

Huck-Sandhu, Simone (2016): Internationale Unternehmenskommunikation, in: Mast, Claudia (ed.): Unternehmenskommunikation, 6th Ed., Munich: UVK, p. 423 - 440

Kennedy, Mary L. (2007): Implementing an Intranet that Makes Sense, in: Kennedy, Mary L./Dysart, Jane (ed.): Intranets for Info Pros, New Jersey: Information Today, p. 55 - 72

Mirbach, Jürgen/Sthamer, Ulf (2012): Social Intranet, in: Dörfel, Lars/Schulz, Theresa (ed.): Social Media in der internen Kommunikation, Berlin: SCM, p. 187 - 204

Prinz, Wolfgang (2014): Konzepte und Lösungen für das soziale Intranet, in: Rogge, Christine/Karabasz, Ralf (ed.): Social Media im Unternehmen - Ruhm oder Ruin, Erfahrungslandkarte einer Expedition in die Social Media-Welt, Wiesbaden: Springer, p. 1 - 17 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-03087-2 [10.12.2016]

Rolke, Lothar (2016): Kommunikations-Controlling: Strategiegeleitete Steuerung mittels Wirkungsmanagement, in: Esch, Franz-Rudolf/Langner, Tobias/Bruhn, Manfred (ed.): Handbuch Controlling der Kommunikation, Grundlagen - Innovative Ansätze - Praktische Umsetzungen, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 27 - 52 [online] http://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-8349-3857-2 [28.12.2016]

Rolke, Lothar/Zerfaß, Ansgar (2014): Erfolgsmessung und Controlling der Unternehmenskommunikation: Wertbeitrag, Bezugsrahmen und Vorgehensweisen, in: Zerfaß, Ansgar/Piwinger, Manfred (ed.): Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation, Strategie - Management - Wertschöpfung, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, p. 863 - 886 [online] http://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-8349-4543-3 [28.12.2016]

Ruck, Kevin (2015): Internal Communication Planning, in: Ruck, Kevin (ed.): Exploring Internal Communication, Towards Informed Employee Voice, 3rd Ed., Surrey: Gower, p. 119 - 131

Schreier, Margit (2011): Qualitative Stichprobenkonzepte, in: Naderer, Gabriele/Balzer, Eva (ed.): Qualitative Marktforschung in Theorie und Praxis, Grundlagen - Methoden - Anwendungen, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Gabler, p. 241 - 256 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-6790-9 [06.01.2017]

Yeomans, Liz (2009): Internal Communication, in: Tench, Ralph/Yeomans, Liz (ed.): Exploring Public Relations, 2nd Ed., Essex: Pearson Education, p. 316 - 337 [online] http://dlx.bookzz.org/genesis/728000/18f516476279fc47945a6ca08baaa2c5/_as/[Ralph_Tench,_Liz_Yeomans]_Exploring_Public_Relati(BookZZ.org).pdf [05.12.2016]

Zerfaß, Ansgar (2008): Kommunikations-Controlling, in: Meckel, Miriam/Schmid, Beat F. (ed.): Unternehmenskommunikation. Kommunikationsmanagement aus Sicht der Unternehmensführung, 2nd Ed., Wiesbaden: Gabler, p. 435 - 470 [online] http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-8349-9883-5 [28.12.2016]

Journals and professional magazines:

Baxter, Gavin J./Connolly, Thomas M./Stansfield, Mark H. (2010): Organisational blogs: benefits and challenges of implementation, in: The Learning Organization, 17, no. 6, p. 515 - 528 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09696471011082376 [10.12.2016]

Begbie, Rosemarie/Chudry, Farooq (2002): The Intranet Chaos Matrix: A conceptual framework for designing an effective knowledge management intranet, in: Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management, 9, no. 4, p 325 - 338 [online] http://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/palgrave.jdm.3240081 [06.12.2016]

Bennet, James/Owers, Mark/Pitt, Michael/Tucker, Matthew (2010): Workplace impact of social networking, in: Property Management, 28, no. 3, p. 138 - 148 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02637471011051282 [06.12.2016]

Burrus, Daniel (2010): Social networks in the workplace: the risk and opportunity of Business 2.0, in: Strategy & Leadership, 38, no. 4, p. 50 - 53 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10878571011059674 [08.12.2016]

Camarero, Carmen/Rodríguez, Javier/San José, Rebeca (2012): An exploratory study of online forums as a collaborative learning tool, in: Online Information Review, 36, no. 4, p. 568 - 586 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14684521211254077 [10.12.2016]

Domm, Graeme W. (2014): Beyond culture, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 19, no. 4, p. 357 - 370 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2014-0022 [05.12.2016]

Griesbaum, Joachim/Mahrholz, Nadine/von Löwe Kiedrowski, Kim/Rittberger, Marc (2015): Knowledge generation in online forums: a case study in the German educational domain, in: Aslib Journal of Information Management, 67, no. 1, p. 2 - 26 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-09-2014-0112 [10.12.2016]

Huang, Li-Chun/Shiau, Wen-Lung (2015): Why do people use microblogs? An empirical study of Plurk, in: Information Technology & People, 28, no. 2, p. 281 - 303 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ITP-07-2012-0067 [10.12.2016]

Jonasson, Charlotte/Lauring, Jakob (2012): Cultural differences in use: the power to essentialize communication styles, in: Journal of Communication Management, 16, no. 4, p. 405 - 419 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632541211279030 [29.11.2016]

Kameda, Naoki (2005): A research paradigm for international business communication, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 10, no. 2, p. 168 - 182 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13563280510596970 [05.10.2016]

Kalla, Hanna K. (2005): Integrated internal communications: a multidisciplinary perspective, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 10, no. 4, p. 302 - 314 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13563280510630106 [14.11.2016]

Koenig, Nils/Schlaegel, Christopher (2014): Effects of design characteristics on corporate blog acceptance, in: Management Research Review, 37, no. 4, p. 409 - 440 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MRR-11-2012-0253 [10.12.2016]

Lam, Helen (2016): Social media dilemmas in the employment context, in: Employee Relations, 38, no. 3, p. 420 - 437 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ER-04-2015-0072 [11.12.2016]

Lipiäinen, Heini S. M./Karjaluoto, Heikki E./Nevalainen, Marjo (2014): Digital channels in the internal communication of a multinational corporation, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 19, no. 3, p. 275 - 286 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-07-2012-0050 [05.10.2016]

Magnier-Watanabe, Rémy/Yoshida, Michiko/Watanabe, Tomoaki (2010): Social network productivity in the use of SNS, in: Journal of Knowledge Management, 14, no. 6, p. 910 - 927 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13673271011084934 [08.12.2016]

Mazzei, Alessandra (2010): Promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 15, no. 3, p. 221 - 234 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13563281011068096 [14.11.2016]

McConnell, Jane (2007): Making intranets meaningful, When it comes to intranets, relevance equals value, in: Communication World, 24, no. 3, p. 24 - 25 [online] http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=24911587&site=ehost-live [08.12.2016]

Mounter, Pamela (2003): Global internal communication: A model, in: Journal of Communication Management, 7, no. 3, p. 265 - 268 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632540310807412 [05.10.2016]

Murgolo-Poore, Marie/Pitt, Leyland (2001): Intranets and employee communication: PR behind the firewall, in: Journal of Communication Management, 5, no. 3, p. 231 - 241 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632540110806794 [05.12.2016]

Ou, Carol X.J./Davison, Robert M./Zhong, Xuepan/Liang, Yi (2010): Empowering employees through instant messaging, in: Information Technology & People, 23, no. 2, p. 193 - 211 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09593841011052165 [10.12.2016]

Razmerita, Liana/Kirchner, Kathrin/Nielsen, Pia (2016): What factors influence knowledge sharing in organizations? A social dilemma perspective of social media communication, in: Journal of Knowledge Management, 20, no. 6, p. 1225 - 1246 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JKM-03-2016-0112 [11.12.2016]

Sharma, Anshu/Bhatnagar, Jyotsna (2016): Enterprise social media at work: web-based solutions for employee engagement, in: Human Resource Management International Digest, 24, no. 7, p. 16 - 19 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/HRMID-04-2016-0055 [08.12.2016]

Spinks, Nelda/Wells, Barron (1997): Intercultural communication: a key element in global strategies, in: Career Development International, 2, no. 6, 287 - 292 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13620439710178684 [29.11.2016]

Sriussadaporn, Roong (2006): Managing international business communication problems at work: a pilot study in foreign companies in Thailand, in: Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 13, no. 4, p. 330 - 344 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13527600610713422 [05.12.2016]

Suh, Taewon/Lee, Jaehun (2016): Internal audience segmentation and diversity in internal communication, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 21, no. 4, p. 450 - 464 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-05-2015-0024 [27.12.2016]

Thomas, Robert J./Kass, Alex/Davarzani, Ladan (2013): Fast and furious: How digital technologies are changing the way we work, in: Outlook - The journal of high-performance business, 25, no. 3, p. 12 - 19 [online] https://www.accenture.com/t20150521T020631__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/Accenture/Conversion-Assets/Blogs/Documents/1/Accenture-Outlook-Journal-October-2013.pdf [27.03.2017]

Tilley, Elspeth N./Fredricks Susan M./Hornett, Andrea (2012): Kinship, culture and ethics in organisations, in: Journal of Communication Management, 16, no. 2, p. 162 - 184 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13632541211217588 [29.11.2016]

Welch, Mary/Jackson, Paul R. (2007): Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach, in: Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 12, no. 2, p. 177 - 198 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13563280710744847 [14.11.2016]

Wheatcroft, John (2016): Risks and rewards in the world of social media, in: Human Resource Management International Digest, 24, no. 5, p. 16 - 18 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/HRMID-04-2016-0056 [11.12.2016]

Wood, Beverley A. (2013): Using Web 2.0 technologies for communication, collaboration and community building: a Caribbean perspective, in: Library Hi Tech News, 30, no. 6, p. 7 - 11 [online] http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LHTN-05-2013-0034 [27.11.2016]

Contributions from internet sources:

ABA - Invest in Austria (n.d.): Electronics Industry in Austria [online] https://investinaustria.at/en/sectors/electronics/ [07.02.2017]

Anon s.n. (13.06.2015a): What is Two way Communication in Business? [online] http://bizcommunicationcoach.com/what-is-two-way-communication-in-business/ [27.11.2016]

Anon, Global Business School Barcelona (27.04.2015b): The Importance of Global Communications in the World Today [online] http://www.global-business-school.org/announcements/the_importance_of_global_communications_in_the_world_today [29.11.2016]

Apud, Salvador/Apud-Martinez, Talis (28.04.2008): Effective Internal Communication in Global Organizations [online] https://www.iabc.com/effective-internal-communication-in-global-organizations/ [29.11.2016]

Brain, Marshall (n.d.): How Wikis Work [online] http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/basics/wiki.htm [10.12.2016]

Burg Nathalie (10.12.2013): How Technology Has Changed Workplace Communication [online] https://www.forbes.com/sites/unify/2013/12/10/how-technology-has-changed-workplace-communication/#551da5e9670b [27.03.2017]

Bynghall, Steve (30.04.2015): 6 digital workplace trends from recent Intranet Innovation Awards [online] http://digitalworkplacegroup.com/2015/04/30/6-digital-workplace-trends-intranet-innovation-awards/ [07.12.2016]

Chess Media Group (n.d.): The FOW Community, 12 Principles of Collaboration [online] https://www.fowcommunity.com/about-collaboration/12-principles-of-collaboration [28.11.2016]

Clarkson, Natalie (29.10.2014): Creating a culture that encourages internal collaboration [online] https://www.virgin.com/entrepreneur/creating-a-culture-that-encourages-internal-collaboration [27.11.2016]

Claromentis (n.d.): Employee Management Intranet Application [online] https://www.claromentis.com/features/people/ [08.12.2016]

Cohen-Dumani, Daniel (26.04.2016): Top 10 Features All Modern Social Intranets Must Have [online] http://www.onewindowapp.com/blog/top-10-features-all-modern-social-intranets-must-have [10.12.2016]

Cross, Rob/Rebele, Reb/Grant, Adam (01-02/2016): Collaborative Overload [online] https://hbr.org/2016/01/collaborative-overload [28.11.2016]

Crump, Kevin, LiquidPlanner, Inc. (11.01.2016): Project Management Challenge: Too Many Different Software Solutions [online] https://www.liquidplanner.com/blog/project-management-challenge-many-different-software-solutions/ [04.10.2016]

Diehlmann, Nicole/Herzog, Christoph/Fischer, Ariana (28.04.2016): Pocket Guide - Social Intranet [online] http://social-intranet.net/pocket-guide-social-intranet-jetzt-herunterladen/ [17.04.2017]

Eisenhauer, Tim (06.07.2012): How to Choose a Social Intranet Platform [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/134/how-to-choose-a-social-intranet-platform [13.04.2017]

Eisenhauer, Tim (11.05.2014a): Cloud Intranet Software vs On-Premise Solutions [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/182/cloud-intranet-software-vs-on-premise-solutions [19.12.2016]

Eisenhauer, Tim (28.06.2014b): How to Define Your Intranet Objectives & Requirements [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/197/how-to-define-your-intranet-objectives-requirements [19.12.2016]

Eisenhauer, Tim (11.07.2014c): Intranet Software Comparisons Don't Paint The Whole Picture. Are They Really Helpful? [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/203/intranet-software-comparisons-don-t-paint-the-whole-picture-are-they-really-helpful [13.04.2017]

Eisenhauer, Tim (05.01.2015a): 13 Hot Intranet Trends for 2015 [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/286/13-hot-intranet-trends-for-2015 [07.12.2016]

Eisenhauer, Tim (28.05.2015b): Intranet Planning - 19 Tips for Staying on Track [online] https://axerosolutions.com/blogs/timeisenhauer/pulse/328/intranet-planning-19-tips-for-staying-on-track [13.04.2017]

Elcom (30.11.2012): Social Intranets Make Employees Happy [online] http://www.elcomcms.com/resources/blog/posts/social-intranets-make-employees-happy [19.12.2016]

Esch, Franz-Rudolf (n.d.): Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon, Das Wissen der Experten. [online] http://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/Definition/kommunikationsstrategie.html [27.12.2016]

European Commission (n.d.): Electrical and Electronic Engineering Industries (EEI) [online] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/electrical-engineering_en [07.02.2017]

Frenz, Roslyn, Hearst Newspapers, LLC (n.d.): The Advantages and Disadvantages of Communication in an Organization [online] http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-disadvantages-communication-organization-23143.html [22.11.2016]

Führmann (07/2014): SOFT-Analyse für die interne Kommunikation [online] http://www.interne-kommunikation.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Fuehrmann-Interne-Kommunikation-SOFT-Analyse.pdf [26.12.2016]

Gatz, Nicole (15.09.2014): Activity Stream [online] http://social-intranet.net/wiki/activity-stream/ [10.12.2016]

Grözinger, Kerstin (24.08.2015): Social Intranet motiviert Mitarbeiter durch verbesserte Kommunikation [online] https://www.tixxt.com/de/social-intranet-motiviert-mitarbeiter-durch-verbesserte-kommunikation/ [08.12.2016]

Habicher, Andreas (07.02.2011): Microblogs revolutionieren interne Kommunikation [online] http://www.netural.com/blog/microblogs-revolutionieren-interne-kommunikation/ [10.12.2016]

Investopedia (29.04.2015): What is the electronics sector? [online] http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/042915/what-electronics-sector.asp [07.02.2017]

itim International, Hofstede Centre (n.d.[a]): Geert Hofstede, National Culture [online] https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html [18.02.2017]

itim International, Hofstede Centre (n.d.[b]): Geert Hofstede, National Culture [online] https://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html [18.02.2017]

Johnson, Kerensa (10.09.2015): How to Define Your Intranet Requirements [online] https://www.claromentis.com/blog/defining-your-intranet-requirements/ [11.12.2016]

Jurevicius, Ovidijus (13.02.2013): PEST & PESTEL Analysis [online] https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/pest-pestel-analysis.html [26.12.2016]

Lange, Anne/Mitchell, Shane/Stewart-Weeks, Martin/Vila, James (07/2008): The Connected Republic and the Power of Social Networks [online] http://www.openforum.com.au/files/The%20Connected%20Republic%20and%20the%20Power%20of%20Social%20Networking%20July%202008.pdf [08.12.2016]

Lewis, Rachel (01.04.2014): Define your intranet requirements the smart way [online] https://www.interact-intranet.com/define-your-intranet-requirements-the-smart-way/ [11.12.2016]

Lundgren, Lena/Strandh, Kicki/Johansson, Catrin (2012): The Practice of Social Intranets, Usage, Benefits and Success Factors [online] http://miun.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:908402/FULLTEXT01.pdf [08.12.2016]

Manchester, Alex (30.04.2012): Selecting enterprise social network software [online] http://www.steptwo.com.au/papers/kmc_selectingsocia/ [13.04.2017]

Manchester, Alex (31.07.2013): Five fundamental capabilities of social intranets [online] http://www.steptwo.com.au/papers/kmc_fivesocial/ [08.12.2016]

Matthews, Paula (28.01.2014): 8 Features your Intranet Must Have [online] https://www.claromentis.com/blog/8-features-your-intranet-must-have-in-2014/ [17.04.2017]

Mattscheck, Markus, Onlinemarketing-Praxis (n.d.): Definition Microblogs / microblogging [online] http://www.onlinemarketing-praxis.de/glossar/microblogs-microblogging [10.12.2016]

mixxt GmbH (11/2015): 10 Auswahlkriterien für Ihren Social-Intranet-Anbieter [online] https://www.tixxt.com/de/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/10-Auswahlkriterien-SI-Whitepaper-1.pdf [13.04.2017]

Morgan, Jacob (21.12.2009): Importance of external and internal collaboration, The connecting and sharing that takes place externally can also be leveraged within the workplace. [online] http://www.zdnet.com/article/importance-of-external-and-internal-collaboration/ [27.11.2016]

Morgan, Jacob (03.05.2012): The Twelve Principles of Collaboration [online] https://thefutureorganization.com/twelve-principles-collaboration/ [17.04.2017]

Morgan, Jacob (30.07.2013): The 12 Habits Of Highly Collaborative Organizations [online] http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2013/07/30/the-12-habits-of-highly-collaborative-organizations/#4be2d6375f12 [28.11.2016]

Nickson, Chris (12.12.2016): Technology & The Way We Work [online] http://www.atechnologysociety.co.uk/technology-way-we-work.html [27.03.2017]

Nielsen, Jakob (02.03.2013): Intranet Social Features [online] http://www.usability.ch/news/intranet-social-features.html [10.12.2016]

Notes Desk (08.03.2009a): Types of Communication [online] http://www.notesdesk.com/notes/business-communications/types-of-communication/ [23.11.2016]

Notes Desk (11.03.2009b): Business Communication and its Types [online] http://www.notesdesk.com/notes/business-communications/business-communication-and-its-types/ [23.11.2016]

Pütz, Horst (03/2012): Einführung von Social Business und Social Intranet [online] http://www.perikom.ch/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/MCCM_Social_Business_2012.pdf [11.12.2016]

Rauv, Siv (03.02.2016): 10 Intranet Trends for 2016 [online] http://www.elcomcms.com/en-au/resources/elcom-blog/posts/10-intranet-trends-for-2016 [07.12.2016]

RECOM Power GmbH (n.d.): About RECOM [online] http://www.recom-power.com/emea/about/company.html [14.10.2016]

Schillerwein, Stephan (20.05.2014): Auswahl eines Intranet-Systems: wie der Kauf eines Familienautos … [online] http://www.intranet-matters.com/de/2014/05/20/auswahl-eines-intranet-systems/ [13.04.2017]

Slotosch, Andreas, Beekeeper AG (09.02.2016): 5 Solutions for Improved Communication Across Teams, Sites and Countries [online] https://beekeeper.io/5-solutions-improved-communication-across-teams-sites-countries/ [04.10.2016]

Stunf B.V. (n.d.): Intranet Portal & Dashboard [online] https://papyrs.com/solutions/intranet-portal-dashboard/ [10.12.2016]

The Financial Times Ltd. (n.d.): Financial Times ft.com/lexicon [online] http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=internal-communication [14.11.2016]

Ueberholz, Oliver (n.d.): Social Intranet, Definition, Ergebnisse & Zukunft [online] https://www.tixxt.com/de/social-intranet-2/ [27.03.2017]

Williams, Max (25.11.2014): What we learnt making a company wiki [online] https://blog.pusher.com/learnt-making-company-wiki/ [10.12.2016]

Wirtschaftswissen (31.03.2008): 7 Fehler bei der Mitarbeiterkommunikation, die Sie unbedingt vermeiden müssen [online] https://www.wirtschaftswissen.de/marketing-vertrieb/public-relations/pr-und-oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/7-fehler-bei-der-mitarbeiterkommunikation-die-sie-unbedingt-vermeiden-muessen/ [23.11.2016]

Wolf, Frank, Staffbase c/o EmployeeApp GmbH (n.d.): Why an internal communications strategy is important for companies [online] https://insights.staffbase.com/blog/why-an-internal-communications-strategy-is-important-for-companies [22.11.2016]

Other sources

E-mails:

Cai, Yahui, BCom., MARCOM Manager APAC, RECOM Power GmbH, [04.01.2017]

Hillinger, Barbara, Accounting, RECOM Power GmbH, [05.01.2017]

Mounter, Pamela, FCIPR, Corporate Communication, [29.11.2016]

Sulejmani, Idriz, Team Leader Data Management/IT, RECOM Power GmbH, [31.01.2017a]

Sulejmani, Idriz, Team Leader Data Management/IT, RECOM Power GmbH, [01.02.2017b]

Viehmann, Iris, Finance/Quality Management, RECOM Services GmbH, [04.01.2017]

Wolf, Christoph, President, RECOM Power, Inc., [23.11.2016]

Face-to-face meetings:

Berger, Konrad, MSc., Marketing Communications Manager, RECOM Power GmbH, [09.03.2016a]

Berger, Konrad, MSc., Head of Global Marketing, RECOM Power GmbH, [11.10.2016b]

Berger, Konrad, MSc., Head of Global Marketing, RECOM Power GmbH, [01.02.2017]

Cai, Yahui, BCom., MARCOM Manager APAC, RECOM Power GmbH, [15.10.2016]

Unpublished sources:

Aichinger, Bianca, RECOM Power GmbH (2015): Stromversorgungs-Cluster im Herzen Europas [unpublished source]

RECOM Power GmbH (2016): RECOM Company Presentation 2016, We Power Your Products [unpublished source]

Appendix

The master thesis' appendix includes all materials resp. information that is needed for the overall comprehensibility. It provides additional and, therefore, complete data of the primary market research.

Appendix: Table of contents

Appendix: List of figures

Appendix: List of tables

1 Quantitative market research

The first chapter of the appendix includes all materials (covering notes and online survey) that were needed for the quantitative primary market research. Also, some additional survey results are demonstrated.

1.1 Covering notes for the mailing of the online-survey

The online questionnaire was sent to 112 employees in total. The survey was sent via e-mail which included a covering note to inform the participants about the survey goals and its procedure. As half of RECOM's employees is also German speaking, the covering note was provided in both English and German.

1.1.1 English covering note

Hi [name],

for the completion of my Master Thesis I truly need your support.

I would really appreciate if you would give me a little of your time and participate in my online survey. In addition, with your participation you have the chance to win 1 of 3 vouchers (Amazon or equivalent) worth EUR 50,-.

You can access the online survey providing more information here:

https://www.umfrageonline.com/s/recom

Thank you for your participation and support!

Kind regards,
Michael

Master Thesis assigned by RECOM Power GmbH

1.1.2 German covering note

Hallo [Name],

für den Abschluss meiner Masterarbeit brauche ich dringend Deine Unterstützung.

Es würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Du mir ein wenig Deiner Zeit schenken würdest und an meiner Online-Umfrage (in EN) teilnimmst. Außerdem kannst Du mit Deiner Teilnahme 1 von 3 Amazon-Gutscheinen (je EUR 50,-) gewinnen.

Den Link zur Umfrage mit mehr Informationen findest du hier:

https://www.umfrageonline.com/s/recom

Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme und Deine Unterstützung!

Liebe Grüße,
Michael

Masterarbeit im Auftrag der RECOM Power GmbH

1.2   Online questionnaire

This subchapter visualises the online survey with all its questions that was sent to RECOM's white-collar workers. The online survey was only provided in English, because this is also the company's corporate language. To provide a better overview the questionnaire was divided into different sections.

The following sections were covered:
- Introduction
- Section 1: RECOM's current internal communication
- Section 2: Social intranets and its features
- Section 3: Statistical data
- Conclusion
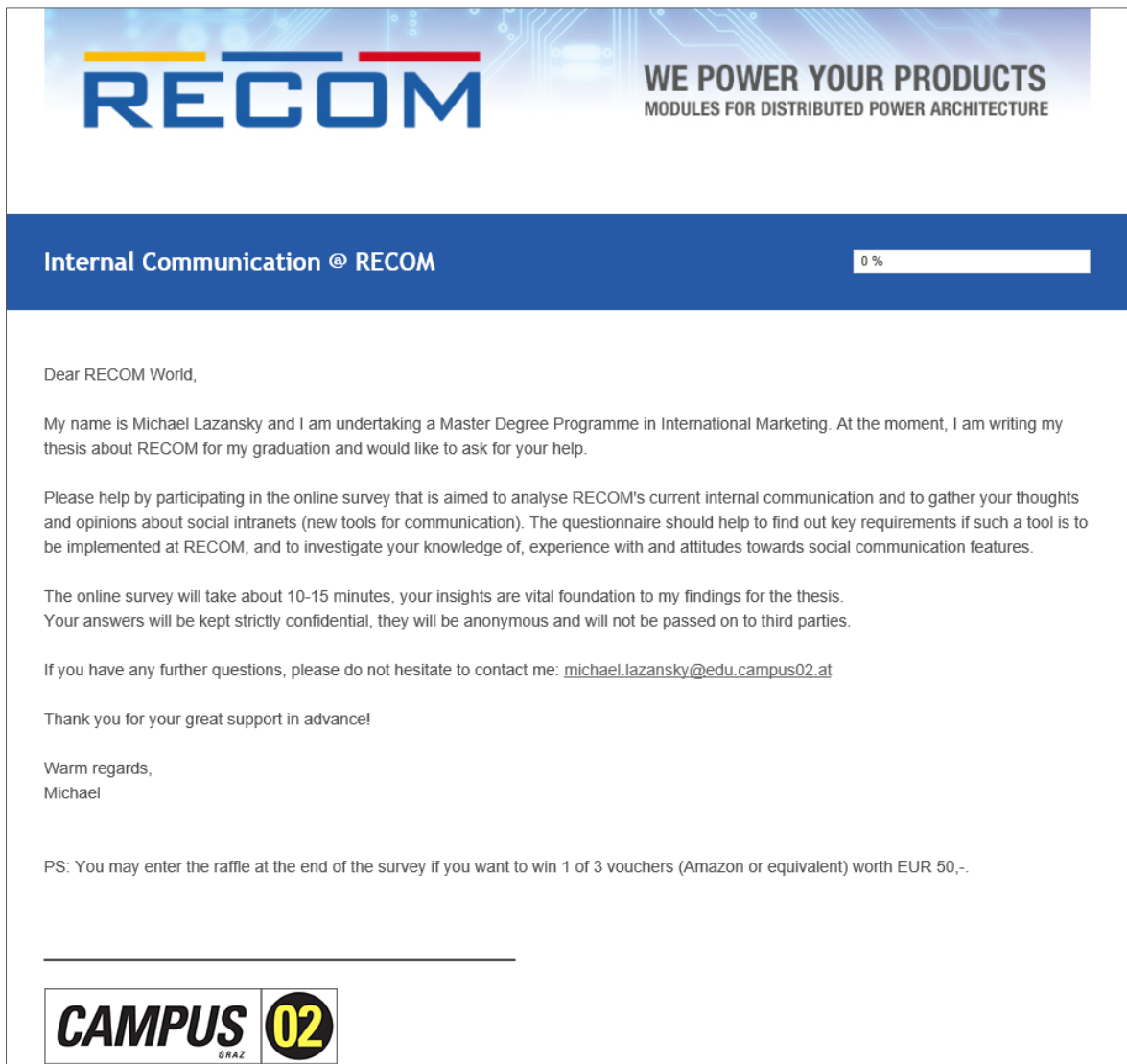
Figure A-1: Online questionnaire page 1 (own presentation)

Figure A-2: Online questionnaire page 2 (own presentation)

Figure A-3: Online questionnaire page 3 (own presentation)

Figure A-4: Online questionnaire page 4 (own presentation)

Figure A-5: Online questionnaire page 5 (own presentation)

3) Which instruments do you currently use for internal communication? (ways of communication) *

Please select multiple answers if appropriate.

- ☐ E-mails
- ☐ Phone calls
- ☐ Text-messaging
- ☐ Department meetings
- ☐ Team meetings
- ☐ Company magazine (feedback)
- ☐ Employee suggestion system (product-ideas mailgroup)
- ☐ Calendar entries
- ☐ Seminars
- ☐ Webinars (online seminars)
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Other: [   ]

4) How satisfied are you with the existing tools, on which this internal communication takes place? *

Please select the appropriate scale of (dis-)satisfaction.

	very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	N/A
Microsoft Outlook	○	○	○	○	○
Microsoft SharePoint	○	○	○	○	○
Skype	○	○	○	○	○
Fabasoft	○	○	○	○	○
GoToMeeting	○	○	○	○	○
Polycom	○	○	○	○	○
Telephone/mobile phone	○	○	○	○	○
Other: [ ]	○	○	○	○	○

Figure A-6: Online questionnaire page 6 (own presentation)

Figure A-7: Online questionnaire page 7 (own presentation)

Figure A-8: Online questionnaire page 8 (own presentation)

Figure A-9: Online questionnaire page 9 (own presentation)

SECTION 2 of the questionnaire is about social intranets and social features.

Before I ask you some questions about the use of a social intranet, I want to clarify the term: A social intranet is a tool that can be used for internal communication providing everything from one source in real-time. This means that every content etc. is available on this platform. Moreover, this tool applies the so-called social features, like instant messaging, microblogging and user dashboards. These features enable the collaboration process, strengthen team work and increase employee engagement.

More interesting facts:
- Social intranets reduce 30-40% of e-mails.
- Social intranets simplify the process of finding documents by using a search.
- Social intranets improve time management and enable collaboration.
- Social intranets enable everyone to connect within the organisation.
- Social intranets provide everything from one source, at anytime from anywhere.

Example of a Social Intranet Interface

Figure A-10: Online questionnaire page 10 (own presentation)

Figure A-11: Online questionnaire page 11 (own presentation)

Figure A-12: Online questionnaire page 12 (own presentation)

Figure A-13: Online questionnaire page 13 (own presentation)

Figure A-14: Online questionnaire page 14 (own presentation)

Figure A-15: Online questionnaire page 15 (own presentation)

Figure A-16: Online questionnaire page 16 (own presentation)

Figure A-17: Online questionnaire page 17 (own presentation)

Figure A-18: Online questionnaire page 18 (own presentation)

Figure A-19: Online questionnaire page 19 (own presentation)

Figure A-20: Online questionnaire page 20 (own presentation)

Figure A-21: Online questionnaire page 21 (own presentation)

13a) How important are the already mentioned social intranet characteristics to you? *

Please select the appropriate scale of importance.

	very important	important	unimportant	not important at all	N/A
Structured communication	○	○	○	○	○
Search functionality	○	○	○	○	○
Up-to-date contents	○	○	○	○	○
Reducing the load of prolonged meetings	○	○	○	○	○
Transparent information	○	○	○	○	○
Increased interaction/collaboration	○	○	○	○	○
Local adaptations	○	○	○	○	○
Easy-to-use	○	○	○	○	○
Responsiveness (availability on smartphones, tablets, ...)	○	○	○	○	○
Reducing the load of unnecessary e-mails	○	○	○	○	○
Everything from one source in real-time	○	○	○	○	○

Figure A-22: Online questionnaire page 22 (own presentation)

13b) You ticked "local adaptations" - which local adaptations do you expect?

Figure A-23: Online questionnaire page 23 (own presentation)

14) What do you expect from RECOM if a social intranet is to be implemented in the future? *

Please select multiple answers if appropriate.

- ☐ Technical support
- ☐ Seminars/workshops
- ☐ Integration into the strategy development
- ☐ Pilot project (small group) before roll-out
- ☐ Participation in idea generation
- ☐ Continuous information on progress
- ☐ Other: [_____]

Figure A-24: Online questionnaire page 24 (own presentation)

SECTION 3 of the questionnaire contains the collection of statistical data.

Gender: *

[Please choose... ▾]

I am ... *

Please enter your age.

[_____]

At which RECOM location do you work? *

Please select one answer.

- ◯ Austria
- ◯ Germany
- ◯ United States
- ◯ Singapore
- ◯ China
- ◯ Japan

Figure A-25: Online questionnaire page 25 (own presentation)
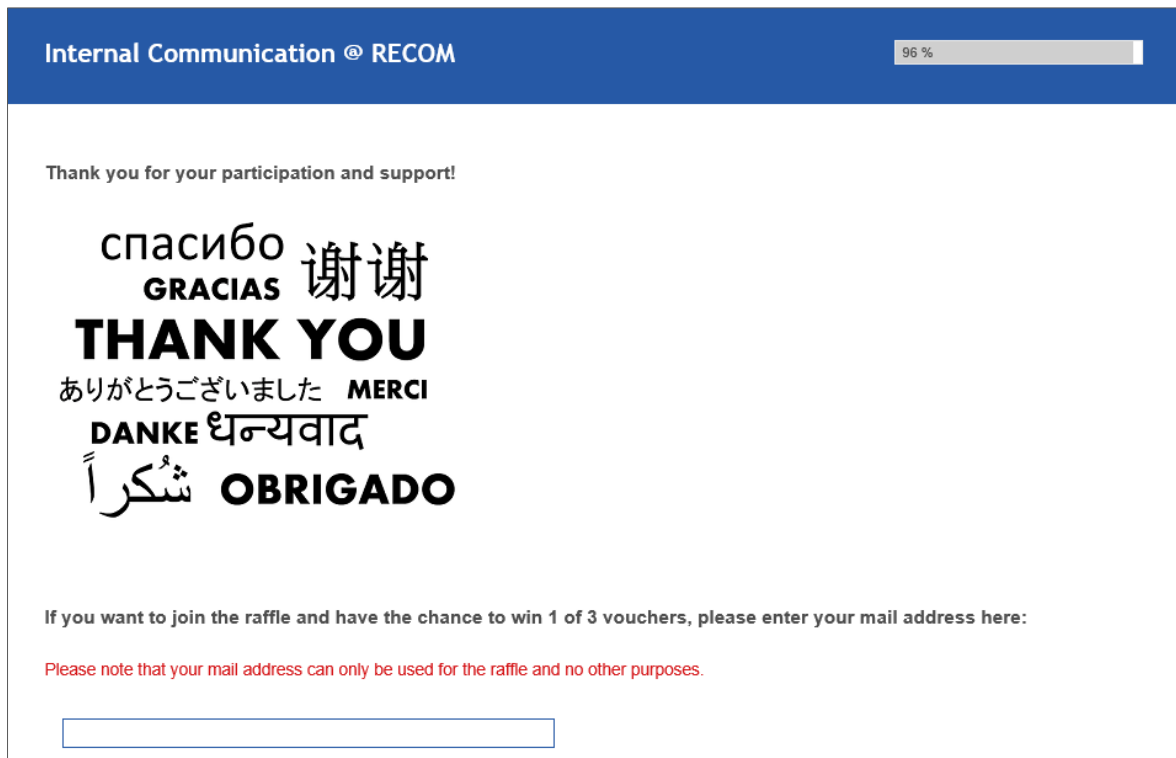
Figure A-26: Online questionnaire page 26 (own presentation)

1.3   Additional survey results

This subchapter includes additional survey results and all frequency tables of the online employee survey. It has to be stated that the raw data of open questions was only adapted and not proof-read; therefore, spelling mistakes might occur.

Question 1: Overall, how satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	11	11.3	11.3	11.3
satisfied	61	62.9	62.9	74.2
dissatisfied	23	23.7	23.7	97.9
very dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-1: Overall satisfaction - Q1 (own presentation)
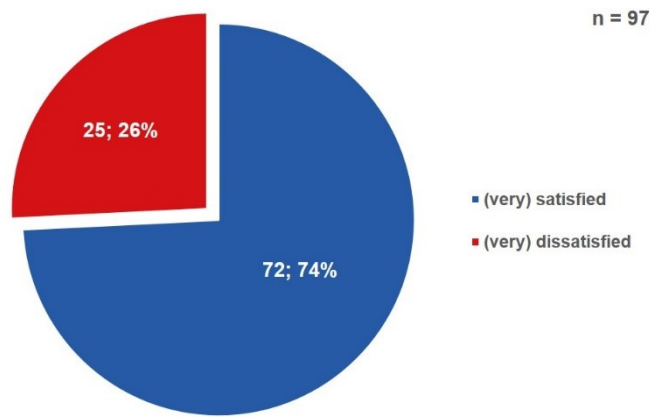
Figure A-27: Overall satisfaction - Q1 (own presentation)

Question 1a: In case of being (very) satisfied, please name the main reason for your satisfaction:

Question 1a was an open question that was asked if someone selected very satisfied or satisfied. The named reasons for the satisfaction were: response in time, immediate feedback, constant meetings to discuss development, face-to-face communication, good working atmosphere, young team, clear and precise information, open communication without restricts, be in touch with people in an efficient way, prompt and thorough responses from the team, easy and quick access to all personnel, amount of communication, flat hierarchies and direct ways of communication, very quick response and detailed technical information, direct information from the chief, good information, not too detailed and not too frequent, and everyone is approachable so it is a good start to a good communication. The answers of this question can be categorised as follows:
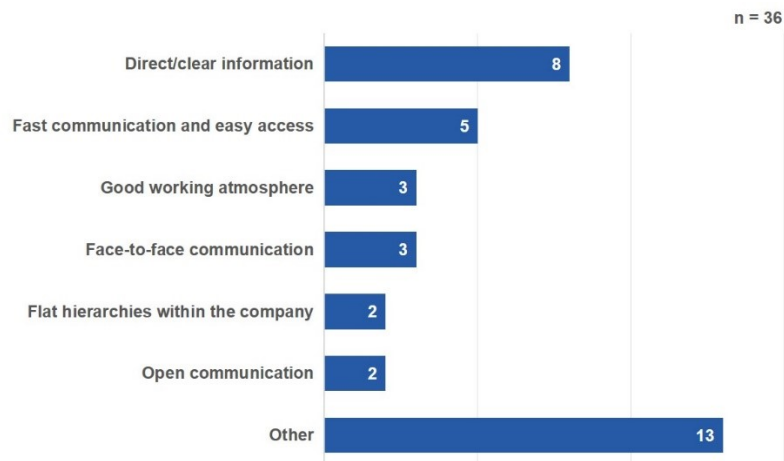
Figure A-28: Reasons for satisfaction - Q1a (own presentation)

Question 1b: In case of being (very) dissatisfied, please name the main reason for your dissatisfaction:

Question 1b was an open question that was asked if someone selected very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. The named reasons for the dissatisfaction were: missing structure, process, responsibilities, no overall structure, missing internal structures like defined processes, responsibilities, no clear defined communication channels, the internal communication is very complicated, everyone talks to everybody but not to the person who's responsible for the matter, communicative silos and overall lack of communication, information is not structured and communicated timely, RECOM shows no interest in the emotional well-being of its employees, its management hierarchy is more important than anything else, random communication, missing information, wrong information, the information shared between global offices is not consistent and it can be time-consuming and complicated to reach out to the appropriate person for information, we often do not know who to contact in the first place without having to ask another team member, which creates further delays, I miss transparency and clear positions, often there is competitive communication, everyone wants to make the most out of it for oneself, unsolved problems, topics, questions, etc. are forwarded to supervisors, or are kept unsolved because of someone feeling not responsible, complicated communication, lots of questions, very difficult ways to solutions for customers, secrecy even within the own department, questions are not answered immediately/correct/misunderstandings, the information flow in some teams is not good, some people want to know everything and let the other team-members without the knowledge of important information, and sometimes you don't have the info you need, you have to ask and ask. The answers of this question can be categorised as follows:
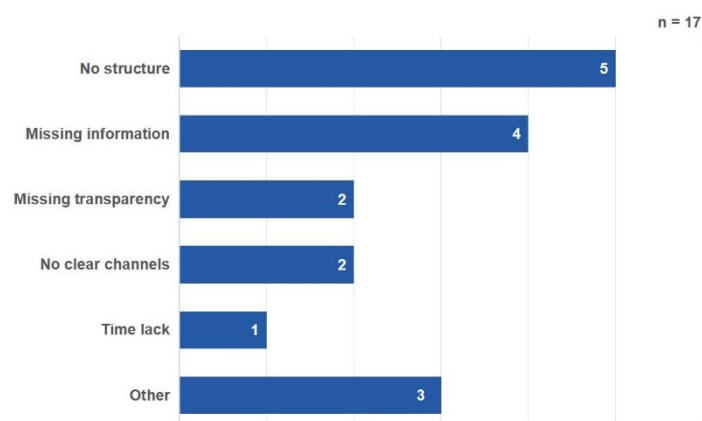
Figure A-29: Reasons for dissatisfaction - Q1b (own presentation)

Question 2: Which best describes your overall impression of RECOM's current internal communication?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Keeps us fully informed.	12	12.4	12.4	12.4
Keeps us fairly well informed.	51	52.6	52.6	64.9
Gives us limited information.	31	32.0	32.0	96.9
Doesn't tell us much at all about what's going on.	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-2: Overall impression - Q2 (own presentation)

Figure A-30: Overall impression - Q2 (own presentation)

Question 2a: Which characteristics describe RECOM's current internal communication?

STRUCTURED - UNSTRUCTURED	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully structured	15	15.5	15.5	15.5
more structured	39	40.2	40.2	55.7
more unstructured	37	38.1	38.1	93.8
fully unstructured	6	6.2	6.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-3: Attribute 1 - Q2a (own presentation)

ACCURATE - CHAOTIC	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully accurate	16	16.5	16.5	16.5
more accurate	39	40.2	40.2	56.7
more chaotic	38	39.2	39.2	95.9
fully chaotic	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-4: Attribute 2 - Q2a (own presentation)

TRANSPARENT - NON-TRANSPARENT	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully transparent	17	17.5	17.5	17.5
more transparent	48	49.5	49.5	67.0
more non-transparent	25	25.8	25.8	92.8
fully non-transparent	7	7.2	7.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-5: Attribute 3 - Q2a (own presentation)

INNOVATIVE - OLD-FASHIONED	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully innovative	21	21.6	21.6	21.6
more innovative	41	42.3	42.3	63.9
more old-fashioned	25	25.8	25.8	89.7
fully old-fashioned	10	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-6: Attribute 4 - Q2a (own presentation)

EFFICIENT - TIME-CONSUMING	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully efficient	15	15.5	15.5	15.5
more efficient	44	45.4	45.4	60.8
more time-consuming	31	32.0	32.0	92.8
fully time-consuming	7	7.2	7.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-7: Attribute 5 - Q2a (own presentation)

ONE-WAY - TWO-WAY	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully one-way	12	12.4	12.4	12.4
more one-way	50	51.5	51.5	63.9
more two-way	30	30.9	30.9	94.8
fully two-way	5	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-8: Attribute 6 - Q2a (own presentation)

CORPORATE - USER	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully corporate generated	15	15.5	15.5	15.5
more corporate generated	48	49.5	49.5	64.9
more user generated	31	32.0	32.0	96.9
fully user generated	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-9: Attribute 7 - Q2a (own presentation)

SUPPORTIVE - STRESSFUL	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
fully supportive	21	21.6	21.6	21.6
more supportive	53	54.6	54.6	76.3
more stressful	19	19.6	19.6	95.9
fully stressful	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-10: Attribute 8 - Q2a (own presentation)
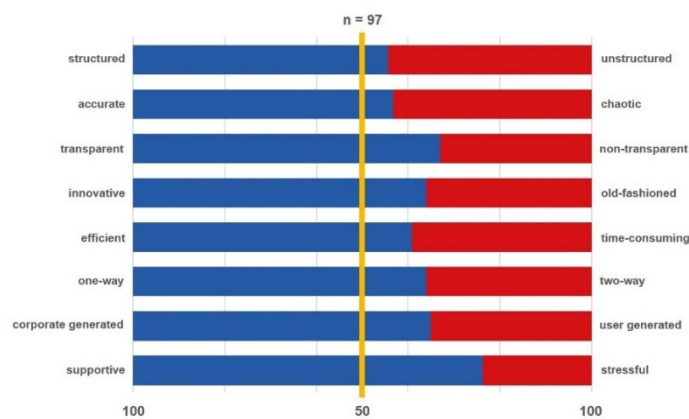
Figure A-31: Current IC attributes - Q2a (own presentation)

Question 3: Which instruments do you currently use for internal communication? (ways of communication)

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
E-mails	96	20.6	99.0
Phone calls	64	13.7	66.0
Text-messaging	39	8.4	40.2
Department meetings	43	9.2	44.3
Team meetings	64	13.7	66.0
Company magazine	46	9.9	47.4
Employee suggestion system	11	2.4	11.3
Calendar entries	28	6.0	28.9
Seminars	13	2.8	13.4
Webinars	22	4.7	22.7
Events	17	3.6	17.5
Other	24	5.1	24.7
Total	467	100.0	

Table A-11: Current IC instruments - Q3 (own presentation)

Question 4: How satisfied are you with the existing tools, on which this internal communication takes place?

Microsoft Outlook	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	43	44.3	44.3	44.3
satisfied	50	51.5	51.5	95.9
dissatisfied	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-12: Satisfaction MS Outlook - Q4 (own presentation)

Microsoft SharePoint	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
satisfied	16	16.5	16.5	17.5
dissatisfied	1	1.0	1.0	18.5
very dissatisfied	1	1.0	1.0	19.5
N/A	78	80.4	80.4	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-13: Satisfaction MS SharePoint - Q4 (own presentation)

Skype	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	46	47.4	47.4	47.4
satisfied	43	44.3	44.3	91.7
dissatisfied	4	4.1	4.1	95.8
very dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.1	97.9
N/A	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-14: Satisfaction Skype - Q4 (own presentation)

Fabasoft	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	7	7.2	7.2	7.2
satisfied	35	36.1	36.1	43.3
dissatisfied	15	15.5	15.5	58.8
very dissatisfied	10	10.3	10.3	69.1
N/A	30	30.9	30.9	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-15: Satisfaction Fabasoft - Q4 (own presentation)

GoToMeeting	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	8	8.2	8.2	8.2
satisfied	44	45.4	45.4	53.6
dissatisfied	4	4.1	4.1	57.7
very dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.1	59.8
N/A	39	40.2	40.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-16: Satisfaction GoToMeeting - Q4 (own presentation)

Polycom	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	4	4.1	4.1	4.1
satisfied	23	23.7	23.7	27.8
dissatisfied	5	5.2	5.2	33.0
very dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.1	35.1
N/A	63	64.9	64.9	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-17: Satisfaction Polycom - Q4 (own presentation)

Telephone/mobile phone	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very satisfied	34	35.1	35.1	35.1
satisfied	49	50.5	50.5	86.6
dissatisfied	2	2.1	2.1	88.7
very dissatisfied	1	1.0	1.0	89.7
N/A	11	11.3	11.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-18: Satisfaction "telephone/mobile phone" - Q4 (own presentation)
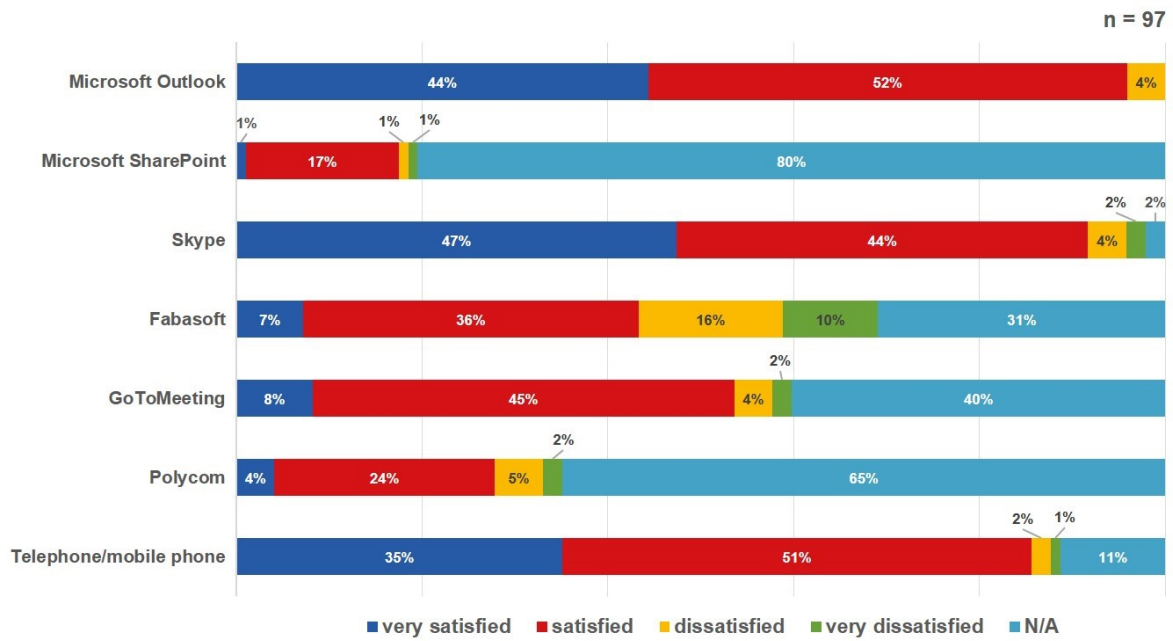
Figure A-32: Satisfaction IC tools - Q4 (own presentation)

Question 5: How important is the following communication/information content to you?

Company performance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	49	50.5	50.5	50.5
important	47	48.5	48.5	99.0
unimportant	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-19: Importance "company performance" - Q5 (own presentation)

Company strategy and positioning	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	58	59.8	59.8	59.8
important	37	38.1	38.1	97.9
unimportant	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-20: Importance "company strategy and positioning" - Q5 (own presentation)

Company values and guidelines	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	44	45.4	45.4	45.4
important	49	50.5	50.5	95.9
unimportant	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-21: Importance "company values and guidelines" - Q5 (own presentation)

Information about products/services	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	58	59.8	59.8	59.8
important	36	37.1	37.1	96.9
unimportant	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-22: Importance "information about products/services" - Q5 (own presentation)

Issues and trends affecting the business/industry	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	37	38.1	38.1	38.1
important	51	52.6	52.6	90.7
unimportant	9	9.3	9.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-23: Importance "issues and trends" - Q5 (own presentation)

Marketing initiatives	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	31	32.0	32.0	32.0
important	53	54.6	54.6	86.6
unimportant	11	11.3	11.3	97.9
not important at all	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-24: Importance "marketing initiatives" - Q5 (own presentation)

Human resources activities	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	34	35.1	35.1	35.1
important	52	53.6	53.6	88.7
unimportant	10	10.3	10.3	99.0
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-25: Importance "human resources activities" - Q5 (own presentation)

Employee profiles	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	31	32.0	32.0	32.0
important	56	57.7	57.7	89.7
unimportant	10	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-26: Importance "employee profiles" - Q5 (own presentation)

Benefits and bonus schemes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	38	39.2	39.2	39.2
important	49	50.5	50.5	89.7
unimportant	7	7.2	7.2	96.9
not important at all	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-27: Importance "benefits and bonus schemes" - Q5 (own presentation)

Key customer information	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	35	36.1	36.1	36.1
important	46	47.4	47.4	83.5
unimportant	15	15.5	15.5	99.0
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-28: Importance "key customer information" - Q5 (own presentation)

Decisions about projects, future direction, …	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	65	67.0	67.0	67.0
important	28	28.9	28.9	95.9
unimportant	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-29: Importance "decisions" - Q5 (own presentation)

Information about technologies, developments, innovations @ RECOM	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	56	57.7	57.7	57.7
important	38	39.2	39.2	96.9
unimportant	2	2.1	2.1	99.0
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-30: Importance "information about technologies, developments, innovations" - Q5 (own presentation)

Information about internal company events	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	32	33.0	33.0	33.0
important	55	56.7	56.7	89.7
unimportant	9	9.3	9.3	99.0
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-31: Importance "information about internal company events" - Q5 (own presentation)
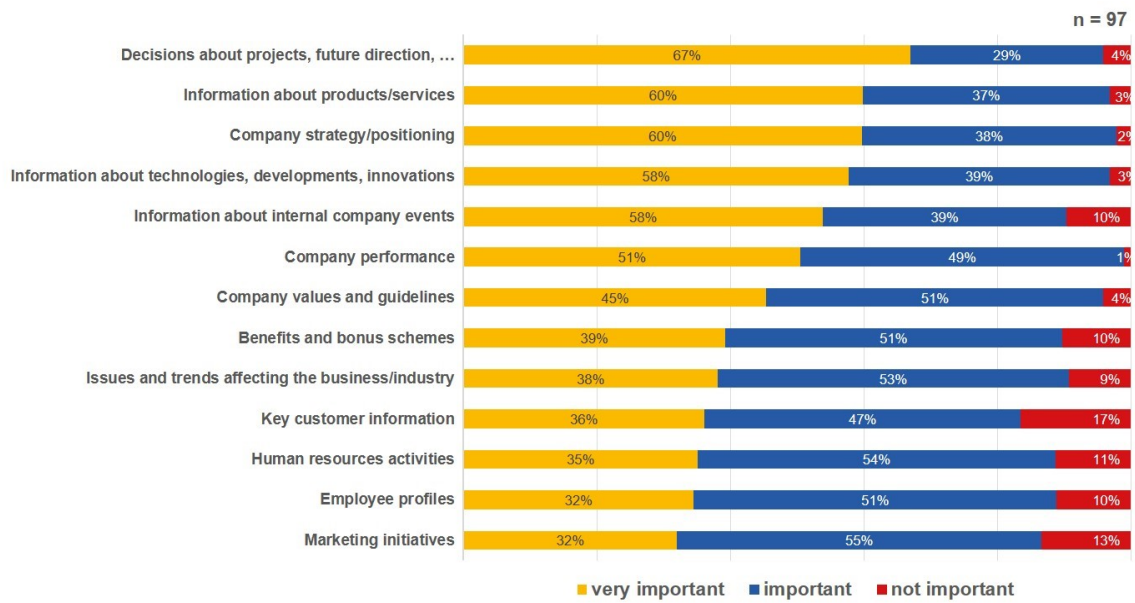
Figure A-33: Importance communication content - Q5 (own presentation)

Question 5a: Which of this content is currently shared/available within RECOM's internal communication?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
Company performance	68	12.3	70.1
Company strategy/positioning	46	8.3	47.4
Company values and guidelines	25	4.5	25.8
Information about products/services	76	13.7	78.4
Issues and trends affecting the business/industry	24	4.3	24.7
Marketing initiatives	58	10.5	59.8
Human resources activities	40	7.2	41.2
Employee profiles	19	3.4	19.6
Benefits and bonus schemes	40	7.2	41.2
Key customer information	26	4.7	26.8
Decisions about projects, future direction, …	34	6.1	35.1
Information about technologies, developments, innovations	41	7.4	42.3
Information about internal company events	58	10.5	59.8
Total	555	100.0	

Table A-32: Current communication content - Q5a (own presentation)

Question 5b: What other topics should RECOM's internal communication cover?

Question 5b was an open question to find out what other topics RECOM's IC should cover. The following topics were named:

- company car using plan;
- employee profiles;
- process definitions and process owners;
- responsibilities;
- global developments;
- work ethics;
- product releases;
- company projects and design wins;
- customer needs and expectations;
- market analyses - trends/issues;
- technical issues (more global meetings within the company).

Question 6: Which issues/challenges do you face regarding RECOM's internal communication?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
Insufficient communication	52	21.8	54.7
Missing personnel/department for internal communication	25	10.5	26.3
Non-transparent communication	37	15.5	38.9
Insufficient communication tools	13	5.5	13.7
Overlaps within communication	37	15.5	38.9
Language barriers	23	9.7	24.2
Geographic barriers	13	5.5	13.7
Different time zones	34	14.3	35.8
Other	4	1.7	4.2
Total	238	100.0	

Table A-33: IC issues and challenges - Q6 (own presentation)

Question 7: Which social features do you know?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
User dashboards	40	10.2	41.7
Communities & forums	72	18.4	75.0
Blogs	74	18.9	77.1
Microblogging, news feed and RSS	29	7.4	30.2
Social bookmarking	19	4.8	19.8
Like, comment, share and tag	66	16.6	68.8
Instant messaging	65	16.6	67.7
Activity streams	26	6.6	27.1
Other	1	0.3	1.0
Total	392	100.0	

Table A-34: Knowledge social features - Q7 (own presentation)

Question 8: How often do you use these social features already in PRIVATE context?

User dashboards	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	6	6.2	6.2	6.2
weekly	15	15.5	15.5	21.7
monthly	5	5.2	5.2	26.9
rarely	14	14.4	14.4	41.3
never	29	29.9	29.9	71.2
N/A	28	28.9	28.9	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-35: Private usage "user dashboards" - Q8 (own presentation)

Communities & forums	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	16	16.5	16.5	16.5
weekly	23	23.7	23.7	40.2
monthly	11	11.3	11.3	51.5
rarely	22	22.7	22.7	74.2
never	13	13.4	13.4	87.6
N/A	12	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-36: Private usage "communities & forums" - Q8 (own presentation)

Blogs	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	11	11.3	11.3	11.3
weekly	16	16.5	16.5	27.8
monthly	10	10.3	10.3	38.1
rarely	26	26.8	26.8	64.9
never	19	19.6	19.6	84.5
N/A	15	15.5	15.5	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-37: Private usage "blogs" - Q8 (own presentation)

Microblogging, news feed & RSS	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	6	6.2	6.2	6.2
weekly	16	16.5	16.5	22.7
monthly	4	4.1	4.1	26.8
rarely	9	9.3	9.3	36.1
never	32	33.0	33.0	69.1
N/A	30	30.9	30.9	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-38: Private usage "microblogging, news feed & RSS" - Q8 (own presentation)

Social bookmarking	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	3	3.1	3.1	3.1
weekly	11	11.3	11.3	14.4
monthly	8	8.2	8.2	22.6
rarely	9	9.3	9.3	31.9
never	30	30.9	30.9	62.8
N/A	36	37.1	37.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-39: Private usage "social bookmarking" - Q8 (own presentation)

Like, comment, share and tag	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	21	21.6	21.6	21.6
weekly	28	28.9	28.9	50.5
monthly	6	6.2	6.2	56.7
rarely	14	14.4	14.4	71.1
never	16	16.5	16.5	87.6
N/A	12	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-40: Private usage "like, comment, share and tag" - Q8 (own presentation)

Instant messaging	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	51	52.6	52.6	52.6
weekly	9	9.3	9.3	61.9
monthly	6	6.2	6.2	68.1
rarely	5	5.2	5.2	73.3
never	9	9.3	9.3	82.6
N/A	17	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-41: Private usage "instant messaging" - Q8 (own presentation)

Activity streams	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
daily	8	8.2	8.2	8.2
weekly	7	7.2	7.2	15.4
monthly	7	7.2	7.2	22.6
rarely	15	15.5	15.5	38.1
never	19	19.6	19.6	57.7
N/A	41	42.3	42.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-42: Private usage "activity streams" - Q8 (own presentation)
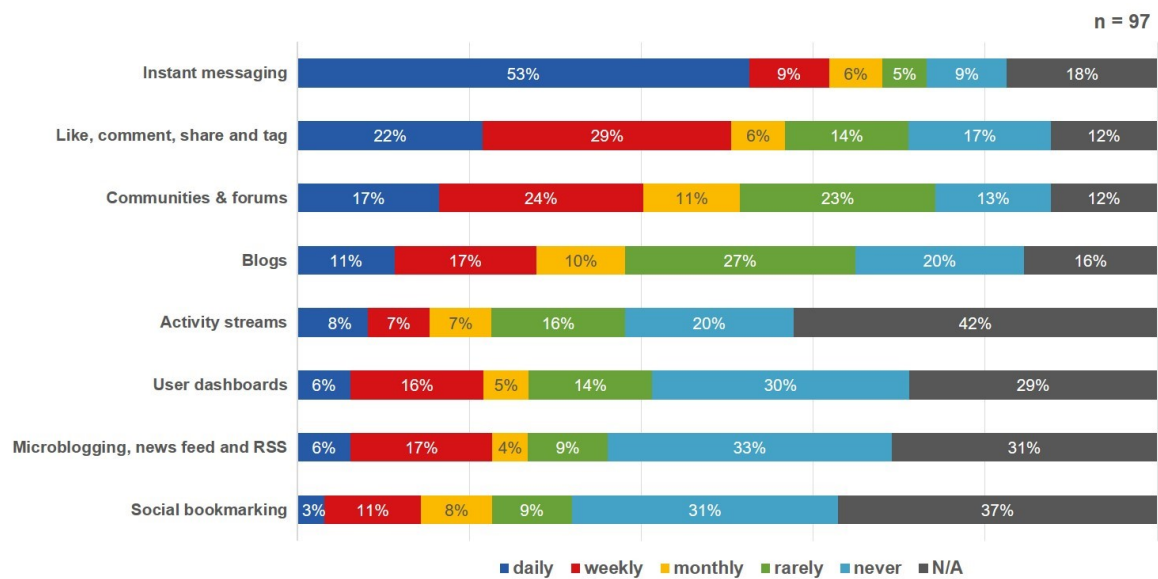
Figure A-34: Private usage of social features - Q8 (own presentation)

Question 9: Can you imagine to use social features for your daily business to improve internal collaboration?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	76	78.4	78.4	78.4
no	21	21.6	21.6	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-43: Willingness to use social features - Q9 (own presentation)
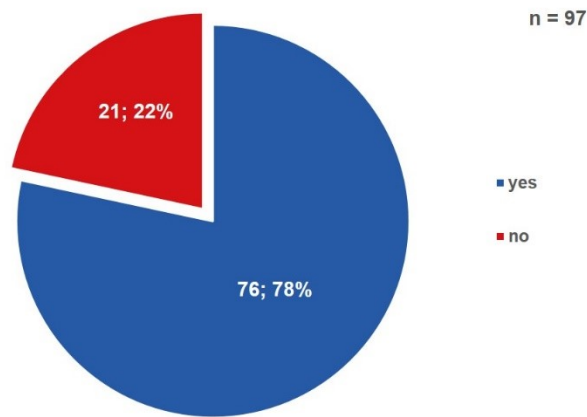
Figure A-35: Willingness to use social features - Q9 (own presentation)

Question 9a: If yes, which of the following social features would you like to use in BUSINESS context?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
User dashboards	42	15.3	54.5
Communities & forums	52	18.9	67.5
Blogs	33	12.0	42.9
Microblogging, news feed and RSS	20	7.3	26.0
Social bookmarking	15	5.5	19.5
Like, comment, share and tag	24	8.7	31.2
Instant messaging	50	18.2	64.9
Activity streams	39	14.2	50.6
Total	275	100.0	

Table A-44: Business usage of social features - Q9a (own presentation)

Question 9b: If not, why can't you imagine to use them?

Question 9b was an open question to find out why some of RECOM's employees cannot imagine to use social features in business context. The following reasons were named: affect private time; I prefer one tool like e-mail with continuous information thread.; I do not and do not wish to communicate widely internally; I don't

think the communication barriers during work is because of tools. Mainly company structure creates the insufficient communication problem.; too much bureaucracy (cause too much time); might be an Information overload; I can't imagine this form of business communication; no time; it's enough to use existing tools.; I prefer private atmosphere; because social media contain too much rubbish; time consuming; could be a distraction and absorb extra time; no time to use during active work.

Question 11: Do you think a social intranet (a corporate platform) can help RECOM to improve its internal communication and collaboration?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	83	85.6	85.6	85.6
no	14	14.4	14.4	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-45: Social intranet for improvement - Q11 (own presentation)
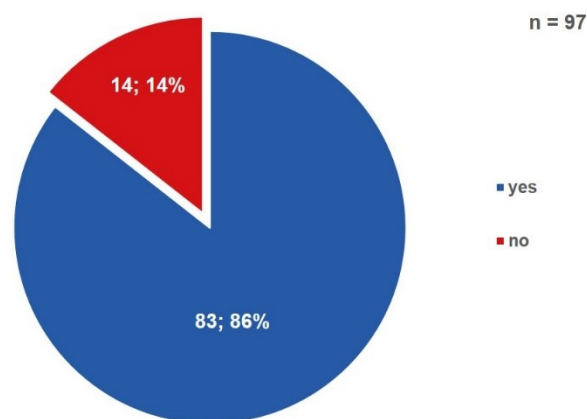
Figure A-36: Social intranet for improvement - Q11 (own presentation)

Question 11a: If not, why do you think so?

Question 11a shows open answers of employees who think that a social intranet cannot improve the IC situation at RECOM: If in a project, many people are involved, but no structure, no responsibility. Tools cannot help much. Already too much information circulating. People lose focus when overwhelmed with information

because there are general intern structure issues, which can`t be solved in this way. RECOM has reached a point where "eye-to-eye" communication and team building events are needed; however, in the long run, a well thought-out intranet might be an improvement. Some people do not want an open communication. We already do have sufficient ways of communication. As said before, too much rubbish. Too busy, no time, not bother. Cannot advise if have no experience. There are people working too, have no time to control the PC or their account all the time.

Question 12: Can you imagine to focus on ONE centralised solution (the social intranet) providing everything from one source instead of using the quite high number of existing tools?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	78	80.4	80.4	80.4
no	19	19.6	19.6	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

<div align="center">Table A-46: Focus on one centralised solution - Q12 (own presentation)</div>
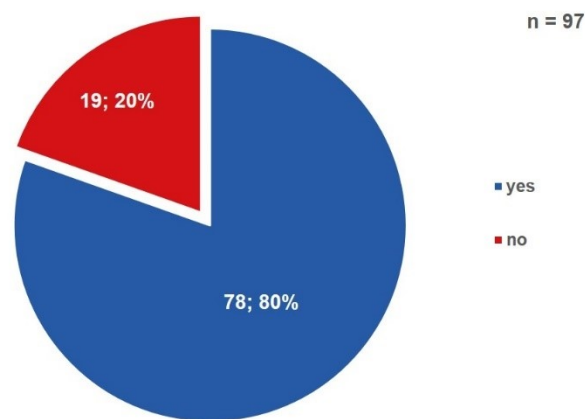
<div align="center">Figure A-37: Focus on one centralised solution - Q12 (own presentation)</div>

Question 12a: If not, why do you think so?

Question 12a shows open answers of employees who think that they cannot imagine to focus on one centralised solution for IC: Different time zones; only one communication pipeline is restrictive; when travelling, often the internet connection

is poor or very slow, then only text messages (e-mail) works; some tools are also used for external communication; if you bring the external information into an internal discussion you don't want to change the tool; sometimes it might even not be possible to change the tool; missing structure at RECOM; I think it´s difficult to focus at one in case of the different areas and countries; no time; not important enough to keep focus; I believe most people prefer to have options when communicating, different comfort levels w/ different options; every country has different tools, different ways of working; some additional tools like e.g. Outlook are necessary, especially for communication with outside world; too many different requirements and systems in place already; to talk face to face can solve actual problems much better; because these days a lot people use several tools to get there Information; again no experience to make a viewpoint.

Question 13: Which characteristics do you expect from a social intranet as a tool for international internal communication?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
Reducing the load of unnecessary e-mails	73	12.5	76.8
Reducing the load of prolonged meetings	37	6.3	38.9
Transparent information	71	12.2	74.7
Responsiveness	36	6.2	37.9
Up-to-date contents	68	11.6	71.6
Structured communication	57	9.8	60.0
Search functionality	58	9.9	61.1
Increased interaction/collaboration	33	5.7	34.7
Easy-to-use	83	14.2	87.4
Everything from one source in real-time	47	8.0	49.5
Local adaptations	20	3.4	21.1
Other	1	0.2	1.1
Total	584	100.0	

Table A-47: Expected social intranet characteristics - Q13 (own presentation)

Question 13a: How important are the already mentioned social intranet characteristics to you?

Reducing the load of unnecessary e-mails	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	38	39.2	39.2	39.2
important	42	43.4	43.3	82.5
unimportant	10	10.3	10.3	92.8
not important at all	3	3.1	3.1	95.9
N/A	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-48: Importance "reducing the load of unnecessary e-mails" - Q13a (own presentation)

Reducing the load of prolonged meetings	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	19	19.6	19.6	19.6
important	45	46.4	46.4	66.0
unimportant	23	23.7	23.7	89.7
not important at all	5	5.2	5.2	94.9
N/A	5	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-49: Importance "reducing the load of prolonged meetings" - Q13a (own presentation)

Transparent information	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	52	53.6	53.6	53.6
important	38	39.2	39.2	92.8
unimportant	3	3.1	3.1	95.9
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	96.9
N/A	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-50: Importance "transparent information" - Q13a (own presentation)

Responsiveness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	23	23.7	23.7	23.7
important	48	49.5	49.5	73.2
unimportant	16	16.5	16.5	89.7
not important at all	6	6.2	6.2	95.9
N/A	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-51: Importance "responsiveness" - Q13a (own presentation)

Up-to-date contents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	48	49.5	49.5	49.5
important	41	42.3	42.3	91.8
unimportant	2	2.1	2.1	93.9
not important at all	2	2.1	2.1	96.0
N/A	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-52: Importance "up-to-date contents" - Q13a (own presentation)

Structured communication	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	49	50.5	50.5	50.5
important	37	38.1	38.1	88.6
unimportant	5	5.2	5.2	93.8
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	94.8
N/A	5	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-53: Importance "structured communication" - Q13a (own presentation)

Search functionality	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	46	47.4	47.4	47.4
important	38	39.2	39.2	86.6
unimportant	8	8.2	8.2	94.8
not important at all	2	2.1	2.1	96.9
N/A	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-54: Importance "search functionality" - Q13a (own presentation)

Increased interaction / collaboration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	26	26.8	26.8	26.8
important	52	53.6	53.6	80.4
unimportant	11	11.3	11.3	91.7
not important at all	2	2.1	2.1	93.8
N/A	6	6.2	6.2	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-55: Importance "increased interaction/collaboration" - Q13a (own presentation)

Easy-to-use	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	66	68.0	68.0	68.0
important	22	22.7	22.7	90.7
unimportant	5	5.2	5.2	95.9
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	96.9
N/A	3	3.1	3.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-56: Importance "easy-to-use" - Q13a (own presentation)

Everything from one source in real-time	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	30	30.9	30.9	30.9
important	47	48.5	48.5	79.4
unimportant	15	15.5	15.5	94.9
not important at all	1	1.0	1.0	95.9
N/A	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-57: Importance "everything from one source in real-time" - Q13a (own presentation)

Local adaptations	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very important	13	13.4	13.4	13.4
important	45	46.4	46.4	59.8
unimportant	24	24.7	24.7	84.5
not important at all	3	3.1	3.1	87.6
N/A	12	12.4	12.4	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-58: Importance "local adaptations" - Q13a (own presentation)

Question 13b: You ticked "local adaptations" - which local adaptations do you expect?

Question 13b was an open question and enquired the employees' expectations for local adaptations. There were not a lot of different answers; only the wording was sometimes different.

In general, the following two local adaptations are expected by the company's employees:

- local content
- local language

It can be stated that these adaptations are most of interest for RECOM, as each answer was named by seven employees.

Question 14: What do you expect from RECOM if a social intranet is to be implemented in the future?

	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Cases
Technical support	66	21.1	68.0
Seminars/workshops	58	18.5	59.8
Integration into the strategy development	41	13.1	42.3
Pilot project (small group) before roll-out	34	10.9	35.1
Participation in idea generation	42	13.4	43.3
Continuous information on progress	66	21.1	68.0
Other	6	1.9	6.2
Total	313	100.0	

Table A-59: Expectations against the company - Q14 (own presentation)

The following "other" expectations were named by employees:

- New trends for product and marketing
- Technical support only within the company - not outside in the first step
- Marketing communications
- Market conform pricing structure for new products
- Communication to be in line with company structure and process flow

Statistical data: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	62	63.9	63.9	63.9
female	35	36.1	36.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-60: Gender (own presentation)
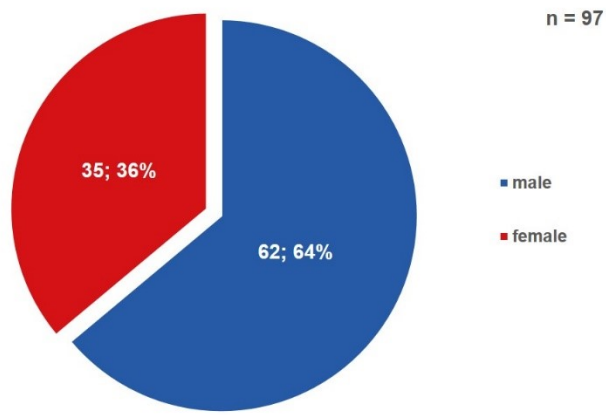
Figure A-38: Gender (own presentation)

Statistical data: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
up to 25 years	17	17.5	17.7	17.7
25 to 35 years	33	34	34.4	52.1
35 to 45 years	25	25.8	26.0	78.1
over 45 years	21	21.6	21.9	100.0
Total	96	99.0	100.0	
Missing	1	1.0		
Total	97	100.0		

Table A-61: Age (own presentation)
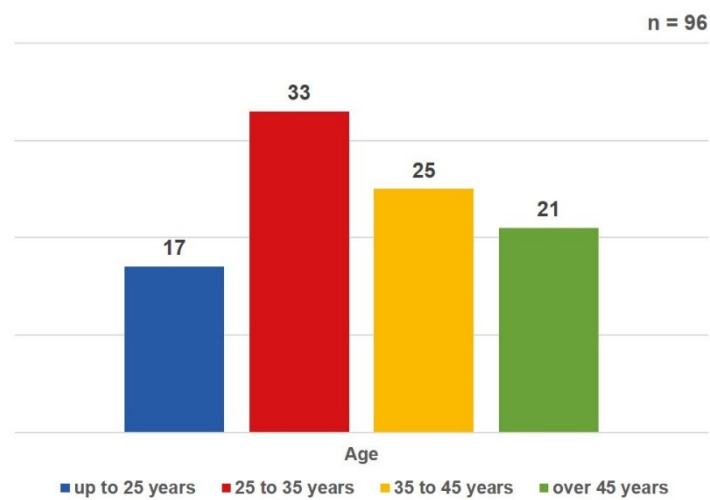
Figure A-39: Age (own presentation)

Statistical data: Locations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Austria	58	59.8	59.8	59.8
Germany	14	14.4	14.4	74.2
United States	8	8.2	8.2	82.5
Singapore	9	9.3	9.3	91.8
China	6	6.2	6.2	97.9
Japan	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Table A-62: Locations (own presentation)
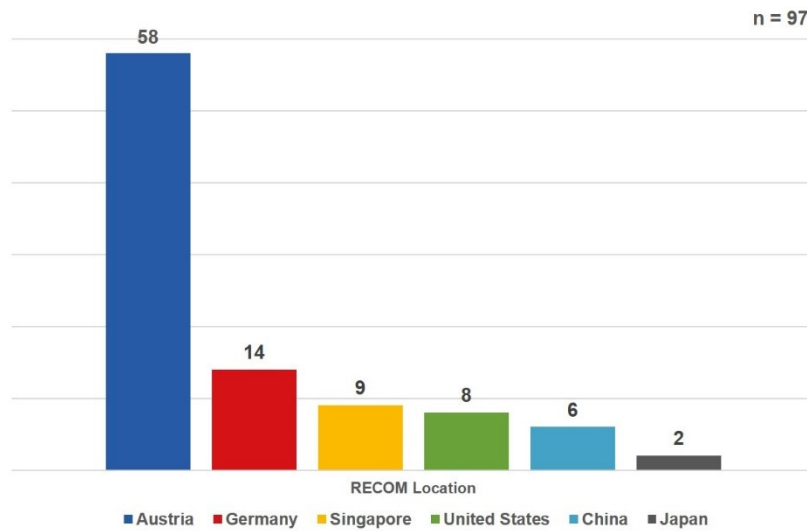
Figure A-40: Locations (own presentation)

Crosstabulation H1: Locations * Q1

		(very) satisfied	(very) dissatisfied	Total
EMEA	Count	50	22	72
	Expected count	53.4	18.6	72.0
Americas	Count	7	1	8
	Expected count	5.9	2.1	8.0
APAC	Count	15	2	17
	Expected count	12.6	4.4	17.0
Total	Count	72	25	97
	Expected count	72.0	25.0	97.0

Symmetric measures	Value	Approximate significance
Contingency coefficient	.182	.188
N of valid cases	97	

2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5.
The minimum expected count is 2.06.

Table A-63: Crosstab hypothesis 1 (own presentation)

Crosstabulation H3: Age * Q9

		(very) satisfied	(very) dissatisfied	Total
up to 25 years	Count	16	1	17
	Expected count	13.3	3.7	17.0
25 to 35 years	Count	27	6	33
	Expected count	25.8	7.2	33.0
35 to 45 years	Count	20	5	25
	Expected count	19.5	5.5	25.0
over 45 years	Count	12	9	21
	Expected count	16.4	4.6	21.0
Total	Count	75	21	96
	Expected count	75.0	21.0	96.0

Symmetric measures	Value	Approximate significance
Contingency coefficient	.282	.041
N of valid cases	96	

2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5.
The minimum expected count is 3.72.

Table A-64: Crosstab hypothesis 3 (own presentation)

Crosstabulation H4: Q9 * Q11

		yes	no	Total
yes	Count	71	5	76
	Expected count	65.0	11.0	76.0
no	Count	12	9	21
	Expected count	18.0	3.0	21.0
Total	Count	83	14	97
	Expected count	83.0	14.0	97.0

Symmetric measures	Value	Approximate significance
Contingency coefficient	.391	.000
N of valid cases	97	

1 cell (25.0%) has expected count less than 5.
The minimum expected count is 3.03.

Table A-65: Crosstab hypothesis 4 (own presentation)

Note:

As already mentioned within the practical part, it was not possible to generate any crosstabs for hypotheses 2 and 5, because the prompted questions are constants.

2   Qualitative market research

The second chapter of the appendix includes the conversation guide that was needed for the conduction of the individual explorations at RECOM. Furthermore, each interview is illustrated by a transcription.

2.1   Conversation guide

Similar to the online questionnaire, also the conversation guide consists of several sections, namely the introduction, warm-up, main part and conclusion:

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in today's individual exploration. As you know, I am undertaking my Master's degree and my thesis will be based on RECOM in the course of its internal communication. To examine the requirements from the company's perspective, I have some questions for you; taking a social intranet as a corporate tool for RECOM's international internal communication into consideration, but more information about this tool later.

The interview will last for maximum 30 minutes. Please state your personal opinion - there are no wrong answers.

Warm-up:

1) What comes to your mind when you think of internal communication?

2) In general, what communication tools do you know or have you used in RECOM or your previous company?

3) What do you think are the most used tools for internal communication at RECOM?

4) Why do you think these tools are used more often/the most?

Main part:

Questions about the actual satisfaction

5) How satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication at the moment?

6) What problems do you face regarding RECOM's internal communication? What would you wish to improve?

Questions about the communication content

7) Which communication content (information, documents, etc.) can you identify within RECOM's internal communication?

8) What kind of information do you usually share with your employees (company performance, new employees, strategic direction, events, social corporate topics, etc.)? And how often do you share such information with the employees?

9) Is there other key information that you think your employees should definitely know about RECOM?

10) Where can employees find this information at RECOM?

11) Who provides the relevant content and communicates information at RECOM?

12) Do you think communication content at RECOM is more corporate or user generated?

Questions about a social intranet

Before I ask you some questions about the use of a social intranet, I want to clarify the term -social intranet:

A social intranet is a tool that can be used for internal communication providing everything from one source in real-time. This means that every content etc. is

available on this platform. Moreover, this tool applies the so called social features, like instant messaging, microblogging and user dashboards. These features enable the collaboration process, strengthen team work and increase employee engagement.

More interesting facts:

- Social intranets reduce 30-40% of e-mails.

- Social intranets simplify the process of finding documents by using a search.

- Social intranets improve time management and enable collaboration.

- Social intranets enable everyone to connect within the organisation.

- Social intranets provide everything from one-source, at anytime from anywhere.

13) Do you think a social intranet can simplify the internal communication process?

14) What are your requirements if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM? What functions should the tool provide to you and your employees?

15) What expectations would you have regarding the tool and its features? How should the social intranet at RECOM look like? (Look and Feel)

16) How do you think would social features (news feed, chats, blogs, etc.) support RECOM's internal communication and collaboration?

Conclusion:

17) Assume that RECOM is going to implement a social intranet. How would you seek for your employee's acceptance? What would you do to get their support?

18) How would you deal with local sensitivity?

This is the end of our interview. Thank you for your time and effort.

2.2 Transcriptions

The interviews within the qualitative research were conducted with the heads of the territories (Americas, APAC and EMEA) and RECOM's CEO for the global view. This subchapter includes all transcriptions of these interviews that were provided by a translation agency. It has to be stated that the transcriptions were not proof-read and, therefore, spelling mistakes might occur. The interviewer statements are indicated with "A:" and the answers resp. the interviewee statements with "B:".

2.2.1 Interview 1 (Americas)

A: Hi! Thank you for participating in today's individual exploration. As you know, I am undertaking my Master's degree at the moment and my thesis is based on RECOM in the course of its internal communication. To examine the requirements from the company's perspective, I have some questions for you taking a social internet as a corporate tool for RECOM's internal communication into consideration. But more information about this later. The interview will last for maximum 30 minutes and I ask you to state your personal opinion, because there are no wrong answers. So let us come to the first question. What comes to your mind when you think of internal communication?

B: Yeah, internal communication is very important for the sharing of information; also about important things that not all employees have access to, that the management has some platform to share stuff with the employees. Important is for the internal communication that it is on demand meaning that people don not just have to look through e-mails and search for the stuff, that they have one place where they can find everything.

A: Okay, and in general, what communication tools do you know or have you used in RECOM or your previous company?

B: Well, of course, first, and most important for the internal communication, are personal meetings and phone conversations, e-mails, of course, are always part of the communication as we have it. We also have weekly jour fixes with different people, different departments, which is quite helpful. And then, from the system's side, we have here in America an employee portal where my employees can get

information about human resources related issues. And also we have an extranet and cloud storage system on which also information is available in real time.

A: Okay, and what do you think is the most, are the most used tools for internal communication at RECOM? - also think of the international perspective.

B: Probably the most used and abused tool is the internet, e-mail.

A: Okay. And why do you think is this tool – or let us say Microsoft Outlook or e-mails, why are these the most used tools?

B: Because people randomly send information to large groups of people, and just send it through, and then these people say, 'Okay, oh, I sent it'. Going back, another tool, I mean, which is the only structured tool we really have at the moment would be the feedback newsletter, which is very helpful. So my employees use it a lot.

A: Okay, so the international feedback newsletter. Let us turn to the main part in which I would like to start asking you questions about the actual satisfaction. So, how satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication at the moment?

B: It is okay, but it is not great.

A: And what problems do you face regarding the internal communication?

B: Yeah, as I mentioned before that people oftentimes do not follow basic rules of writing e-mails. You know, it is very hard to differentiate if it is an action item or if it is just for information, how people send it or cc people, you know, there are no clear rules very often. And it is too many e-mails. And a problem is also, it is oftentimes not clear who is responsible for something, which leads again to these big, big e-mail groups. And then people probably hope that the responsible person will take care of it.

A: Okay, so, what I can hear is that you would like to improve the cc culture and in general the mailing process or mailing structure. But what other things would you wish to improve regarding RECOM's internal communication?

B: Well, it would be nice to have a centralised portal that we can get rid of Fabasoft for a lot of things that refer to internal communication, sharing of documents, access of any kind of information for the daily work.

A: Now we continue with questions about the communication content. So, which communication content can you identify within RECOM's internal communication? The major content like information, documents, etc. – what is the most important topic or communication content you can identify?

B: Yeah, information is pretty much in all of the e-mails, documents are also e-mailed widely, but then again, you have to be very good with the filing of the e-mails to later find these documents again. So, that is probably the most.

A: So within RECOM's internal communication, information sharing and document sharing is, at the moment, a very huge part of the communication process?

B: Yes.

A: What kind of information do you usually share with your employees? And how often do you share this information?

B: It depends what it is. I would say, I mean, certain things that I get from corporate, like today, we had a new product introduction, this is what I share with my employees right away. But then there is other information which I collect from the management's side and then bring it into our weekly, monthly meeting and bring that up. I have basically all kinds of information at management function, and then I decide what is important to share. What I also do, on a weekly basis, is that I give them a snapshot of the numbers, how the numbers of our department are.

A: So, let us say, you are kind of a filter for your employees, so that they have no information overload, only the information that they really need to focus on their work?

B: I would not call it filter. I am collecting more, not really filtering; but it is important that the right people then get the information versus that everybody gets everything and then picks it.

A: And is there other key information that you think your employees should definitely know about RECOM?

B: Yeah, what is definitely a good thing to have, if they would have access to the company, to the performance in real time, you know, if there was a dashboard where they can go, and see where our bookings are and things, this would be good. And also, where there is a lot of questions, is about product roadmap, what is coming and when. So, there are a lot of questions, especially from my regional managers, so if we had a tool somewhere in an employee extranet, where there is some basic information, and in a product roadmap, and it is updated in real time from corporate, that would be great.

A: And where can employees find this information at RECOM right now? As you have told me already that you have an own portal in America, and you share a lot of information in meetings, but is there another database or something, kind of an intranet-based …

B: No, no, most of the information at the moment would be on demand, and then I will try to get them answers if they have questions that goes beyond what I share in the weekly meetings.

A: Who provides the relevant content and communicates information at RECOM?

B: That would be me. Or you mean from corporate side, where I get the information from?

A: Generally, so you say that would be you, so, it is like you stated before, at the moment it is more on-demand information, when employees want to know a specific information about a product, for example, the product roadmap, they would have to ask you?

B: Yap!

A: Okay, the next question, do you think communication content at RECOM is more corporate or user-generated at the moment?

B: More, probably, user, I mean there is corporate information, but it is more user-generated. For example, somebody from the tech support or RMA writes something about a product or a new standard and then shares it with a big e-mail list. So then I have to see, is that something relevant, and who from my team needs that. So, it is more user-generated.

A: Okay, so the next section are questions about a social intranet. But before I ask you some questions about the use of a social intranet, I want to clarify the term. A social intranet is a tool that can be used for internal communication providing everything from one source in real time. This means that every content, etc. is available on this single platform. Moreover, this tool applies the so called social features, like instant messaging, microblogging, and user dashboards, and these features enable the collaboration process, strengthen teamwork, and increase employee engagement. And very interesting facts are that social intranets reduce 30 to 40 percent of e-mails, simplify the process of finding documents by using a search function, and improve time management and enable collaboration. Social intranets also enable everyone to connect within the organisation, and provide everything from one source at anytime from anywhere. So, when we keep this in mind, do you think a social intranet can simplify the internal communication process also at RECOM?

B: Yes, I think it would simplify the information flow especially from corporate side to each and every single employee.

A: Okay, and what are your requirements if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM?

B: The requirements would be again that employees can find information, let us say, the latest company presentation. Maybe it can replace even the feedback newsletter that we currently e-mail. Maybe we can have it more like a blog that is going on, and

if we have something new, then everybody gets an e-mail that there is a new information on the portal. It must be searchable. That is very, very important, that you can go back in time, that information is not somewhere in our outlook inboxes, that relevant news is shared, relevant news can be really, really anything, little, at corporate, or other things, stuff that even would not fit into the feedback newsletter at the moment, but maybe it is interesting to know. If there is a certain event anywhere, or we participate with a university, we sponsor a university; a lot of this stuff is not really relevant for the feedback newsletter, but maybe here we can do something. Another interesting part would be definitely to replace the Fabasoft; replace Fabasoft not for everything, but for a lot of things. That there is a download section, that then relevant information can be found there, as I said, company presentation, maybe even certain technical information can be there, and then people have this as the one place to get it. Maybe it can also be linked for marketing purposes to the RECOM library, which works really well. If this can all be consolidated in one platform would be great.

A: Okay, so you mentioned already that a document section would be useful, also a news feed, kind of news feed where things like sponsorships, etc. are shared, and when you think of such functions, what other …

B: And, of course, again the company numbers, as I said, if there was something like a dashboard with the numbers in real time that would be great as well.

A: Okay, and are there other functions the tool should provide to you and your employees? We are using also Skype for telephone calls or instant messaging. Do you think that this function should also be part of the tool and be provided to you and your employees from this platform? Do you think this is helpful?

B: I do not think it is really helpful, because If you are travelling a lot, then it is not feasible to log in into a portal. Then you want to use the programs that are commonly used, such as WhatsApp or text messaging or Skype.

A: And if such a tool, for example, the social intranet is a modern and a very innovative tool, for example, where also apps are available, and it is responsive on mobile devices. Do you think that such functions would be supportive, and also

when you can use it like Skype or other applications you can use on the mobile phone?

B: No, I do not think that, because here we have other portals that also try to provide these functions, but it is still what is on the market, we need the flexibility for communication with each other. So, still I think that the existing tools are, from the flexibility point of view, the best.

A: Okay, and what expectations would you have regarding the tool and its features? How should the social intranet look like when you now think of the look-and-feel perspective, the look and the customisation? What are your expectations?

B: It should be pretty much like the extranet. It should be scalable, which means we can modify it, not that we just get a good-looking tool and then try to adopt it, that is not going to really work for a lot of stuff. And it should be probably more for general information. The personal information that I am using here in my human resources portal, I would not want to integrate that in the RECOM intranet, because we have strictly confidential information here, which I would share probably for the human resources part, where is personal information in there and people can make healthcare and benefit elections, I would not make that part of the general tool. I would just strictly use it for general corporate information.

A: So, more general information and maybe also project-related information within team rooms or product groups.

B: Exactly, yes.

A: Okay, how do you think would social features, news feeds, chats, blogs, etc. support the internal communication and collaboration at RECOM?

B: It would help a lot, especially in form of a news feed. If there is anything new, somebody from corporate would add the news to the news feed and then everybody, all registered users would get an e-mail and then they can go in there. And you see then, in the timeline, also when the news were coming. And it is searchable. That is a little more comfortable than just going on the website and then looking for whether that is a product news or whatever it is.

A: And regarding the collaboration, do you think such tools and its features would also shift the one-way on-demand communication more to a two-way interactive communication?

B: I do not think so. And I do not think that this is really required. For the two-way communications, that is, again, where the personal communication, I think, it is very important in form of meetings, and then discussing things. But what is important in my opinion is still the structured way of having information available at one place that people can see, and feel comfortable checking it, and that this is maintained centrally and always up-to-date.

A: We are coming to the last part of the interview already. Assume that RECOM is going to implement a social intranet. How would you seek for the employees' acceptance so that they support the project and the implementation process? How would you seek for the acceptance and what would you do to get their support?

B: Yeah, I would, first of all, introduce the idea in our meeting and then I would probably arrange a phone call with the person who is implementing it. So maybe I would give them a little summary of what is planned, and then I would let them test it, to think about it, and collect the feedback. And then maybe we have a phone call with the person implementing it, and then going over it, brainstorming what it would have. So then they would feel part of the process, and I am pretty sure, they will also then accept and use the social intranet.

A: Okay, and as you are representing the Americas territory, when you have a look at the global internal communication at RECOM, how would you deal with local sensitivity? Do you think there are adaptations needed? If yes, which ones? Or how would you deal with this issue?

B: It depends, but as I said, I would make this a tool for corporate communication to the employees where each and every employee has access to information, and this, I do not think that there is local sensitivity. I would not want to make it a tool where then, as I said before, human resources or very, very strictly confidential information is posted, that is sort of data protection issue. However, it would not hurt if I can, as head of the Americas division, if I could add some additional information

that are locally relevant for my employees, why not? Yeah, local information would be good.

A: So, minor local adaptation which is just necessary to know in America, for example. And when you think of language barriers or something like this – okay, the corporate language is English …

B: English, only English. No other language, and for God's sake, no German language anywhere on this portal.

A: Okay. Okay, this is the end of our interview. Thank you very much for your time and effort. And when I am working with the interview and I have the transcriptions and there arise some questions, I hope I can get back to you if I have some other questions.

B: Okay, sure.

A: Okay, thank you, bye.

B: Alright, thank you, bye.

2.2.2 Interview 2 (Global)

A: Thank you for participating in today's individual exploration. As you know, I'm undertaking my Master's degree and my thesis is based on RECOM in the course of its internal communication. To examine the requirements from the company's perspective, I have some questions for you taking a social intranet as a corporate tool for RECOM's internal communication into consideration. But more information about this later. The interview will last for maximum 30 minutes. Please state your personal opinion; there are no wrong answers. So let us come to the first question. What comes to your mind when you think of internal communication?

B: Inefficiency, a tool for increasing the efficiency of the overall company structure, team-building factor, competitive advantage if we draw the right conclusions, and fun factor.

A: And in general, what communication tools do you know or have you used in RECOM or a previous company before?

B: Meetings, in any kind of communication, be it face to face, telephone conferences, Skype conferences, TeamViewer conferences via the individual tools, online tools.

A: Okay, and what do you think are the most used tools for internal communication at RECOM?

B: Meetings, Skype, TeamViewer.

A: And why do you think are these tools used more often or the most?

B: Well, I think then the face-to-face meeting is used most because it gives you up-to-date information on a frequent basis. It is easier because you can address things in a more practical way because you can share information, at the same time you can also see information. As we are talking about a technical organisation here, sharing technical information, or details, schematics, or anything to do with the product, here is the big advantage if you do it on a face-to-face basis. I think, on the online meetings, like Skype or something, it is a very practical tool because everyone has it on a broader base, everyone has access to it. Talking about the Polycom, for example, I like the Polycom because that is a practical tool when you communicate with Asia, for example, because of the quality. I am not a big fan of telephone conferences. Because a telephone call is only the spoken word but no optical information.

A: When we come to the main part now, I would like to start with questions about the actual satisfaction. How satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication at the moment?

B: Okay, it is a difficult question. There is not one answer to it. I am very satisfied with the amount of communication, which means that we are a very transparent company internally and we communicate a lot, a lot more than top-down organised organisations would do. That is why we have a more horizontal, a more lean

structure and that is why we communicate a lot, that is a big advantage because everyone is very much up-to-date about what is going on. That is the positive side. I am not satisfied – and that is in line with this approach – when you have a lot of communication, there is a lot of inefficiency, and … which is the nature of the topic. And there is a lot of people involved and due to inefficiency, it is the negative part of this type of approach which we have.

A: Okay, and what problems or challenges do you face regarding RECOM's internal communication? What would you wish to improve?

B: I think if you want everyone informed, which in a smaller team like we are where information is absolutely vital, if you want everyone informed, you have to make sure that you channelize it in a way that it is digestible for the system, and digestible for the people, and that you address the critical information with the right people. And that is sometimes not so easy. But if you do it the right way, and I think we are still far away from achieving the efficiency which we should have, then it is a very powerful tool. But I would prefer to have a lot of information and a lot of communication rather than having no, or little, communication rather than inefficiency, you know, better than high efficiency, but no communication. So, I think getting the right mix between them.

A: Okay, the next questions are about the communication content or the information content at RECOM. Which communication content can you identify within RECOM's internal communication?

B: Ah, that is difficult because every individual has different information he is sharing. From my point, from my case, it is more strategic topics, market topics, market environment, market information, then structural topics, clearly a lot of product-related topics, competitor topics. I think these are the key parts. So it is a wide range of different things. When you draw it down to individual departments, this comes down to very unique topics for an individual workplace. But again, what we are trying to do increases the inefficiency, we try even to inform everyone in different departments about all the different aspects. Because that gives them a broader picture of the overall picture. But then again, inefficiency comes into play. So it is the same situation.

A: Okay, now you answered already my next question. The information which is usually shared with employees like the company performance, new employees, strategic direction, structural points. And what would you say, how often is information like this shared with the employees?

B: I would say, on a constant basis. I mean we are a marketing and sales machine, and because we are that, constant information, constant information flow is normal to our structure, and launching twenty, thirty, forty different new products per year requests a lot of communication.

A: And is there other key information that you think your employees should definitely know about RECOM?

B: Okay then, clearly, the philosophy of the company, what is our main philosophy, this is what you constantly talk about, what makes RECOM strong, what is our strategy, why do we tick as we tick. But then, on a day-to-day operational basis, everything concerning new products and the impact of designing and launching new products in all aspects, marketing, logistics, financials, sales, should be part of information, information flowing within the group. I think performance analysis has to be drawn down to the performance of individual products, not so much on an overall performance of the company because this is something you do on a not constant, but less frequent basis.

A: Okay, and when we exclude the face-to-face communication now, where can employees find this information at RECOM at the moment, like the philosophy and the topics you just covered?

B: Well, obviously the web, there is our website, that is where we put a lot of information on the website. I think one very good and practical approach which has been successful over the years now is our internal feedback letter, which I think there is a lot more than a feedback letter, than just, you know, basic information about products, it is all around the products, competitors, what is happening in the organisation, what is happening with the tools. I think that is a very powerful tool, and I think not a lot of companies do this kind of thing. Sometimes it has sensitive information but we still think that it is a very good tool to keep the workforce informed.

A: Okay, and who provides the relevant content and communicates information at RECOM?

B: Well, it is driven by the marketing people, like you, that is where it is driven, and collected; and supply is coming from, depending on what the topic is, from the different departments including me. And then it is put together to a … it is the same like on a Facebook site, Facebook is handled by the marketing team, but the information comes from the various different departments and what they think makes sense to let the other team members know on a global basis.

A: Okay, and do you think communication content at RECOM is more corporate or user-generated?

B: User, you mean, user, internal, staff?

A: Exactly, yeah. I mean if it is more project-related so that you have to communicate about it or …

B: It is a mix, I think it is probably user and corporate-related. It is a mix of both things.

A: Okay, so the next questions are about a social intranet. But before I ask you the questions, I would like to clarify the term a little bit. A social intranet is a tool that provides information and any communication content from one source in real time. This means that every content is available on this platform. Moreover, this tool applies so called social features, like instant messaging, microblogging, and user dashboards or user profiles, which enable the collaboration process, strengthen teamwork, and increase employee engagement. More interesting facts: social intranets reduce 30 to 40 percent of e-mails, social intranets simplify the process of finding documents by using a search, social intranets improve time management and enable collaboration. Social intranets enable everyone to connect within the organisation, and social intranets provide everything from one source at anytime from anywhere. Do you think a social intranet could also simplify the internal communication process at RECOM?

B: Well, I am not too familiar with a social intranet, but a platform where you channelize information and where the sender and the receiver can communicate is definitely something sensible. So I am very convinced that there will be a platform solution where all of these topics can be channelized and provided in a digestible and efficient way to individual people. The question is can that solve the face-to-face meetings, for example. But if it supports the meeting and reduces the number of meetings by providing efficient information to the right people, then it is fine. I mean it is like with the internet. In the internet, the problem is not that the information is not available, there is more information than we can digest. The question is how can we structure it in an efficient way. So I think the challenge is can the intranet qualify content in a way that it is directed to where it should be. And there has to be someone there who qualifies the content. And who qualifies this content? Because, as you know, on a day-to-day operational basis, there is so much content flying around, corporate and social, that it is very difficult to qualify this as what is important, and what is not important, where should what be, who should be the address of something. If that is possible, then it is a sensible tool.

A: Okay, and what are your requirements, or would be your requirements if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM? What functions should the tool provide to you and your employees?

B: Just what I just said. I think I would like to see content being qualified, being easy to access, and not just being an internet source of information because this is - you use a Google or a search function to search for the right topics, but that is not a qualified source of information, this is just getting a huge amount of content to be limited to an unqualified content. But this intranet should qualify information that it is usable and practical.

A: And how should the social intranet look like? Do you think the look-and-feel would be also an important topic regarding the social intranet?

B: I think the look-and-feel … I think important is the usability. If you look at Microsoft, if you look at the Outlook, Microsoft Outlook, there's nothing with look-and-feel, it is the same like a Filofax, important is that it is practical, more than does it look nice. But I am the older generation now, you people use Facebook because

maybe Facebook looks nice. I do not know, but for me the content and the practical usability is more important.

A: Okay, and how do you think would social features, like the previously mentioned news feeds, chats, blogs, microblogging, instant messaging, support RECOM's internal communication and collaboration? When we're talking about the social intranet, I have to explain it is a platform where you can find everything. As RECOM is using at the moment Skype, Fabasoft, and other tools, social intranets provide these functions as social features, and provide everything from one platform. Would you think this would support RECOM's internal communication and collaboration, making it more efficient?

B: Depending on how it is structured, yeah. An e-mail is something you write, you start, you close it, you send it, it is over. A Twitter or a chat, is something which you start and you communicate and not necessarily you stop it, there is not an end. And I think the problem would be if you start chatting and communicating and there is no ending to it, then you create even more confusion. So, an e-mail has a sense, because e-mail, you have to put something in writing and it has an end and it has a result. And the question is, is this the case when you sit on a platform where everything is openly communicated on a constant basis. You can cause a lot more confusion there because everyone's communicating something, but you do not come to an end. So I think important on a platform is that you come to an end and if that is the case, then it could make sense.

A: We are almost at the end of the interview and coming to the concluding questions now. Assume that RECOM is going to implement a social intranet. How would you seek for your employees' acceptance? What would you do to get their support?

B: Well, I think the most important thing is I would do it by myself. That is always a good sign, if they see, oh, he uses it by himself, and starts the communication, encourages people to use the tool. That would be one thing. The other thing would be that the content which we from a corporate and management point of view add to the system, has to be interesting, and if that is the case, and helpful for the people and the staff, and enjoyable to digest, then I think the interest is going to be big. I think there is a big interest in the organisation for more efficiency on communication,

which is normal. And if we can provide that by using these type of tools, I think everyone would be very interested in using this tool.

A: And how would you deal with local sensitivity?

B: What do you mean by local sensitivity?

A: As RECOM has a lot of subsidiaries around the world, I mean with dealing with local sensitivities - as English is the main language, the corporate language at RECOM - do you think there is other local sensitivity like content-driven or culture-driven, which is important?

B: Absolutely, you are right, that is definitely a topic. Globalisation means cultural differences, culture differences means different types of communication. That is definitely a challenge, I mean that is definitely a challenge which we have to see if a system can, well …, no system will be able to manage cultural differences, I think you can just make the system, or try to standardise it in a way that certain content is communicated globally in a way that everybody understands it, and can use it. But … not an easy task.

A: So, you would also support if, for example, the main language is still, as it is obvious in an international organisation, English, but for local sensitivity, so local topics, also other languages could be applied?

B: I think that is a must. At the end of the day, if you really want to use a system on a global basis in the whole organisation, you would have to have local communication between departments in, be it the language or the way of communicating in, at these local areas. I think, there might be a centralised setup, but decentralised standard communication and then individual features for local communication.

A: Okay, this is the end of our interview. Thank you for your time and effort.

B: Thank you very much.

2.2.3 Interview 3 (EMEA)

A: Thank you for participating in today's individual exploration. As you know, I am undertaking my Master's thesis at the moment and it will be based on RECOM in the course of its internal communication. To examine the requirements from the company perspective, I have some questions for you taking a social intranet as a corporate tool for RECOM's internal communication into account. But more information about this tool later. The interview will last for maximum 30 minutes. Please state your personal opinion; there are no wrong answers. What comes to your mind when you think of internal communication?

B: Okay, it is the way how to communicate internally, the most important thing that everybody should know.

A: Okay, in general, what communication tools do you know or have you used in RECOM or your previous company?

B: E-mail, extranet, telephone, Skype conferences, newsletters.

A: What do you think are the most used tools for internal communication at RECOM?

B: Face-to-face meetings.

A: And why do you think are these tools used more often or the most?

B: Which one are used the most?

A: Why are face-to-face meetings used the most at RECOM? Why do you think so?

B: I think it is important to see the individual person in the communication, to see the reaction, to see the communication is more direct, much clearer, from my experience, if you have a face-to-face instead of Skype, instead of e-mail, or whatever.

A: So let us come to the main part of the interview now and I would like to start with questions about the actual satisfaction. How satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication at the moment?

B: Hmm, some things are working very well, and some other things are not. Sometimes there is too much information flow which makes everybody confused; it confuses a lot of people. Not everybody should know everything at the same time. My opinion is it would be enough to tell people the final result instead of discussing everything.

A: Do you face any problems regarding RECOM's internal communication? Or what would you like to improve? For example, would you like to reduce the information, the load of information?

B: I think so, yes.

A: And regarding the information load, when you think of the tools used for communicating at RECOM – do you think also that this creates overlaps or something like that - there are so many ways of communicating at RECOM, like Skype, face to face, and e-mails?

B: No, I would say, in general, the information flow is too much, but not the different ways, no.

A: Okay, so the main challenge, you would say, is the amount of information, the load of information, in general?

B: I'm a friend of keeping things, keeping this message very simple and short instead of telling everything, because, you know, we aree changing often our mind, our strategy. This is sometimes really confusing everybody.

A: Okay, that is a good point for the questions about the communication content. Which communication content can you identify within RECOM's internal communication? We talked already about the information and another content would be, which every company has, the documents – and what other topics or content

can you identify when you think of communicating with each other? Is it just for information and document purpose or other things?

B: First of all, performance, new products, new people within RECOM, a strategy update.

A: And what kind of information do you usually share with your employees? And how often do you share such information with the people?

B: Daily.

A: Okay, and you share with them the before-mentioned topics like the performance, new products, strategy?

B: So updating … they are getting every month performance information. So, whenever there is something which I need to tell them, they are getting it immediately without any barriers.

A: Okay, and is there any key information that you think your employees should definitely know about RECOM?

B: Ahh, performance and strategy.

A: Performance and strategy. You said you share this information immediately with your employees. Most of the time, I assume, face to face, or where can they find this information?

B: Face to face or by e-mail, because people are not sitting in the same place.

A: Okay, when you think of the overall communication at RECOM, who provides the relevant content and information?

B: Who … which person?

A: Exactly, yeah … or which people?

B: That should be RECOM's CEO, first of all. Then from the product side, it is our Technical Director, Application Engineering, and marketing contents would be your department.

A: And do you think the communication content and the information at RECOM is more corporate-generated or user-generated, meaning that it is shared with the employees because it is project-related or company-related, or do you think that …?

B: Both, both.

A: So the next part are questions about a social intranet. But before I will ask you the questions, I would like to clarify the term. A social intranet is a tool that can be used for internal communication providing everything from one source in real time. This means that every content, etc. is available on this single platform. Moreover, social features are applied, like instant messaging, microblogging, user profiles, and these features enable collaboration processes, strengthen teamwork, and increase employee engagement. More interesting facts: social intranets reduce 30 to 40 percent of e-mails, simplify the process of finding documents by using a search, improve time management and enable collaboration. Social intranets enable everyone to connect within their organisation. Social intranets provide everything from one source at anytime from anywhere. Do you think a social intranet can simplify the internal communication process?

B: Yes.

A: What are your requirements if a social intranet is to be implemented at Recom? What functions should the tool provide to you and your employees, when you think of the main functions, or when you think of a centralised, single platform – what would be your requirements?

B: First of all, again, the strategy, our strategy, performance, new products, employees, that they can see the face, who is behind this.

A: So that everyone can find the mentioned content and information on this platform when he wants to?

B: Yes, all the documents, all the datasheets, all things we have from marketing side, or selection guides, whatever …, videos …

A: So everything that is need for work, the daily work?

B: Yes.

A: And what expectations would you have regarding the tool and its features when you think of the look-and-feel of the social intranet?

B: I do not care.

A: So the usability would be the most important aspect. How do you think would social features support RECOM's internal communication and collaboration? Social features, again, are, for example, news feeds, chats, blogs, or employee profiles, which enable, the profiles, for example, that you can find responsibilities or experts for certain topics, you can see the faces, and news feeds which are known from Facebook, for example, or Twitter, would you think such features can support internal communication and collaboration?

B: Yeah.

A: And how do you think could they support the communication, in which way?

B: I do not know - I am not using Facebook, not using Twitter so it is difficult.

A: Do you think these features could provide more up-to-date content when employees are able to share information with other employees immediately when it comes into their mind? Or, if, for example, another social feature is activity streams so that the employees, like on social media platforms or other platforms, can subscribe or choose what information they want to receive, do you think this would also increase efficiency and knowledge sharing?

B: Yeah.

A: And as you previously said that the information load is very high, and there is much information at RECOM, do you think that the working performance and productivity of the employees would also be increased if they could decide which information they want to receive, or if they …

B: Of course, of course.

A: We are already at the concluding questions. Assume that RECOM is going to implement a social intranet. How would you seek for your employees' acceptance and what would you do to get their support?

B: Of course, I would to everything to promote this new tool, even if I am personally not coming from the Facebook generation, so I have more in my mind the idea less information is more information, so just keep it to that, bring it to the point, the most important information, and everything else should not be shared. And not everybody should know everything at the stage when something is not finalised.

A: But if needed, and the tool is implemented, you would also give your team and your employees support with seminars or workshops, not planned or done by yourself, but if they need support, you would provide them also the support they need?

B: Of course.

A: And how would you deal with local sensitivity? When you think of RECOM's subsidiaries worldwide, do you think that local sensitivity is an issue, a challenge, or would you, regarding this topic, keep it also short and simple, English the main corporate language?

B: Yes.

A: This is the end of our interview now. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

B: Thank you.

2.2.4 Interview 4 (APAC)

A: Thank you for participating in today's individual exploration. As you know, I am undertaking my Master's degree and my thesis will be based on RECOM in the course of its internal communication. To examine the requirements from the company's perspective, I have some questions for you; taking a social intranet as a corporate tool for RECOM's international internal communication into consideration, but more information about this tool later. The interview will last for maximum 30 minutes. Please state your personal opinion - there are no wrong answers. Let us start with the first questions. What comes to your mind when you think of internal communication?

B: E-mails, phone calls, chats, meetings, blackboards lists and schematics… anything we use in our office to deliver messages to each other.

A: And in general, what communication tools do you know or have you used in RECOM or your previous company?

B: We currently use mostly e-mails and skype, and our project/customer management extranet system. At RECOM we have tried also other tools like forums, seminars, document-sharing tools /Google. The likes of google docs, Dropbox and most recently Fabasoft. Locally in Japan I have also tried to implement project-management and ticket-based tools like Asana or similar, but because of the lack of time to keep it updated we always go back to the good old e-mail reminders and flag-systems.

A: Okay. What do you think are the most used tools for internal communication at RECOM?

B: As I said in my previous answer, e-mails and skype. Also Fabasoft for some specific files that need to be shared at management level (prices, NPIs information, etc.).

A: Good and why do you think these tools are used more often/the most?

B: They are easy to use, I guess. And they are part of our daily routines. Open outlook, check e-mails, check reminders, check flags, open skype, check pending conversations, … all these actions are interiorized in today's day-to-day work in the office like checking your phone for messages even though it has not vibrated or made any noise.

A: When we now come to the main part of the interview, I would like to start with questions about the actual satisfaction. How satisfied are you with RECOM's internal communication at the moment?

B: I am not, to be honest. We are still using the same tools we used when we were a small company and it has become more and more complicated to deal with the information. A lot of the times the information never comes from the proper channel, you hear it at a meeting or a conversation, or from a unrelated e-mail. We should be much more structured on internal communication, at least for critical issues.

A: Okay, so what problems do you face regarding RECOM's internal communication? What would you wish to improve?

B: Time. Lack of time is our worst enemy to keep the internal communication flowing. We are all busy, travelling, with different schedules, time zones.

A: Which communication content can you identify within RECOM's internal communication? Think of information topics, documents, etc.

B: We have a feedback magazine, some management files with sales information, Fabasoft folders with pricing, NPI and EOL information… from the top of my head that is it. Not much, right? Ah, in our Japan office we also keep up-to-date company presentations, which take a lot of time from our Japan office although this material should come from HQ.

A: Okay and what kind of information do you usually share with your employees and how often do you share such information with the employees?

B: We are a very small team, all in the same office room, so communication is relatively easier than with HQ. I share company performance, key new personnel (if it is important for their jobs because my sales manager does not care if a new inside sales is hired in America or a new accounting person is added to our HQ), market information. How often? Hm, at least once a month I guess; but pretty much when something important happens it is passed on to my team.

A: Good and is there other key information that you think your employees should definitely know about RECOM?

B: Product related information is important for our sales teams, what is our R&D working on, what is our strategy for the short-term and long-term.

A: Where can employees find this information at RECOM?

B: Nowhere in particular. Right now the best way is to call a department head or RECOM's CEO and ask.

A: That is interesting. And what do you think, who provides the relevant content and communicates information at RECOM?

B: Most heads of departments do share by e-mail when something important is happening, as well as written news on our internal magazine. Product information and strategy is only shared during management meetings and during one-on-one phone calls with the relevant people.

A: According to your answer, do you think communication content at RECOM is more corporate or user generated?

B: I would guess user generated.

A: The next questions are about the so called social intranet, but before I ask you some questions about the use of a social intranet, I want to clarify the term. A social intranet is a tool that can be used for internal communication providing everything from one source in real-time. This means that every content etc. is available on this

platform. Moreover, this tool applies the so called social features, like instant messaging, microblogging and user dashboards. These features enable the collaboration process, strengthen team work and increase employee engagement. More interesting facts are that social intranets reduce 30-40% of e-mails, simplify the process of finding documents by using a search, improve time management and enable collaboration and enable everyone to connect within the organisation. Also, social intranets provide everything from one-source, at anytime from anywhere. With this information, do you think a social intranet can simplify the internal communication process?

B: To be honest I am not very familiar with this term, but anything that can reduce the time we spend searching through e-mails or searching past information is always welcomed.

A: Okay, but what are your requirements if a social intranet is to be implemented at RECOM? What functions should the tool provide to you and your employees?

B: I really do not know yet. In my case, I will have to see what is available and how can we best implement it in our teams without affecting their jobs.

A: Okay, I understand - but when you think of the tool's look and feel, what expectations would you have regarding the tool and its features? How should the social intranet at RECOM look like?

B: For me the most important is that is easy to use and always up-to-date.

A: And how do you think would social features, such as news feed, chats, blogs, etc., support RECOM's internal communication and collaboration?

B: It all depends on how all the company employees interact with it. If it becomes a routine, then it will be very, very helpful. If it is another annoying program that I need to update and spend time on it, then I am afraid it will not work.

A: Thank you for this rough estimation. We are now already at the final section. Please assume that RECOM is going to implement a social intranet. How would you seek for your employee's acceptance? What would you do to get their support?

B: I think they will accept it if we impose it as a new tool anyway; but besides that if I can show them how they can benefit from it, it is an easy sell.

A: And how would you deal with local sensitivity?

B: Local languages are always a nice touch, but in a global company a common language makes these tools more useful especially when looking for past information or activities happening in other regions. However, easy documentation like presentations, marketing stuff and similar should definitely be properly translated and kept updated.

A: Okay. This is the end of our interview. Thank you for your time and effort.

B: Thank you, too.