



Strategic Business-to-Business Marketing Communications in the German Machinery and Plant Engineering Sector

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Declaration

Declaration

I declare that the ideas, results, analysis, findings and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own efforts. I also declare that this work is original and has not been submitted previously for any degree award.



28.09.2022 Hamburg – Justin Tipke

Acknowledgments

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List of abbreviations

4C	Customer / Country / Channel / Costs
4P	Price / Placement / Promotion / Product)
7P	Price / Placement / Promotion / Product / People / Process / Physical evidence
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Customer
CI	Corporate Identity
CJ	Customer Journey
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DMP	Decision-making process
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication
SDM	Strategic decision-making
SDMP	Strategic decision-making process
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation
SEA	Search Engine Advertising
USP	Unique Selling Point

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Abstract

A multitude of constantly evolving communication channels and tools present B2B branding communication today with the challenge of communicating efficiently and effectively in an increasingly complex interaction with customers and prospects. The continuously expanding media and communication channel landscape over the last few years has contributed to a shift from one-way communication to two-way interaction between customers, external stakeholder groups, and companies. Available budgets and resources are usually not similarly adapted to the changes. Instead, many marketing communication managers are faced with the challenge of managing the increasing complexity and multitude of communication channels with the same or even decreasing resources – financial and human. Additionally increasing expectations of management for more transparency about the effectiveness of branding communication does not always necessarily simplify the decision about strategic measures for the further development of communication channels.

This dissertation addresses this dilemma and aims to examine the discipline of B2B marketing in the German machinery and plant engineering sector in depth by exploring how strategic decisions to adjust the company's marketing communication approach are made. The research objectives are to understand how strategic decisions are made by gaining insights into the different steps of the decision-making process and how these are influenced by organisation structures and personal skills. It also aims to gain an understanding of what information and knowledge is used to strategically define the marketing communication approach.

The study was conducted from a marketing communication perspective with a total of 6 cases and 24 in-depth interviews from companies in the German mechanical and plant engineering environment each with a foundation of more than 60 years ago. Likewise, all companies show international or global sales activities with more than 20 global sales locations each and, in some cases, a country presence in more than 100 countries. The selected cases represent the investigated industry segment through a mix of different organisational structures ranging from owner-managed to multi-division companies. At the same time, they nevertheless behave and act similarly, as they either belong to the project business environment or to a product business type of company.

Abstract

The insights gained from the work contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges for the further development of the marketing communication approach towards a strategic approach, which has already been discussed in the literature. At the same time, the findings indicate a new contribution to literature with the finding that strategic decision-making in marketing communication consists of two in parallel but mainly separate running processes – one focusing on selecting and publishing contents in the most efficient way and the second on developing the communication channel and tool landscape. The second mentioned is unfortunately not a process that is already established comprehensively in all conducted cases.

With these findings, the thesis contributes to the literature through its combination of the two main research disciplines namely marketing communication and decision-making. By linking the two disciplines, not only was a detailed understanding of strategic decision-making in marketing communication created but at the same time the applicability of the case study research method in a business context was investigated by studying the German mechanical and plant engineering industry. Contribution to practice is the suggestion of how to handle communication channels and tool development with a newly installed function.

1 Introduction

Chapter 1 covers the classification of the subject to be examined within the framework of the DBA Thesis. For this purpose, Chapter 1.1 introduces the research focus of strategic decision-making in B2B marketing communication. Based on the explained research focus, Chapter 1.2 derives the research aim from the context of marketing communication. In the following step, Chapter 1.3 describes the problem formulation resulting from the research aim. The selected scope of the investigation, the German Machinery and Plant Engineering sector as well as the German marketing communication specifics, will be described and justified in Chapter 1.4 to set the basis for analysing the strategic marketing developments in this regard. Based on these findings, the derived research objectives can be found in Chapters 1.5 – 1.7. Chapter 1.8 concludes the first chapter by describing the research procedure and thus the structure of the thesis itself.

1.1 Strategic marketing communications

As strategic marketing communication represents the discipline conducted in this study, the context and role of marketing and marketing communication will be discussed in the following section. Marketing can be understood as the approach of providing offerings and purchasing goods and services in a market (Drucker, 1954) and find its root in Frederick Winslow Taylor's published principles of Scientific Management (Londe and Morison, 1967). It leads to managerial orientation but also contains an organisational and social function. It results in the intention and managerial aim to position a provider or company on the market with dedicated products and services from which customers purchase (Varey, 2002). The marketing function arises from the need to promote market exchange between buyers and sellers, communicating about competitive advantages. It takes over the function of exchanging information and, while doing so, reduces the uncertainty of the market participants (Backhaus and Muehlfeld, 2005).

Therefore, marketing can be defined as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2017). Throughout various industries, recurring marketing features are highlighted in Figure 1.

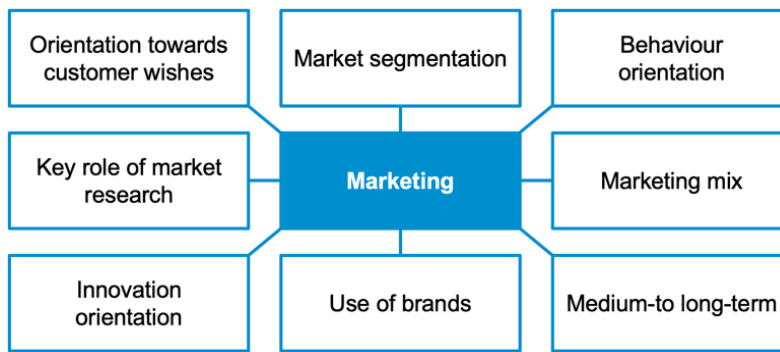


Figure 1 - Features of marketing
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017)

As market environments are constantly changing, a broader and more long-term oriented perspective on marketing needs to be taken. To reflect these long-term market changes, strategic marketing planning must be part of the corporate planning process (Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017). Strategic planning thereby follows the identification of strategic issues, their analysis and the systematic formulation and decision of strategies to address them (George, Walker and Monster, 2019). As it is highly complex and a significant amount of information needs to be considered, diverse management levels are involved in strategic marketing decisions (Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017).

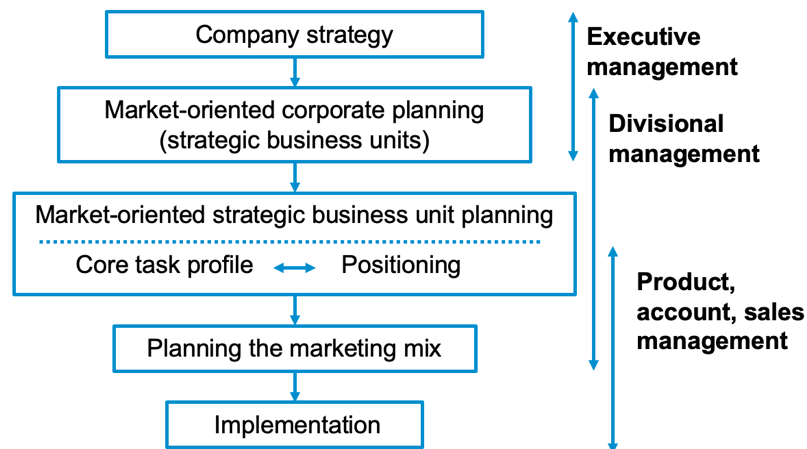


Figure 2 - Planning phases and management levels
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017)

The involvement of marketing in the strategic corporate planning process can contribute in multiple ways. Marketing gives guidance to create customer value, provides input to evaluate market opportunities, and helps design strategies to reach the defined objectives. Thus, all marketing activities can be seen as a process of planning, implementing, and monitoring (Armstrong, Kotler and Opresnik, 2019). Therefore, the term marketing management is also established, and marketing strategy becomes central for practitioners (Morgan et al., 2019). Within this strategic management process,

the tactical planning and implementation follow the so-called marketing mix activities (Armstrong, Kotler and Opresnik, 2019). The marketing mix approach supports companies in determining which product, at what price, is distributed and advertised/communicated via which distribution channel (Meffert et al., 2019). The Marketing Mix concept, established as 4P (Price, Placement, Promotion, Product), is proven as a practical toolkit for marketing decision-making. With the evaluation of the marketing discipline, customer behaviour has also evolved towards personalized markets where relationship building plays a much more significant role. With this ongoing process, the Marketing Mix has evolved into the 7P (Price, Placement, Promotion, Product, People, Process, and Physical Evidence) concept (Constantinides, 2006).

Marketing activities can thus contribute to managing the relationship between customers and companies and therefore support the exchange interactions and can result in a positive impact on trust and commitment over time (Lambe, Wittmann and Spekman, 2001). It additionally ensures, at the same time, a high acceptance of the offers. The described functions above, therefore, also show that marketing is not only transaction-based or relationship-driven. It must also be seen as an information-handling problem approach by considering the issue to be solved before interpreting how to solve it (Holland and Naude, 2004). The proactive use of these marketing activities to engage as an organisation with customers to create, develop and maintain exchanges is also known as relationship marketing (Harker, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994) which has evolved from tactical customer management to the strategic management of relationships with all stakeholders (Payne and Frow, 2017). From a customer perspective, building relationships on trust not only reduces the risk a customer might take with relational exchange (Hunt, Arnett, and Madhavaram, 2006) but also reduces the necessity of processing information to make appropriate (buying) decisions (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). The benefit for the organization, in contrast, relies on achieving competitive advantages through relationships and generating a superior financial performance and an efficiency-enhancing and effectiveness-enhancing portfolio of relationships (Hunt, Arnett, and Madhavaram, 2006; Hunt, 1997).

Therefore, a firm's marketing capabilities are essential to enable competitive advantages (Day, 1994; Tan and Sousa, 2015). These organisational marketing capabilities can be built, for instance, by making use of well-established learning mechanisms as benchmarking (Vorhies and Morgan, 2005). Organisational capabilities are understood

as the organisational ability “to perform a coordinated set of tasks, utilizing organizational resources, for the purpose of achieving a particular end result” (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003:999). They can also lead to competitive advantage and ensure customer orientation while evolving over time (Morgan and Slotegraaf, 2012). From an organisational perspective, unique marketing knowledge and skills are especially present on an individual level. Combined individuals’ knowledge and skills are also available on a broader and aggregated level in a marketing function as well as across other functions. The higher the level in the organisational hierarchy, the more expansive and complex it becomes, so that marketing capabilities are hierarchical in nature (Morgan and Slotegraaf, 2012; Grant, 1996). With reference to Figure 2 above, different levels of knowledge and skills exist in an organisation and affect the strategic decision-making process dependent on the capabilities of the decision-makers.

Proven impacting capabilities on marketing performance are branding and innovation capabilities of a firm. Whereas structured management processes primarily determine a firm's innovation capabilities, branding capabilities are specifically determined by market orientation (Merrilees, Rundle-Thiele and Lye, 2011). These capabilities are associated positively with a firm's general and financial performance (Ramaswami, Srivastava, and Bhargava, 2009; Krasnikov and Jayachandran, 2008). The contribution of marketing capabilities is verifiably even higher than functions like research and development, operations, or operational capabilities like cost cutting (Krasnikov and Jayachandran, 2008). Based on these findings, Krasnikov and Jayachandran (2008) state that frequent marketing strategy and approach changes can also negatively affect the overall contribution of marketing to the company's performance. Nevertheless, the attention of top management is not in an equally manner (Dziubaniuk et al., 2021; Gleichauf, 2016; Zerfaß and Volk, 2019; Day, 1994).

As part of the above-described marketing activities of a company, communication is generally understood as a process to transfer information between a sender and a receiver. Transferred to the organisational context, communication can be seen as an instrument to create meaning about the business's purpose to its environment. Here, the strategy provides the context, and the communication represents the constituting pillar. This communication process, which is also understood as strategic communication, consists of several communication fields. Among others, public relations, management communication and marketing communication (Van Ruler, 2018). Whereby marketing

communication creates the link between the corporate strategy and corporate identity (Balmer, 2001).

1.2 Introduction into research topic

Especially in the last decade, the field of marketing communication has been recognised in many firms as a differentiating factor in competitive markets – independent of the fact if it is a Business to Consumer (B2C) or Business to Business (B2B) market (Lilien, 2016; Kitchen, 2017; Réklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019; Holm, 2006). With its increasing relevance, both practice and theory have paid increased attention to the discipline (LaPlaca, 2013; Tanner, 2021; Tzempelikos, 2022), even though the transfer from theory into practice is not given in an equal manner (Tzempelikos, 2022). The theoretical discourse in the field of marketing communication is often characterized by the psychological foundation and justification of the new and upcoming mechanics of communication channels. Whereas in business practice, the adaption of the fast-growing communication landscape and the resulting new communication formats into the company's communication strategy represents most often today's challenges (Kotler et al., 2019).

One of the main reasons for this increased attention relies on technological changes that impact customer and prospect communication and buying behaviours (Constantinides, 2006; Homburg, Jozić and Kuehnl, 2017). The internet is one of the main courses that contributed to a technology shift in marketing communication and radically affected B2B marketing (Lehtimäki et al., 2009). Besides the technological shift to digital media, marketing communication also shifted from mass media to individual (digital) media. It enables unprecedented opportunities for customers and prospect segmentation as well as the interaction between all groups of interest (Keller, 2016; Soffer, 2019; Wiencierz, 2017). Lastly, the internet allows users to communicate via communities, social networks, or virtual worlds, enabling them to create and share content (Lehtimäki et al., 2009). Instead of the former one-way communication, which providers controlled, digital media is characterized by two-way communication. On the one hand, interactive communication and constant visibility can create opportunities to interact directly with customers and relevant stakeholders in a surrounding where everyone can act as a communicator (Zerfaß and Volk, 2019). On the other hand, the level of engagement is determined by each market participant – independent of the participant being a customer, a stakeholder, or the company itself (Keller, 2016; Soffer, 2019; Zerfaß, 2010).

Chapter 1.2 - Introduction into research topic

This results in the new risk of companies losing control of the communication as all market participants can act as an active party (Wade, 2009; Smith, Fischer and Yongjian, 2012; Zerfaß and Volk, 2019).

Besides changing the means of communication, the internet has also accelerated the number of arising channels and fundamentally changed the present media and marketing technology landscape (Holm, 2006; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). A study conducted by Binker (2022) identified a massive increase of marketing tools available. While in 2011 there were only 150 tools, in May 2022 there were already 9,932 tools. This finding is indicative of a landscape that is more complex and dynamic than ever before. Approaching the digital marketing communication landscape without a strategy will also lead to missed customer opportunities and efforts that are in line with the company's business strategy (Ryan and Jones, 2012). Every new opportunity in this landscape leads to chances but also challenges. On the one hand, the possibilities for marketers to address customers and prospects with new marketing communication channels are increasing. On the other hand, the complexity to define the most appropriate communication approach is also increasing (Barnes, 2018; Cavusgil et al., 2014; Cortez and Johnston, 2017).

In relation to the German market, the German Federal Institution BVIK (Bundesverband Industrie Kommunikation) identified a marketing communication budget shift from mass media towards digital media channels. This shift has been recognised over the past years. The BVIK study results additionally point out that most companies that participated are currently involved in the digital transformation process. Eighty three percent perceive the added value of digital communication platforms long-term (BVIK, 2020b). Baumgart's statement "the new normal of B2B marketing [in Germany] will have to solve ever more complex and new tasks with less budget" (BVIK, 2020a:4) summarizes the current issues in the German Business to Business marketing sector very concisely.

As a consequence of the technological changes, the complexity in media has increased and companies are finding it difficult to reach defined target groups (Réklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019; Kitchen, 2017; Lilien, 2016). Besides the distribution of communication across different channels, customer needs and how customers want to engage with

companies have also changed and affected the purchasing process (Heinemann, 2017a).

Consequently, every upcoming marketing communication trend, platform, or tool can lead to a new opportunity to reach customers, prospects, and further groups of interest and must be evaluated by a company. Not at least because of this, scholars and practitioners are thereby evaluating the benefits of new media, communication platforms or channels like social media to adjust their marketing communication approach to new market conditions (Valois et al., 2017). Due to the rapidly changing environment and a lack of marketing knowledge, strategic decisions to improve and develop marketing communication are often procrastinated or it is decided that no actions will be taken (Wright et al., 2004), as proven by Mortimer and Laurie (2017) on the example of implementing an Integrated Marketing Communication approach. The change in media usage behaviour has also led B2B to the fact that 57% of the purchase decision is already made by the customer before contacting the manufacturer and the engagement with manufacturers in relation to the overall process only accounts for about 17% of the decision (Schmidt, Adamson and Bird, 2015; MacDonald, 2022).

To strategically plan and develop a firm's marketing communication, responsible managers currently have to handle a growing landscape of communication channels, resulting in complexity within their communication approach(es) (Smith, Fischer and Yongjian, 2012). Although different communication options, as well as different objectives, must be considered within the communication approach. These increasing opportunities make it even more challenging to select the most appropriate approach under the pressure of communication effectiveness and in accordance with the corporate strategy and communication targets (Batra and Keller, 2016). Especially regarding leveraging the effectiveness of content distribution across communication channels, content management systems help to steer communication messages and to make them manageable to react quickly to external influences (Galea, 2007). One of the concepts for effective content distribution, the theory of integrated marketing communication (IMC), will therefore be part of the subsequent literature review chapter. The literature used for this purpose, such as relationship marketing or the customer journey (CJ) theory, thus draws on the holistic marketing management approach of Kotler et al. (2019) and links marketing and marketing communication with each other.

All described challenges – the increased complexity of the marketing communication technology landscape and changed market conditions and customer expectations – must be managed by available resources in the most appropriate way. In contradiction to the consequence of answering a higher complexity and increased expectations of customers by increasing resources, the German B2B firms must cope with decreasing marketing communication budgets and a shrinking number of employees simultaneously. The effect was noticed in the upheaval from 2018 to 2019 and continued in 2020 (BVIK, 2020a). Even though a declining number of marketing communication employees was found until 2020, the average number of marketing employees has slightly increased from 6.78 in 2020 to 7.70 in 2021 – mainly in the field of digital marketing (BVIK, 2021). If the effect remains positive in 2022, it must be explored with the next evaluation.

According to the study constantly surveyed by BVIK, the trend of shrinking annual marketing communication budgets were confirmed in the 2021 report, even though further decreases are expected for 2022. The longitudinal study of the BVIK shows that marketing communication budgets were reduced in the Germany industry from 1% of a company's annual turnover to an average planned 0.6% share in 2020 and remained in average at a 0.5% share in 2021 (BVIK, 2021; BVIK, 2020a). Regarding communication channel development, a constantly increasing share of marketing communication budgets is recognizable for digital marketing (BVIK, 2021).

However, in addition to the facts just mentioned, it must also be noted that the attention of academics and practitioners has focussed mainly on consumer markets, whereas the marketing discipline in B2B markets is relatively rarely observed (Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020; Cortez and Johnston, 2017, Järvinen et al., 2012; Jussila, Kärkkäinen and Leino, 2011) even though the comparative economic impact is more significant (Lilien, 2016). Changes in marketing communication concern both B2C and B2B markets (Shaltoni 2017). It must be stated that B2C is far quicker in taking up new communication channels and means of communication than B2B, even though the challenges for adapting the communication as well as the overall objectives are the same (Lopez-Lopez and Giusti, 2020; Järvinen et al., 2012), and the lines between B2C and B2B are blurring depending on the industry as customers are empowered by reducing the information asymmetry (Nath, Saha and Salehi-Sangari, 2019). Therefore, research into B2B marketing is required to compensate for the lack of knowledge. Besides a lack of

investigations and awareness needed to discover the mechanisms of actions in B2B, the need for efficiency, transparency and traceability forces those responsible for marketing activities to develop an increasingly strategic approach (Kotler et al., 2019).

To handle the complexity of marketing communication channels and customer requirements, scholars recommend developing marketing communication from a tactical to a strategic approach (Keller, 2006). Whereas a strategic decision approach leads to effective cost planning, a tactical planning approach focuses on ensuring message consistency (Batra and Keller, 2016). Nevertheless, most companies get stuck in the tactical phases of integrated marketing communication (Keller, 2006). Kotler et al. (2019) state that especially B2B is not able to develop its marketing from tactical to strategic communication.

In summary, it can be said that the strategic relevance of marketing and marketing communication described in theory does not correspond to its significance in practice. An investigation into the form and extent to which strategic decisions are nevertheless made should provide further insight into the theory-practice transfer. Following the fact that individuals responsible for strategic management decisions do not have the expertise in marketing communication (Holm, 2006), organisational and personal capabilities as well as the process of information and knowledge processing have to be evaluated in the context of strategic decision-making in B2B marketing communication. Additionally, the investigation answers the calls from practitioners requesting more guidance along with those of scholars who suggest more practical implications to combine theory and praxis are needed to further and close the theory-practice gap (Baumgarth, 2021; Möller and Parvinen, 2015). By studying how the German industry sector faces the aforementioned challenges, this dissertation makes a contribution to knowledge in the field of B2B marketing communication. Therefore, the aim of this research is:

**To explore strategic B2B marketing communication
in the German industry sector.**

Exploring strategic B2B marketing communication thereby primarily refers to the decision-making process and the question of how B2B companies strategically develop their marketing communication activities.

1.3 Problem definition

Marketing has thus evolved from transactional to relationship marketing that has not only changed with the increasing complexity of the business landscape. Relationship management has also changed from bilateral to multi-lateral relationship management with a multi-directional flow and exchange of information through communication channels such as social media (O'Malley, 2014). Against the same background, marketing communication has developed from a conventional domain of business behaviour to a behavioural social science that contains different research fields (Shaw and Jones, 2005; Hadjikhani and LaPlaca, 2013; Lilien, 2016). While B2C customer needs are already understood relatively well, B2B academia is lagging (Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020; Cortez and Johnston, 2017; Wierseman, 2013; Jussila, Kärkkäinen and Leino, 2011), even though the economic impact in comparison is more significant (Lilien, 2016; Backhaus and Voeth, 2011). Nevertheless, attention to B2B marketing is noticeably increasing – in practice as well as in theory. The reasons for this increased interest over the last years have been driven by globalisation and therefore changing market environments, disruptive technological changes, e.g., social media, and a stronger focus of companies on creating customer value. Additionally, the future research agenda also forces more clarification about the interface of marketing and sales, as well as between marketing and finance functions (Backhaus and Voeth, 2015a). The number of interfaces listed shows that there is a dispersion of marketing activities in companies and highlights while a continuous development of new marketing capabilities is needed to adapt to these external changes (Gnizy, 2019).

For a deeper insight into the situation just described, the main drivers of change already mentioned are described in more detail below. In addition, they also represent possible influencing factors regarding the strategic development of marketing communication and, at the same time, current challenges for marketing communication departments:

Digitalization

One of the biggest drivers of change in marketing communication is information technology. Marketplaces are nowadays dominated by the customer and its needs instead of by marketers itself (Schultz and Schultz, 1998). Through a better understanding of the requirements of the customers and by providing each stakeholder of the buying centre the appropriate information needed along the purchase process in a media-friendly manner is one the challenges. For this, using instruments like the

described company's business type separation can help (Backhaus and Voeth, 2015a). The aim of providers should be to cleverly link media in which information technology, and especially the internet, plays a significant role (online media) with media that exists without the internet (offline media) (Naik and Peters, 2009). Studies like Hänninen and Karjaluoto (2017) have already identified and measured a shift in industrial customer preference toward digital communication channels. Through the internet, especially the so-called new media or online media channels have been expanded over the last years. They need to be seen as additional communication opportunities to the previous purely offline media channels and require different management to manage relationships (Obal and Lancioni, 2013). Digital media not only enriches the possibilities of marketers to address customers and prospects (Barnes, 2018), but also enables markets to monitor and measure established marketing communication activities more transparently (Richards, 2018; Soffer, 2019). It is, therefore, essential to examine how digital channels can be effectively integrated into sales and sales processes (Lässig et al., 2015). They allow tracking of customer engagement and allow sales conversations in real-time. Even if digital marketing is no longer a new phenomenon, many firms in the B2B environment lack comprehensive knowledge and are not capable of analysing its impact (Pandey, Nayal and Rathore, 2020; Dziubaniuk et al., 2021).

An example of this is the usage of social media as part of a company's relationship marketing approach (Gillin and Schwartzman, 2011). In addition, when considering the theory on the use of social media, a lack of social media investigations in B2B is recognisable compared to B2C investigations (Deng et al., 2021; Lashgari et al., 2018). Even though the importance for B2B has been realized, the effects have only rarely been investigated (Wang, Pauleen and Zhang, 2016) and potentials in practice have not been used completely (Wang et al., 2017). In addition, a strategic perspective for B2B on social media is missing, as most of the research conducted so far did focus on the tactical usage of social media. Also, in social media, the B2B specifically relies upon the challenge of interacting with multiple stakeholders compared to B2C (Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats, 2021). The literature identified in this regard actual shows that digital B2B marketing publications are spatially distributed in the USA or the United Kingdom, rather than a balanced view across countries (Pandey, Nayal and Rathore, 2020), which also represents the need of further investigations of the market to be investigated in the present study.

Big data and analytics

Emerging from digitalization, the access to data and the linkage between activities also increases. The need to handle that data also results in one of the B2B challenges today. It must be said, that due to the fundamental differences between B2B and B2C, analytics of both markets cannot be used, compared or shared equally. The limited quantity of B2B studies contributes to the undersupplied analytics. Established Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, consisting of internal and external data sources, also enable companies, especially marketing communication departments, to use big data (Lilien, 2016; Wierseman, 2013). Relationship management is a central element of B2B business (Cartwright, Davies, Archer-Brown, 2021). The ability of big data, also coming from online media and communication, helps to maintain relationships (Payne and Frow, 2017) and refers back to the relationship marketing approach resulting from the core tasks of marketing in Chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden..**

Customer insights and digital marketing

Customer demands and markets are changing ever more quickly. Therefore, speed and agility are challenges in current market environments. This leads to one of the most relevant issues in marketing: gaining knowledge about customers allows a customer-informed perspective to select the most appropriate opportunities in changing markets (Wierseman, 2013). Digital communication channels allow this kind of individualized marketing and speed (Mehmet and Clarke, 2016; Michaelidou et al., 2011; Kho, 2008) and therefore support establishing, maintaining, and developing relationships (Huotari et al., 2015). Especially social media platforms allow this kind of interaction and therefore challenge the engagement strategies of B2B companies (Cartwright, Davies and Archer-Brown, 2021). The benefits are on both sides, for the company and customers. On the one hand, it allows companies to distribute knowledge. On the other hand, it allows customers to interact and engage with companies (Jussila, Kärkkäinen and Leino, 2011; Mulhern, 2009). This two-way communication mechanism can help improve interaction efficiency (Juntunen, Ismagilova and Oikarinen, 2020). However, using a multi-platform social media approach is not the only possibility to engage with B2B customers and stakeholders. It must be carefully selected which specific channel is the most suitable rather than using a broad range of social media platforms to create effective relationships (Gruner and Power, 2018). It also helps to establish a service-dominant logic of

marketing, which supports relationship building by sharing knowledge in a co-creation process for service-related topics (Ballantyne and Aitken, 2007).

At the same time, using social media channels can increase the complexity of the communication landscape of a company. The complexity mentioned above, combined with the fact that information flows are multi-directional, also leads to companies losing control over communication, as it can no longer be controlled bi-laterally (Bruce and Solomon, 2013; Cartwright, Davies and Archer-Brown, 2021). Besides the fear of loss of control over communication, the lack of organisational capabilities and skills to use social media effectively have also been a hurdle for marketers (Bernard, 2014). Most companies use social media (Holden-Bache, 2011; Nielsen, 2010; Rapp et al., 2013). Whereas the impact of social media in the context of B2C has been widely explored, the knowledge about the impact of social media in the B2B context is limited (Cartwright, Davies and Archer-Brown, 2021; Swani et al., 2017).

Despite the shift of communication towards digital media and two-way interaction, digitalisation has also changed procurement processes, contributing to change in communication (Heinemann, 2017b). It also has the consequence that information about the people involved in the buying process and their motives can be identified instead of facing an anonymous organization (Chelbisová, Kyzeková and Zajarosova, 2011; Schultz and Schultz, 1998). For marketing communication scholars, the change led to the need to understand how customers reach possible providers instead of considering how they reach their customers (Peymani, 2012). The availability and access to information play a fundamental role and are key for marketing communication (Fill and Hughes, 2006). Customers and prospects determine the integration of sales through their way of gathering information and communication, thus changing the role of sales. Before the widespread use of the internet, sales had been responsible for the distribution of information, but it is now the customers who determine the information addressed to them (Cortez and Johnston, 2017).

Intercompany interfaces

To fulfil market and customer needs, a cross-functional relationship between sales, service and marketing is needed and all functions must act with a specific customer focus. These different perspectives can potentially be conflicting due to different goals and a mismatch of cultures (Enyinda et al., 2021). Literature, therefore, has also outlined the need to clarify the interfaces of marketing and other functions seen in practice –

especially between marketing and sales. Additionally, the need to gain more knowledge and understanding of customers and markets in more detail is required to understand the buying behaviour and general behavioural patterns of customers and prospects (Wieserman, 2013; Backhaus and Voeth, 2015a). Additionally, Batra and Keller (2016) stated that more academic research is needed to improve the interface between marketing and sales to ensure a “more holistic development of messages and creative across communication options” (Batra and Keller, 2016).

Resource and budget planning

Swani, Brown and Mudambi (2020) also see a need to investigate appropriate budgeting processes for B2B advertisements, reflecting an efficient allocation of advertising. Published studies are limited and outdated. The article also describes the current challenge of marketers to justify budgets and sees the need for further investigation regarding research questions that solve issues of how to integrate research in managerial practice better and that question if the budgeting process differs between industries and the size of organizations.

Missing transfer from theory to practice

Besides the technological changes and the mentioned organisational process challenges, a lack of knowledge transfer from theory into practice has been identified. The mentioned reasons for these circumstances, investigated by Baumgarth (2021) rely on three main reasons. First and foremost, every person must deal with general information overload in everyday (business) life. Second, due to the increased complexity, contents of scientific articles are too pointed and too small in scope. The third reason is the trend of “fast science”. Due to fast and constant environmental change, scientists often do not have the time to think about results – instead, they must deliver directly and answer to the given problem (Baumgarth, 2021).

Changing market environments

As environmental factors, external effects and influences like economic crises or pandemics also need to be mentioned, as they affect marketing communication approaches of companies as well. During this investigation, the coronavirus, which was not comparable to other crises before, also affected the investigation as companies were forced to adjust their communication approaches and touchpoints according to the situation (Cortez and Johnston, 2020). Based on the investigation by Cortez and

Johnston (2020), the pandemic accelerated the digitalization of companies, and their marketing communication approaches. Following their findings, investigated companies indicated that existing communication channels like websites have been reworked content-wise, and additional opportunities were used to set up virtual showrooms and intensify marketing analytics due to the increased amount of data coming from digital communication channels. Also, most investigated participants stated that social media turned out to be effective, and the majority used webinars to communicate technical information. Besides questions about the changes made to cope with the dynamic situation, interviewees also suggested that they want to ensure more proactive strategic flexibility to manage political and economic risks (Cortez and Johnston, 2020). During the literature review, only a few investigations so far are published analysing the sustainable impact of this pandemic on marketing communication in B2B.

1.4 Research context

The B2B marketing communication developments in the subchapters above have been described from a general perspective. Nevertheless, literature from the selected country where this research takes place has already been consulted. Complementing the literature already reviewed, this chapter describes German market characteristics and justifies the choice of focus.

The term industry is initially understood to mean plant-intensive or capital-intensive enterprises. Based on the official classification, "industry is divided into the mining, basic materials, capital goods, consumer goods and food and luxury food industries" (Schneck, 2015). As this study focuses on B2B, the German industrial sector has been selected for this investigation as it is relative to the overall economy and ranked as the largest industrial sector in the world. It is the biggest industrial nation in Europe with over 2.1 trillion euros in revenue and the fourth largest producer of industrial goods worldwide (VCI, 2021), employing about 7.4 million workers (Destatis, 2022). Small and medium-sized companies represent the backbone of the German industry (Tatsachen-über-Deutschland.de, 2022). As part of this overall industry backbone of the German industry, the mechanical engineering sector, for example, is comprised of over 6,500 companies with over a million employees (VDMA, 2020). This sector alone represents the third-largest sector in the European Union, measured by 650 billion euros revenue in 2015. German companies in this sector generated a revenue of 296 billion euros in 2019, making Germany the most important industry location in Europe (VDMA, 2020). Seen

worldwide, Germany ranks third after China (876 billion euros revenue in 2019) and the United States (348 billion euros revenue in 2019) (Statista, 2020).

In addition, it should be mentioned that Germany also has a high industry location quality in international comparison (VBW, 2021). This is also one of the reasons why it can be assumed that Germany will further expand this relevance and position as a result of the corona pandemic and thus the containment shakeout of the service sector. German industry is largely dependent on exports. This poses the risk of trade conflicts, which directly impact success even if the largest trading partner in this context is the European Union (Tatsachen-über-Deutschland.de, 2022).

The relevance within the European Union, as well as its global position and in combination with the diversity of industrial sectors, are the reasons why the present study focuses on the German market for the investigation. Based on the challenges, marketing communication can also contribute to defending Germany's current market position. The challenges currently being faced are a technological and a paradigm shift regarding digitalisation, the internet of things or artificial intelligence (Tatsachen-über-Deutschland.de, 2022). This leads not only to a challenging global competitive environment but also underlines the need for marketing communication activities to assert the German position globally.

Since most modern scholarly marketing development occurred in the United States of America (Wilkie and Moore, 2003), the following paragraph highlights the differences of B2B marketing in Germany for the research context. The fundamental differences here include the established response to stimuli institutional approach with its origin in the US industrial marketing environment. In contrast to this, German researchers established their own marketing approach independent of the US mindset and stopped following the US lead (Backhaus, 1998). Compared to the institutional approach, German researchers developed an interactive approach characterized by multi-directional strategic interaction of buyers and sellers (Kirsch and Kutschker, 1978). This approach emerged from the combination of network thinking, exchange theory and new institutional economies (Kleinaltenkamp and Jacob, 2002). One of the most popular and prominent examples is the textbook *industrial marketing* from Backhaus (2014). However, the term industrial marketing has become synonymous with B2B, or the distinction has been lost (Backhaus and Voeth, 2015b). By investigating the German market, the derived German

perspective of B2B marketing will define the basis of the interpretation of results, even though the number of studies relating to German B2B marketing insights and its development is limited compared to the dominance of American literature.

“The new normal of B2B marketing will have to solve ever more complex and new tasks with less budget. The lean, agile and innovative years will come.” (Baumgarth, 2020:4).

An independent study on the topic of marketing budgets and their development has been carried out by the BVIK (Federal Association of Industrial Communication) for nine years. It shows two increasing trends over the last few surveys. On the one hand, it shows that marketing budgets seem to be decreasing. This trend started in the upheaval from 2018 to 2019. While marketing budgets in 2019 still amounted to a secure 1% of sales, according to the survey carried out between March and May 2020, the proportion was only 0.6% of sales on average.

According to the results, the emerging trend of budget restrictions was only partially influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the study shows that not only the internal and external marketing budgets are reduced, but also the number of employees. In addition to budget trends, the study also shows a change in the relevance of communication channels. The digitisation in marketing and the use and investments in digital marketing are recognizable as a clear trend over the last few years. The study on the subject of "digitisation" also carried out by the BVIK (2020b) this year highlights the areas of development and trends in digital marketing.

1.5 Rationale for the research

The context for the present investigation in the context of B2B marketing communication in Chapter 1.21.1 and Chapter 1.3 has outlined that the available literature shows a deficit in the B2B marketing communication domain. Besides the theoretical deficit, it has been shown that marketing communication is currently shaped by various social, economic, and technological changes. It was also described how technological development has increased the complexity and responsibility for managing marketing communication and how marketing communication is therefore becoming more relevant in German B2B companies in general. At the same time, it must be noted that the resources required do not grow with the increasing relevance and that the discipline is

not equally anchored in management. In addition, the example of existing tools for the further development of marketing communication, such as the integrated marketing communication concept, showed that companies in B2B still find it challenging to develop the conducted discipline strategically. Even though marketing is already seen as a strategic decision-making process in companies that ensure customer orientation in entrepreneurial measures, in practice, the coordination of individual fields of activity of marketing is currently not provided with the same strategic relevance. Also, the external changes on marketing communication that have been identified have only been examined to a limited extent in terms of their impact on the strategic role of marketing communication for companies. These circumstances have led to the formulation of the present research project.

Based on the findings described so far, a comprehensive literature review is carried out in Chapter 2 against this background, concerning marketing communication on the one hand and the strategic decision-making process for further development on the other. The German industry was selected as an additional defined geographical focus due to its global and representative relevance. The described contents will be used as a basis for the content of the research design and the data collection methods. The study aims to find out whether the consideration of the interfaces between the mentioned theoretical disciplines is sufficient to evaluate the research question or whether there are others. In such a case, the informative value of the present study is limited.

The definition of the research objectives for the present research project, considering the mentioned limitations, in the following chapter will therefore ensure that the scope of the study meets the requirements of a DBA thesis.

1.6 Research objectives and research questions

As mentioned, the described conflicting objectives do not only concern the marketing discipline. It is also a result of the interconnectedness of marketing communication and strategic decision-making disciplines. The question of how to reconcile these goals in practice thus forms the core of this thesis. The described findings in the literature illustrate the knowledge gap and need in the operational context. For a fundamental evaluation of the issue, it is therefore first necessary to understand the strategic decision-making processes of B2B marketing communication in practice and to determine the most important influencing factors. Only a comprehensive understanding of the process

Chapter 1.6 - Research objectives and research questions

can provide a basis for the derivation of recommendations for actions and improvements, and a sustainable contribution be made.

Because of the described context, the research aim, questions, and objectives selected for the present investigation are the following:

Main research aim:

To explore strategic B2B marketing communication in the German industry sector.

Research objectives:

1. To generate a comprehensive understanding of how strategic B2B marketing communication decisions within the German industrial sector are made.
2. To identify decision-making process steps to define the strategic approaches for B2B marketing communication planning.
3. To identify which way organizational structures and personal skills of internal stakeholders determine a firm's strategic marketing communication approach.
4. To identify which information and/or knowledge is taken into consideration by the involved stakeholders to strategically define the firm's strategic marketing communication approach.

Research questions:

1. How are strategic B2B marketing Communications decisions made within the German industrial sector?
2. What are the process steps in the B2B marketing communication decision-making process?
3. How do organizational structures and personal skills of internal stakeholders affect the strategic marketing communication approach of a company?
4. Which information and/or knowledge is used to define the strategic marketing communication approach?

1.7 Research scope

The scope of the research refers to the boundaries and limitations within which the research was performed. First, the study is limited to the German industry sector. Generated findings, therefore, cannot be automatically generalised for other industries. Another limitation is that the focus on the German industry could restrict data collection and the research findings. The limitation to the German industry sector defines the regional and market scope of the investigation. Finally, selecting the German industry as the scope for the present research also results in additional specific research contextual factors, such as the role of culture, which will be described in relation to the created conceptual framework of this study in the following chapter. This industry and regional specific research focus additionally do influence the set of data collected and used for the analysis.

Due to the variety of decisions, it is essential to define and describe the processes to be investigated in the best possible way so that the results are meaningful. The strategic decision-making process under investigation refers to all external communication activities of a company that contribute to the marketing of products and services to its customers and prospects. Ad hoc decisions are excluded from the investigation. Nevertheless, the description of such decision-making processes that are not in focus, or even the description of other communication activities in data collection, is not excluded if the description contributes to the general approach to corporate marketing communication.

1.8 Dissertation organization

Chapter 1.1 is an introduction to the study and covers its background, the research objectives, research scope and an outline of the research. The research scope, defined by the research aim and objectives in Chapter 1.6, illustrated that the present investigation aims to build theory rather than test it. The main research disciplines in this context, marketing communication and strategic decision-making, will be discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The review positions the study in the context of existing knowledge. It also relates the disciplines involved in decision-making, like stakeholder management or budget allocation processes. These disciplines will also be considered in order to arrange the topic within the investigation scope. The multidisciplinary literature review research strategy provides the scope and foundation for the conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 12, at the end of the literature review.

The methodological approach and research strategy for this investigation will be refined and the data collection process and procedure itself will be described in Chapter 3. The data analysis and evaluation and the presentation of research findings are described in Chapter 4. An evaluation of the selected methodological approach for this study in conjunction with the results will be made in Chapter 5. The final Chapter 6 summarizes the study in general and highlights implications for further research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction of chapter

The highlighted environmental changes in the marketing communication landscape underpin the need for further investigation to explore the effects of new media in B2B (Cortez and Johnston, 2017; Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020; Pandey, Nayal and Rathore, 2020) and to develop new tactical and strategical approaches to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Based on the introduction, Chapter 2 details the theoretical background to describe the current status in the relevant research disciplines. The literature review contains the disciplines of strategic marketing communication in Chapter 2.2 and strategic decision-making in Chapter 2.3. As the study is limited to the German industry sector, Chapter 2.4 will describe the cultural specifics that the research project outcome might affect in additionally and will thereby round up the literature review as it aims to identify possible influencing constructs on the strategic marketing communication decision-making process with an internal or external context in a structured way.

The identified constructs thus represent a closer structure for the object of investigation, the decision-making process and allow to identify the research gap for this investigation, which will be described in Chapter 2.5. The findings in combination with the identified research gap result in the derived conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 12 in Chapter 2.6. The framework allows the reader a structured description and deduction of the current state of literature within the major research disciplines and connects the major research domains in the context of the present research. Finally, the chapter closes with a general summary in Chapter 2.7.

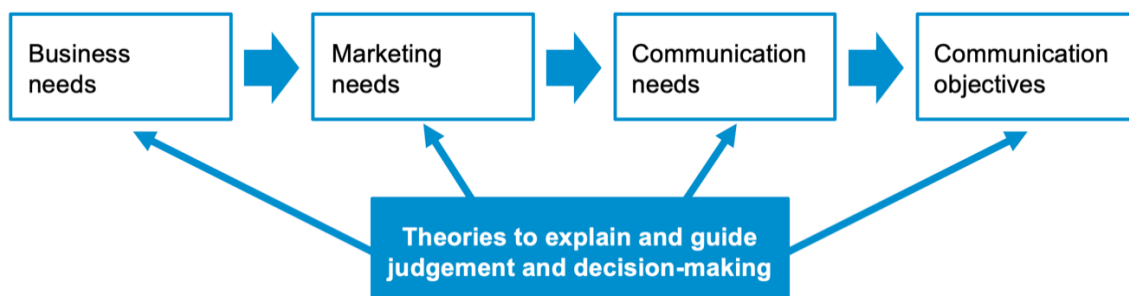
2.2 Strategic marketing communication

2.2.1 Introducing marketing communication

Marketing communication can also be described as the “promotion of producer[s] and product[s] to a predetermined audience to elicit a desired response” (Varey, 2002:10). It represents the area of promotion within the marketing mix described earlier and additionally stands for the function of communication in general (Kayode, 2014). Thus, marketing defines the conditions under which communication takes place to support the management of demand for goods and services and their supply. Marketing

communication is taking over the lead in managing relationships and taking up ideas to be deployed by initiating communication to fulfil customer demands and requirements (Drucker, 1954; Hänninen and Karjaluoto, 2017). In the hierarchies of marketing capabilities, marketing communication capabilities are typically built on fundamental lower levels in the organisation (Morgan and Slotegraaf, 2012). Communication is described as a process by which a value is generated for a specific purpose through “the customer’s integration and sense making of all messages from any source, company-driven or stemming from other sources” (Finne and Grönroos, 2017:446). For companies, the meaning and purpose of communication relies on seeking the most effective way to exchange information with customers, prospects, or other external stakeholders (Holm, 2006). It must also be mentioned that communication contains aspects like market research to discover market needs (Kayode, 2014). Marketing communication is therefore seen as the process in which a customer or prospect perceives a company’s product and service offering (Finne and Grönroos, 2017).

In sum, it fulfils the function of exchanging information and generating persuasion to expand primary and selective demands. By this, marketing communication contains the usage of one or more media channels out of the mass communication sector or individual media channels that are based on the internet, telemarketing, or direct marketing, including email (Kayode, 2014). Besides initiating communication, marketing communication also takes on a mediating role in managing past and current experiences of customers with its future behaviour and by managing personalized communication and thus the relationship between a company and its customers and prospects (Hänninen and Karjaluoto, 2017). Marketing communication management can therefore add value for all parties involved – providers and customers (Varey, 2002).



*Figure 3 - Marketing Communication management
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Varey, 2002:2)*

In summary, it can be said that corporate communication helps to market products and services, promotes the development of intangible values such as brand or image, contributes to the maintenance of relationships with customers and other stakeholders, and contributes to corporate strategy by monitoring public opinion through communication channels (Zerfaß and Volk, 2019).

2.2.2 Introduction of strategic marketing communication

In Chapter 1.1, marketing has been described as a management process which consists of planning, implementing, and controlling related activities. The same counts for communication activities as part of the 7P concept described. In this regard, strategic marketing, including all sub-areas such as marketing communication, can be understood as the “organisation’s strategy that determines its critical decisions regarding corporate-level actions, customer-level actions, and market-level actions [to] help the organisation create value for its customers and stakeholders” (Kumar, Sharma and Gupta, 2017:166). Thus, the strategic process for designing marketing communication includes the identification of the target group and communication goals, its content design and communication channel selection, the budgeting and decision-making on the designed measures, as well as their implementation and measurement (Kotler et al., 2019).

As there are many communications channel options available today, the selection and definition of which option is the most suitable for the appropriate communication target, the effectiveness (suitability), as well as the efficiency of the activity (performance), can be accessed to determine and judge decisions regarding the communication channel selection and steering (Varey, 2002). Initial findings on interactions between marketing channels, IMC and consumer engagement can be found in the literature. However, there has been insufficient research on omnichannel marketing related to brand and communication channel choice (Manser Payne, Peltier and Barger, 2017). In sum, relatively rare investigations could be identified that consider a holistic concept that combines theoretical marketing communication approaches to cope with the increasing complexity of the communication landscape and the need for more transparency, as well as with the organisational challenges for implementing and strategically developing their marketing communication approach. The following Chapter 2.2.5 will introduce possible planning concepts and their objectives, which have been identified in the literature. Those currently most frequently used are also described, as it can be assumed that they will also be discussed during the data collection phase.

In addition to the strategic planning of the communication channel mix and its development, the budgeting process to be resourced for the execution of the communication mix is essential to strategic marketing communication (Kotler et al., 2019). Common models are briefly presented in Chapter 2.2.6 to be able to classify the budgeting process that belongs to the decision-making process later.

The decision-making process on the communication channel mix, its measures and the provision of resources depend on the organisational marketing communication capabilities. These are addressed in the final subsection before the decision theory is described in more detail in Chapter 2.3.

2.2.3 Distinction of B2B

Markets are generally made up of several providers as well as consumers of services that are related to the supplier-demand relationship (Meffert et al., 2019). There are both markets that focus on consumers (B2C) and markets that focus on business with other companies (B2B). The distinction between those kinds of markets is also relevant for this research because customers' and companies' behaviour in terms of communication do have some differences, but also intersections, when comparing both kinds of markets (Mora Cortez and Johnston, 2017). The mentioned differences and the intersections will be highlighted during this chapter.

In general, B2B companies can act as providers and demanders simultaneously. The sales markets in B2B differ in terms of their type of demand. Depending on the volume of goods and services in demand, a distinction must be made between the capital goods market, the industrial goods market, and the general B2B market (Frauendorf, Kähm, and Kleinaltenkamp, 2007). The capital goods market is limited to industrial consumer goods, such as systems or machines (Kirchgeorg, 2018a). In addition to consumer goods, the industrial goods market includes goods such as raw materials, auxiliary materials, and operating materials (Backhaus and Voeth, 2011). In its entirety, B2B encompasses all relationships and forms of service exchange between companies (Kollmann, Kirchgeorg and Krieger, 2018).

B2C and B2B overlap along the entire value chain. The B2C demand is triggered directly by a provider. This means that there is a business between a merchant and an end consumer (not a merchant). The provider passes the need on to its manufacturer. These

transactions between companies can be assigned to B2B. The demand in these markets often shifts in time and arises in several stages along the value chain. This is because consumer goods are traded in B2C, whereas in B2B products must be manufactured and are significantly more complex (Frauendorf, Kähm, and Kleinaltenkamp, 2007).

Depending on the goods to be procured, the purchase decision and the associated process must be made in any case. In contrast to B2C, B2B is a derived demand for services with which capital goods are created. The purchased services are often complex and have a high degree of individualization, so the procurement phase often extends over a longer period. Organizations are in demand of these services. They are characterized by professional buyers or groups of people taking the buying decision jointly (Meffert et al., 2019; Chlebišová, Kyzeková and Zajarošová, 2011; Backhaus and Voeth, 2011). This composition of a group of people is also described as a buying centre and represents an additional influence on the buying decisions besides advertisements or communication messages of the provider (Chlebišová, Kyzeková and Zajarošová, 2011). Depending on the formalization of the buying process, different people are involved in the buying process in different roles. A classic distinction is made between the user, the purchaser, the decision-maker, the influencer, and the information selector (gatekeeper) (Kirchgeorg, 2018b). Another difference between B2C and B2B is that in B2B, there is a relatively small number of customers facing a smaller group of providers (Kotler, Bliemel and Keller, 2007).

The mentioned B2B specifics also impact how B2B companies communicate to their multiple stakeholders and stakeholder groups. Investigations in B2B marketing communication research have outlined that especially communication channels with direct contact are used to address messages to customers and prospects. Besides direct sales contacts, direct marketing and advertising in industry-specific media or sponsorships still count as the most relevant channels (Lichtenthal and Eliaz, 2005; Lichtenthal et al., 2003). In addition, digital marketing has developed into one of the most critical communication mediums for B2B over the last decades (Deng et al., 2021), even though the highest budget spending is still directed towards live marketing activities, e.g., trade fairs or customer events (BVIK, 2021). Besides a website or e-mails, social media communication has become a relevant channel for B2B. One reason is the individualized two-way communication opportunity, which allows an entirely new form of individual customer interaction and engagement supporting relationship building (Ryan and Jones,

2012). Users expect an interactive exchange, and companies and network users do have the possibility to act as thought leaders (Katona and Sarvary, 2014). It allows companies to build relationships, widen the stakeholder relationship management, support sales and business development as well as allow co-creation (Rose et al., 2021).

Despite all these described added values, a different adaption speed and focus of academia is recognizable between B2C and B2B. B2B research has received by far less attention compared to B2C. This also accounts for the main theories like Customer Journey concepts used in this research (Grewal and Sridhar, 2021). Additionally, it must be stated that B2C normally recognizes and acknowledges trends far quicker than B2B (Michaelidou et al., 2011) and adaptations of latest technologies and trends in B2B are still viewed with some scepticism (Zaif and Cerchia, 2019). One example of this is the adoption and usage of social media, which can also be shaped by the misperception and existing capabilities of marketers (Lacka and Chong, 2016). Against the background of the convergence of B2C and B2B marketing communication in certain areas, a limitation of the literature research to B2B literature in the context of this study must also be critically questioned, and corresponding findings should not be subject to blanket exclusion.

On the contrary, B2C literature can make a complementary contribution to this study at these points, as it is about identifying process steps and influencing factors on internal decisions for the strategic development of marketing communication. Since these determine the further development of marketing communication in B2B, but the object studied has nothing to do with the target group itself. Models and theories from the discipline of marketing communication theory used for decision-making cannot be excluded because they have been proven in just one of these market segments. They must be considered in the analysis and evaluation of the present research and thus also possibly prove to be applicable in another business field. The approach of evaluating both disciplines as part of the same marketing context is also already part of the discussion in marketing literature (Gummesson and Polese, 2009). Similar approaches to review the literature from both disciplines are also taken within a certain industrial marketing context like social media, from researchers like Neuhaus, Millemann and Nijssen (2022), as the usage applies to both.

Communication activities are seen as one of the most effective strategies for building relationships in B2B (Murphy and Sashi, 2018). Of course, sellers must adapt the communication appropriate to its customers (Koponen, Julkunen and Asai, 2019). Strategic planning of communication is vital to ensure addressing the right message and image of a brand to customers and prospects (Chlebišová, Kyzeková and Zajarošová, 2011). Especially with regard to branding, it must be mentioned that it plays a significant role in B2B in creating emotional relations (Lynch and De Chernatony, 2004).

2.2.4 Business types in industrial marketing

As described in the chapter above, buying decisions in B2B are affected by its specific market characteristics. Those must be considered while addressing marketing activities toward customers and prospects (Chelbisová, Kyzeková and Zajarosova, 2011). Different marketing strategies must be selected depending on the market type. Due to substantial heterogeneity in B2B, Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015) suggest facing marketing activities, on the one hand, to be application-oriented and individual, but they should also have a certain degree of generalisation to do justice to practice as well as to theory. In their approach to distinguish general B2B business types, Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015) developed a transaction-based theory differentiating between three main types as a basis for developing marketing programs:

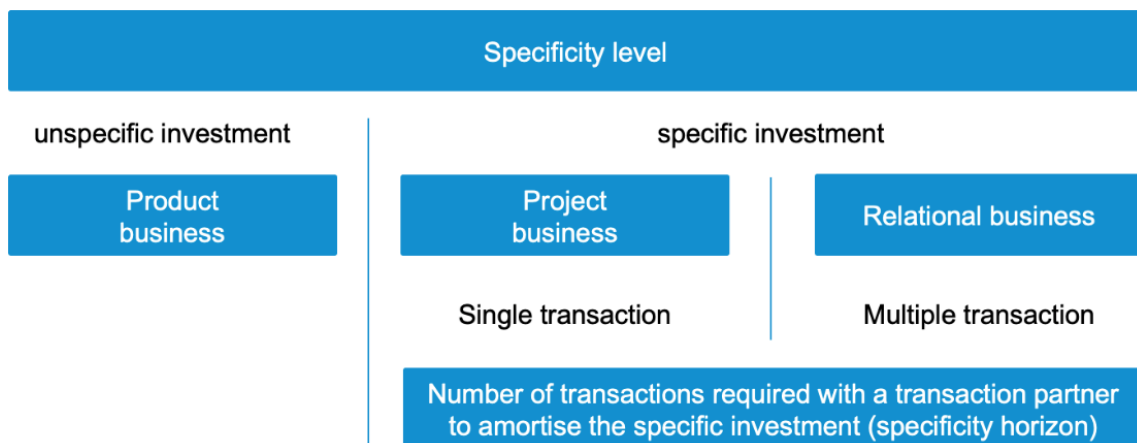


Figure 4 - Business types in industrial marketing
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Backhaus and Muehlfeld, 2015)

- The *product business* is characterised by good information gathering in the run-up to the conclusion of the contract, reducing uncertainties. From the buyer's point of view, the aim is to create as comprehensive a picture as possible of the subjectively perceived fulfilment of functions in the run-up to the transaction. Since the provider faces an anonymous market and is interchangeable, it is crucial to ensure an efficient and effective information policy before the transaction while addressing an anonymous market.
- The *project business* is characterised by dependency and exploitation risk on the supplier's part. For this reason, the communication and marketing of competence in the provision of services, the communication of a fair price-performance ratio, and the use of touchpoints such as showrooms for customer acquisition are crucial.
- The *relational business* is characterised by recurring transactions. Due to the higher risk, building and communicating a solid brand can reduce the buyer's perceived risk.

As stated previously in this chapter, the general marketing strategy affects the communication approach. Therefore, the B2B business types indicate how appropriate marketing strategies determine and affect the communication approach. For this reason, the concept of Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015) represents the first guiding theory for this research that allows an evaluation scheme of the data to be collected. Based on this theory, it can be seen whether differences in the strategic planning of marketing communication differ depending on the type of business. However, it should also be mentioned in conclusion that an increasing convergence can be observed, as providers also partly change their business type over time (Backhaus and Muehlfeld, 2015).

2.2.5 Marketing communication theories and concepts

2.2.5.1 Overview of concepts

Communication links people together and creates relationships. Marketing communication, therefore, can also be seen as an activity that supports persuasion through a communication process (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). In today's omni-channel communication environment, theories like integrated marketing communication (IMC) evolved to ensure communication message consistency (Finne and Grönroos, 2017) and to use appropriate communication concepts to operationalise the company's marketing strategy. One frequently used concept in this regard is the Customer Journey (CJ)

concept (Laverie, Humphrey and Bolton, 2018), which allows one to generate and consider the whole path of a customer along its decision-making process of purchasing (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016) and therefore help to plan customer experiences (Varnali, 2019). The planning process, outlined in these theories, can then follow several strategies. As marketing communication contains the promotional perspective, the intention of marketing communication measures, out the of the perspective of the acting company, is to create awareness, construct knowledge around themes, products, and solutions offerings, as well as to motivate purchase (Varey, 2002).

For this research, the CJ approach represents the underpinning model for decision-making in the context of B2B marketing communication. In Chapter 1.3 the challenges resulting from digitalization in the research discipline under investigation research discipline was introduced. They impact the importance and relevance of all customer touchpoints in B2B, as customer buying behaviour and information seeking, as well as supplier selection and contact, have changed (Steward et al., 2019). With all these technological advances, the importance to understand which channels customers prefer and how they are linked to each other becomes more important to allocate the companies resources accordingly (Koch and Hartmann, 2022). The CJ theories therefore illustrate a suitable perspective for this research to understand the current status and possibilities of marketing communication and outline in which areas companies should strategically develop their B2B marketing communication.

The elements of the promotional communication perspective are also reflected in other available theories and concepts. For instance, the media richness theory helps to determine which communication channel and mode has the best utilisation for the given purpose of communication. The media richness theory thereby considers the media properties to objectively determine the use of the medium (Ishii, Lyons and Carr, 2019). In addition, media synchronicity theory can help to manage conversations between multiple senders and receivers (Murphy and Sashi, 2018). Advertising models that should create awareness are, for example, the AIDA model (Hassan, Nadzim, Shiratuddin, 2015; Rehman et al., 2014) or further theories with more specific purposes, e.g. the Lavidge and Steiner Model (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961). All stages depend on the fact that companies need to know which of its stakeholders to approach with which kind of information, at what point, and where. To answer those questions, media selection theories have been developed, stating that various influencing factors can

affect the choice of communication channels, as communication channels fulfil different tasks. The latter always requires defining a communication goal before defining a communication strategy that provides guidance when selecting a communication channel and message content (George, Carlson and Valacich, 2013).

Looking at the theories and concepts mentioned in the paragraph above in more detail, the focus relies on the processes and procedures to implement marketing communication measures. Internal processes of the decision-making and evaluation process are not considered comprehensively as part of these theories. However, the CJ and IMC approaches offer approaches in this respect, which will be examined in more detail in the following chapters to understand their contribution to the strategic development of marketing communication.

2.2.5.2 Customer journey approach

Knowing customer decision-making processes is integral to strategically plan marketing communication activities (Keller, 2016). The lack of awareness about customer behaviour currently increases due to the constantly increasing complexity of media through additional communication channels (Cortez and Johnston, 2017). But also, because customers' decision-making processes are long lasting, go through multiple channels and additionally multiple stakeholders with different needs have to be covered (Ludwig et al., 2017). Today, scholars and practitioners are interested in the field of customer experience. It consists of all individuals' direct and indirect contacts with a company over time. The contacts are called touchpoints (Varnali, 2019; Homburg, Jozić and Kuehnl, 2017). This kind of touchpoint along the customer journey can be anything, by which information is transferred from the company to a customer or prospect, such as a digital touchpoint like a website visit or a physical advertisement in public. All these touchpoints not only affect the brand perception, but also influence the purchasing behaviour or customer satisfaction (Aichner and Gruber, 2017). The approach, which has its roots in the field of customer experience, has gained interest, as customers and companies are nowadays interacting in various communication channels in multiple ways with each other (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Concerning customer experience, it helps to grow profitability and financial performance by ensuring trustful and long-term relationships (Reinartz and Kumar, 2003; Palmatier, Dant and Grewal, 2007; Yongvongphaiboon and Chantamas, 2021).

With digitalisation, an increasing blending between marketing and sales can be perceived to ensure a contemporary customer experience (Rusthollkarhu et al., 2022). This means that customer decision journeys are part of the customer journey approach. These decision journeys consist of several steps, each composed of different means of communication and touchpoints. Suppose the awareness phase aims to generate widespread attention, in that case, a different set of communication media can be used than in the post-sales phase, which aims to address existing customers in good time before a repeat purchase (Court et. al., 2009).

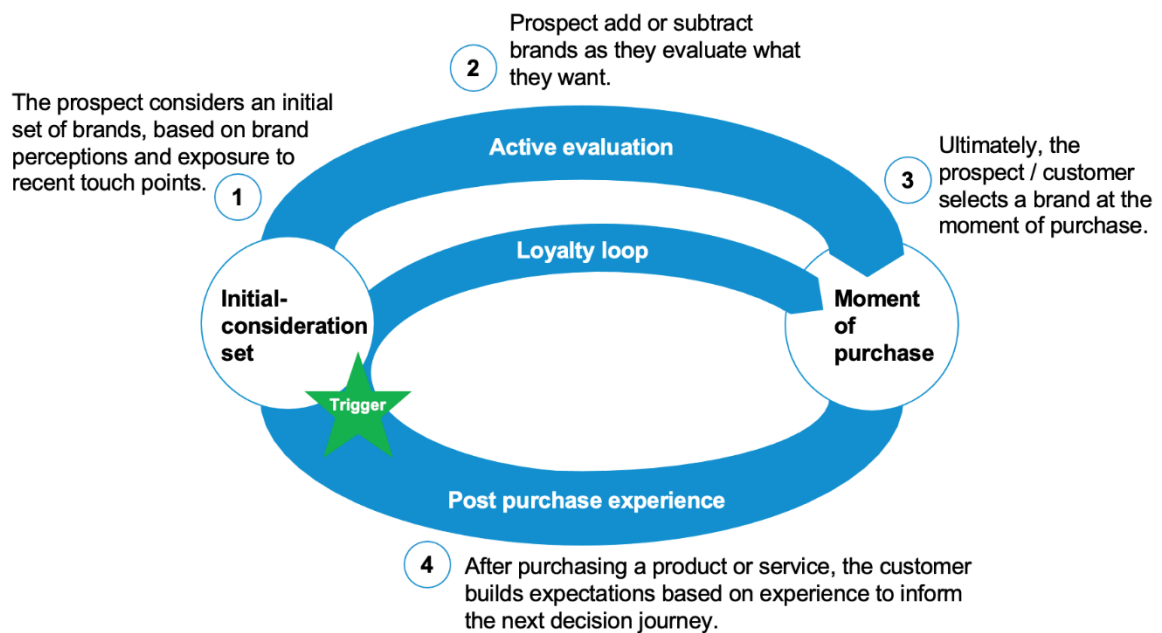


Figure 5 - The customers decision journey
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Court et al., 2009)

With the digitalisation in B2B already discussed, the exploration of B2B customer journeys is one of the most current and relevant research priorities, even if actors are exposed to a high level of complexity compared to B2C (Lundin and Kindström, 2023). It additionally supports the already mentioned growing focus in corporate strategy activities to create a strong customer experience (Varnali, 2019).

2.2.5.3 Integrated marketing communication

The concept of IMC aims to steer communication measures via multiple channels with one voice (Finne and Grönroos, 2017). The communication strategy planning concept can support to manage today's highly fragmented and complex communication landscape (Graber and Dotson, 2002) and therefore contributes to increase the

efficiency of communication (Chlebišová, Kyzeková and Zajarošová, 2011). Since the initial publication of the concept, three different approaches of conceptual frameworks have been raised (Tafesse and Kitchen, 2017). Whereas Nowak and Phelps (1994) focus on the outcomes of behaviour and image-related factors, Dunican and Moriarty (1998) investigated the impact of IMC on customer relationships and brand value. As a third approach, Kitchen and Schultz (1999) addressed and focused on the relevance of IMC with regard to customer information and knowledge in combination with its impact on a firm's profitability (Reid, Luxton, and Mavondo, 2005).

As all three conceptual frameworks differ on their level of organisational integration. Nowak and Phelps (1994) focus on a tactical integration with short-term activities around implementing one-time media campaigns. In contrast, Dunican and Moriarty (1998) intend a strategic integration focus that allows the integration of cross-functional communication activities through multiple organisational processes. In comparison, Kitchen and Schultz (1999) discuss a function integration focus allowing an outside-in perspective on marketing communication activities that encompasses all customer touchpoints resulting of four stages of integration. Regardless of which framework is used, however, IMC is considered a strategic planning tool to address the more stringent complexity in communication. This applies to both B2C and B2B, although the concept has been applied less to B2B in the literature. The effect of IMC in the B2B context, with its special features such as the different customer and market environment, has therefore not yet been comprehensively investigated and fully confirmed (Garber, Kim and Dotson, 2020).

In the last few years, the effectiveness and consistency of marketing communication were mainly discussed based on IMC approaches (Rėklaitis and Pilelienė, 2019). Theoretical investigations have proven that IMC has an impact on business performance, which can contribute to competitive advantages and brand equity and communication effectiveness (Bruhn and Schnebelen, 2017; Widjaja, 2022). Some of the IMC concepts focus on how communication effectiveness could be increased by consistent content management (Mortimer and Laurie, 2017). At the same time, other IMC concepts focus on marketing concepts and models that pursue distinct communication channels and their modes of operation. One established example for the second mentioned IMC is the distinction between paid media, owned media and earned media by Keller (2016). For social media, the IMC concept can improve brand messaging

consistency as proven by Rehman, Gulzar and Aslam (2022) or Kliatchko (2005, 2008). In addition, user-generated content from social media channels is not considered in IMC concepts (Ananda, Hernandez-Garcia and Lamberti, 2016; Bruce and Solomon, 2013). The same applies for viral marketing, mobile marketing or search engine marketing (Castronovo and Huang, 2012).

With regard to the planning process, two different approaches can be selected. The first is a top-down approach. The procedure foresees aligning the overall design of communication measures to support short-term sales and long-term brand equity. The second approach follows a bottom-up procedure, by which the most appropriate communication measures will be selected after evaluation on a tactical level (Noppel, 1999; Rapert, 2017; Batra and Keller, 2016).

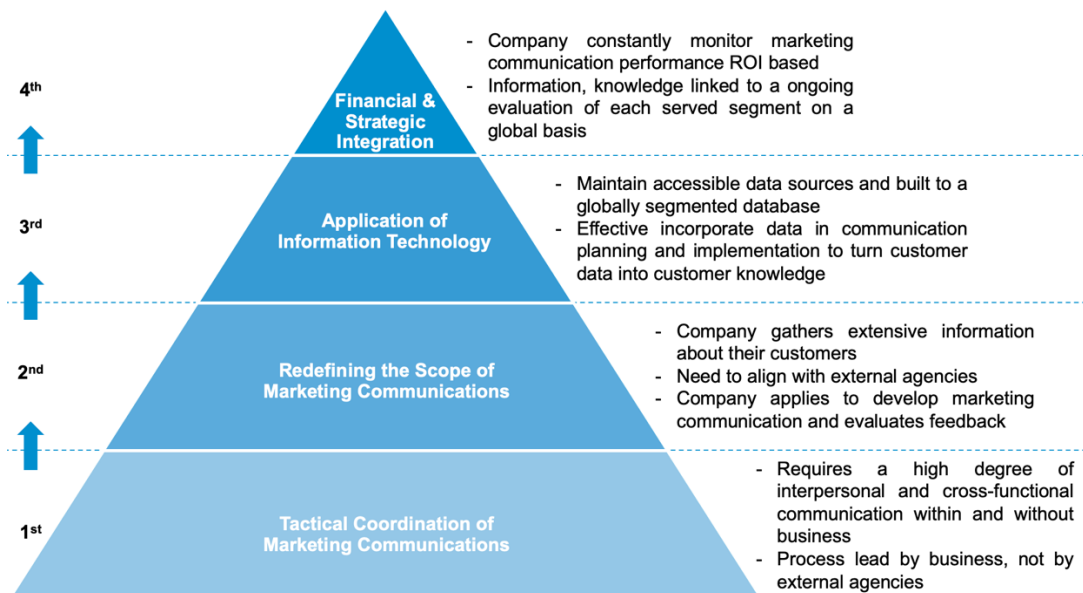


Figure 6 - Integrated Marketing Communication pyramid
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Schultz and Kitchen, 2000)

A highly changing environment leads to high risks in the perception of decision-makers. For this reason, strategic decisions to implement IMC concepts are procrastinated, or management declines to decide (Wright et al., 2004). In addition, marketing departments struggle with implementing IMC strategies as they lack power within an organisation and the relevant stakeholders who could make this strategic decision decide against it because they do not fully understand the IMC concept (Mortimer and Laurie, 2017). Besides this more strategic top-down planning concept, no other holistic planning process could be identified in the literature to develop communication channels strategically. These findings provide complementary support for the research gap

described above and make the consideration of the discipline of strategic decision-making appear all the more important in this context. The need for further investigations in B2B marketing communication and more practical guidance is also highlighted in this regard (Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2017).

Clarity about the role of top management in the implementation of IMC in organisations is still lacking (Mortimer and Laurie, 2017). Where Kliatchko and Schulz (2014) have figured out that top management in the Asia-Pacific region is not supporting the implementation, Swani (2004) underpins the necessity that both marketing managers, as well as top management, are essential to make the strategic decisions on implementing IMC. Additional support is given by Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan and McDonald (2005), who highlight top management's essential role in building a brand identity-oriented culture. Besides all the findings above, it must be mentioned, that the number of investigations of IMC in the B2B context is still rare (Garber, Kim and Dotson, 2020).

Despite the possibilities of optimisation described above, there are also critical remarks regarding IMC concepts, for example, insufficient validation (Barker, 2013). There is also insufficient consideration of the CJ along the contact points from the customer's perspective (Kitchen, 2010). Most of the strategic marketing communication and IMC literature involve an investigation of the effects of a dedicated communication channel. The impact of this selected channel on the company's communication channel mix, on the other hand, is usually not considered (Valos et al., 2017; Mortimer and Laurie, 2017). According to Barker (2010), the need to adopt a different strategic communication perspective in IMC is also due to the rapidly changing environment of the internet and digital communication channels. The goal here should be to reduce the strategic communication approach not only in relation to the current situation and thus the current business focus, the message and the brand. Rather, by adopting a different perspective, different theories such as 7P, IMC, Integrated Communication, Integrated Brand Communication and Strategic Communication should be united.

2.2.6 Budget allocation in marketing

Following the strategic approach to defining marketing communication activities, the previous two chapters can help to identify and describe the behaviour of target groups, define objectives and design communication activities. The next step in the strategic

definition and planning of communication is to set the budget, decide on the media and communication mix, and determine how to measure results to guide the implementation of communication measures (Lazarević-Moravčević, 2019; Kotler et al., 2019). Budget allocation thereby is understood as a process of spreading a set budget in the most efficient way for all activities (Berger and Bechwati, 2001). Theories presented, such as IMC, can be seen as supportive tools in this context, considering available resources and evaluating the maximum impact at an efficiently used cost (Kotler et al., 2019).

With the increasing relevance of marketing and marketing communication in companies, the need for more budget transparency has increased (Bigné, 1995). Budget allocation optimisation in marketing is of interest in praxis and theory (Smith, 2020). Whereas the contribution to research on budget allocation by marketing scholars is rare, the managerial relevance is increasing. The budgets are often seen as investments, as the effect is often only visible with a time lag. They are often defined on an annual basis and under a high complexity as they are defined under dynamic optimisation problems (Fischer et al., 2011).

There are judgment-oriented techniques that are based on subjective judgments of involved executives and their set of values and predictions. But also, more data-driven approaches are recognisable. However, the optimisation problem can be manifold, and the optimisation can follow different objectives. These can include lead generation, for example, but also reach or media switching costs (Berger and Bechwati, 2001). Examples of strategically planned marketing communication budgets are the (Kotler et al., 2019):

- **Affordable method**, by which communication budgets are defined based on the management's opinion of what is affordable for the company.
- **Percentage-of-sales method**, which is based on a defined percentage of sales or based on the sales price of a product.
- **Competitive parity method**, which aims to achieve a party of the share-of-voice in the market in relation to its competitors.
- **Objective-and-tasks method**, which determines the budget based on objectives and estimates costs to perform the tasks necessary to achieve goals.

Kotler et al. (2019) recommend planning the overall budget based on product and market needs before aggregating communication costs and thereby following a bottom-up rather than top-down approach. However, it should be noted that international marketing programs are often defined in headquarters, but local execution is often in the subsidiary's responsibility. Standardization can help increase a company's performance while increasing budget efficiency simultaneously (Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou, 2006). Against this background and in relation to IMC, it can be concluded that contemporary techniques are still in demand with the increasing complexity and that there is a need for research (Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020).

Therefore, the inclusion of these findings in relation to the present study consists of examining which techniques serve as a basis for determining marketing communication budgets.

2.2.7 Organisational marketing (communication) capabilities

Strategic management research has always recognised that marketing plays a vital role in business performance (Hult, Ketchen and Slater, 2005; Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou, 2006). In contrast, contemporary practice shows that the discipline of marketing and communication in companies still needs to gain visibility from top management but already receives greater attention compared to former times (Wierseman, 2013). One of the reasons for the already increased attention might come from the fact that stakeholders, shareholders, but also customers or employees influence the future of companies, which results, for example, from their communication within their environment (Cornelissen, van Bekkum and Van Ruler, 2006). Following the literature findings, the marketing communication function often had to face the challenge of being seen as a function that, with few exceptions, generates costs. In this respect, the position of the function is also more difficult than other company functions. Nowadays, however, interest has increased, and the benefits of the function are more widely recognised. With the increasing relevance, accountability within organizations and the need for more transparency about the success of measures are increasing (Zerfaß, 2015).

The models described above do not enable most companies to develop their marketing communication approach from a tactical to a more strategic approach per the developments described above (Keller, 2006). The reasons, therefore, have not been investigated thoroughly. Possible reasons might result from a lack of information about

internal stakeholders, organisational structures or personal skills of decision makers. Mortimer and Laurie (2017) identified that the level of marketing qualifications is shrinking, the higher the management levels are. According to Mora Cortez and Johnston (2017), one of today's challenges in B2B marketing is that B2B companies have also been successful without comprehensive theoretical information and knowledge of the discipline. Following their study, only 2.31% of 173 contacted marketing and sales managers stated that they read at least one academic article a year. This also illustrated the beforementioned lack of knowledge transfer from theory into practice. It also led to a growing gap between theoretical possibilities and generated findings in research and operational practice. It also highlights the need to build more comprehensive marketing communication capabilities in an organisation.

Marketing communication capabilities describe the company's ability to manage its image. This can contain advertising or public relations activities (McKee et al., 1992). Here, social capabilities can support antecedent marketing capabilities (Acquaah, 2007). Since top management uses business and political networking most in the organization, their social capital is the most important for the company (Peng and Luo, 2000). Networking activities of the top management reduce uncertainty because gained insights are primarily associated with the development of market capabilities (Park and Luo, 2001). Additionally, networking capabilities or managerial tie utilization also ensure an understanding of customer preferences (Wernerfelt, 1996; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). For this reason, trustful relationships of the top management can be valuable for marketing communication (Acquaah, 2007), and reduce uncertainty (Park and Luo, 2001).

In addition, organisational marketing communication skills are also influenced by culture, as the social capital created by a homogeneous and national group of people is transferred to business (Kemper, Engelen and Brettel, 2011). Capabilities in this regard are understood as complex bundles resulting from managerial skills and collective learning. They are closely connected to organisational processes, as capabilities are experienced through the organisational processes (Day, 1994). One of the reasons is that national culture determines the behaviours and perceptions of individuals (Webster and White, 2010; Steenkamp, 2001). That is also one of the reasons why testing of marketing theory and models is required in the cultural setting to prove its validity and degree of generalisability (Steenkamp, 2001).

Investigations have proven that management is shaping the organisation with its characteristics and processes (Geletkanycz and Hambrick 1997). A company's performance results from its resources and capabilities. Especially, because most market information is available from external sources. (Wernerfelt, 1984). In this context, knowledge is seen as the most strategically relevant resource. Bringing together the knowledge of individuals within an organisation is thus considered an essential organisational capability. This capability is particularly relevant in dynamic market environments with dynamically competitive conditions (Grant, 1996).

Especially top management can contribute to this, as they usually invest more time in networking than other levels of employees (Wernerfelt, 1984; Peng and Lou, 2000). Their actions are embedded in social networks (Kemper, Engelen, Brettel, 2011; Acquah 2007; Peng and Luo 2000). Networking can thereby decrease the cause-effect ambiguity and uncertainty coming from market developments (Park and Lou, 2001). This is because the social context in which managers operate contains more than the organisation itself and derived market insights from the managers network. Also, bounded rationality shapes the manager's perception (Geletkanycz and Hambrick 1997). The above points provide the basis that social capital does affect marketing capabilities (Lachman, Nedd and Hinings, 1994). Following Kempler, Engelen and Brettel (2011), potential moderating variables like power distance, collectivism or uncertainty avoidance can impact those. For this reason, the moderating variables will be explained in the next chapter of decision-making. The social capital construct itself will be explained hereafter.

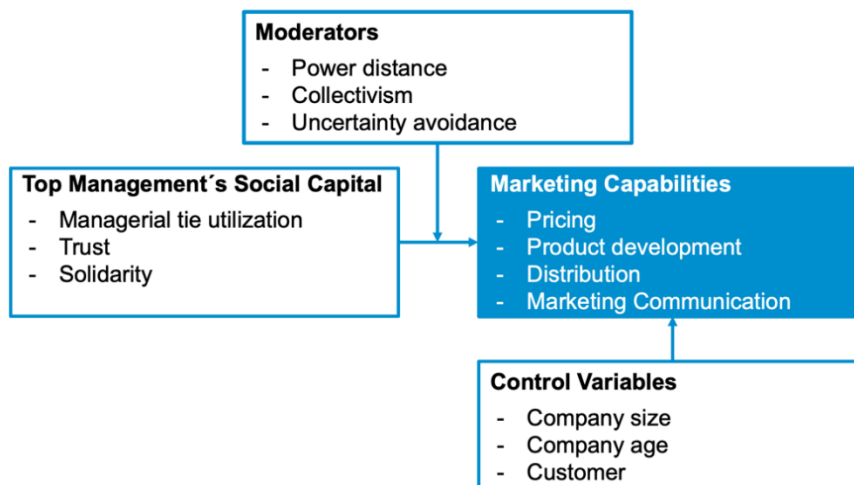


Figure 7 - Marketing Capabilities
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Kemper, Engelen and Brettel, 2011)

As already described, marketing communication capabilities describe the ability to successfully manage the corporate image through communication activities and public

relations (McKee et al.,1992). The networking capabilities of the management can support detecting market changes and needs earlier. This adaption would result in competitive advantages and might lead to the opportunity to anticipate market changes in general as well (Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998). Trust supports the ability to act effectively and efficiently in marketing communications with regard to the exchange of external institutions due to the credibility and ability of top management (Acquaah, 2007). Therefore, understanding the market and environment is a key driver of marketing performance (Wiereman, 2013). It also refers to the quality of relationships between individuals within a company and indicate how the culture of failure and mistakes is evaluated within the group (Atuahene-Gima and Murray 2007). Solidarity within the relationships will help to ensure effective collaboration between involved parties and, throughout the collaboration, smooth implementation of measures (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998).

The national culture creates orientation and determines how people perceive situations and interact with each other. Therefore, the national culture represents the most relevant environmental characteristic as a moderating variable (Papadakis and Barwise, 1997b; Webster and White, 2010). The influence of national culture on organisational culture is confirmed in the literature. As it represents cultural values, it is not only relevant to the corporate culture itself. It is also vital for a company's marketing strategy to ensure addressing prospects and customers in the right way (Webster and White, 2010). Therefore, the cultural dimensions from Hofstede (2001) will be used as a reference in this research to detect the influence of the dimensions of power distance, the expression of individualism vs collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. A more detailed description of Hofstede's cultural dimensions follows in Chapter 2.4. In addition, benchmarking, also with regard to marketing communication, can also be seen as a tool to improve its own marketing capabilities. It is understood as a structured process in which one compares oneself with the "best practice" identified according to the business. By this, it represents a learning tool that additionally supports managers in market orientation and understanding of their external market environment (Vorhies, Morgan and Autry, 2009).

In an organisational context, knowledge is generated through the interaction of involved stakeholders (Nonaka, 1994). A critical aspect of making appropriate decisions regarding marketing communication is raising all stakeholders to the same level of information and knowledge (Elbanna and Child, 2007). Decisions of communication managers are

typically influenced by the exchange of information between customers or stakeholders, sales-related employees, and communication agencies, who consult the managers on channel-specific topics, their own experience, and by scientific findings. Table 1 illustrates an overview of forms of mentioned information and resulting knowledge.

Following the target to fulfil customer expectations, the group of customers and prospects contribute relevant information for communication managers, who must decide on communication activities to fulfil business targets (Hänninen and Karjaluoto, 2017). Customers can actively deliver feedback related to interaction with the company (Senguo, Xixiang, and Kilango, 2017). In addition, it is also possible to collect indirect information about customers and prospects through communication measures (Wiesel, Pauwels and Arts, 2011). Another group contributing information for knowledge generation is internal stakeholders, who interact with customers and prospects (Campbell, 2003). This group could provide relevant information to communication managers, which could help to develop communication measures. A similar contribution of information that could help understand customers and optimise communication measures can be delivered through external partners, like agencies, or even through science.

The nature of the knowledge at hand could be different for all the groups mentioned. Therefore, a short description of the existing knowledge of the stakeholder groups is given below and summarised in Table 1. A distinction is made between explicit knowledge, derived from data interpretation, and tacit knowledge, which is derived from experiences, feelings and values and thus describes an individual's understanding of the external world (Richards, Foster and Morgan, 1998; Hackley, 1999).

Origin of information	Form of information	Nature of knowledge
Customers and prospects	Customer satisfaction survey	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; opinions; different timings of evaluation
	Exhibition visitor feedback	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; opinions
	Communication channel related information	Explicit knowledge; Quantitative, empirical and experiential; KPIs differ per channel
Organisational / Internal knowledge	Experience of sales related people	Tacit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; opinions
	Opinions of stakeholders	Tacit knowledge; Qualitative data; opinions
Agencies / External knowledge	Know-how of experts	Tacit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; opinions
	Published knowledge	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; opinions
	Market research	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Quantitative data; empirical
Science	Universities / Student projects	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical, experiential
	Studies / papers	Tacit + explicit knowledge; Qualitative and quantitative data; empirical; experimental

*Table 1 - Origin of knowledge
(Source: Author's own, based on findings in literature)*

Organisational / Internal knowledge:

Internal or organisational knowledge is generated through the interaction with customers and processed within an organisation to derive activities ensuring to develop customer-specific strategies (Campbell, 2003). Communication managers develop tacit knowledge during their daily business of analysing the available market and customer information. Increasing with the affiliation with company, tacit knowledge might become the dominant basis for decision-making, and context-based experience strengthens the personal opinion. This might lead to decisions effected by tacit knowledge (Hackley, 1999).

The circulation of knowledge and results of activities can follow various options. For instance, regularly created management reports or score card targets, on which the company development is evaluated. For situational activities or questions, flash reports with selected statements or figures dealing with a specific question could be the format for knowledge sharing. Daily key performance indicators are also relevant to steer and act based on the market situation. They can also support problem identification and decision-making. Another element to record knowledge is to establish an activity feedback process to improve the quality of activities.

The next aspect of knowledge generation, based on internal company information, is related to the personal background of communication managers. Personal skills, as well as experiences throughout the person's career, have an impact on decision-making. In this context, managers' capabilities and their impact have been described in the

paragraphs above (Wierseman, 2013). Besides making use of explicit knowledge, which a communication manager might acquire throughout stages in his career, he could also make use of agencies or studies. This context will be described in the associated paragraphs below.

The results of direct customer feedback via surveys and feedback functions or indirect customer feedback via implemented measures also are affected by the controlling approach and considered performance indicators. Depending on the professionalism of information processing tools, models, or methods to evaluate the information could be taken into consideration for decisions. Often communication managers focus on metrics, which help to analyse and forecast the marketing communication performance and thereby derive explicit knowledge. These metrics can generally be classified into three categories: marketing inputs (e.g., advertising spend), marketing outputs (e.g., reach or website visits) and business outputs (e.g., return on marketing investment) (Sexton, 2014). The risk exists that metrics, which should help steer communication measures, are misinterpreted. Besides, the way data is generated could additionally be influenced by a wrong collection method. These influences should also be evaluated during the analysis.

Additionally, internal knowledge is generated through information exchange with internal stakeholders. Information can be interpreted by all stakeholders, based on their individual profession and individual motivation, different and resulting opinions lead possibly to different decisions.

Agencies / External knowledge:

Companies are cooperating with agencies and external partners for different reasons. They could be involved in decisions as a sparring partner or knowledge carriers, as well as partners to ensure integrated marketing communication (Kitchen et al., 2004). Besides, they could also take over the lead for communication measures and make decisions under the authority of communication measures.

Since external partners or agencies act under a different premise as the company they are hired by, they can contribute additional external information and, therefore, explicit and tacit knowledge. The model for cooperation used here is information or service purchasing, where the company uses the information to provide an expert service that it

cannot provide itself. Otherwise, consultants/agencies may be called in to review issues and recommend remedial action. Of course, this approach can be understood from the perspective of a process consultancy, where the external agency or consultant brings in skills to diagnose and make constructive recommendations for improvement (Jugo, Pakozdi and Milas, 2020). The resulting knowledge and know-how of experts empowers externals on the one hand side to improve communication measures. On the other hand, the integration of external partners leads to an additional information and knowledge basis. The communication manager could also use it during the decision-making process.

To underline the expertise of agencies or external partners, some of them create frameworks or models from their experience. They take the frameworks as consulting approaches to other companies. It should be noted that the frameworks or models are developed out of the perspective of an agency, justifying, explaining and underlining the approach of action and consulting. Examples in the context of communications are the AIDA model, which contributes an understanding from an advertising psychology perspective (Lewis, 1908), or the R.A.C.E. principle, developed by Smartinsights, for online marketing activities (Chaffey, 2022). Mentioned frameworks or models tend to be developed based on experience. Generated knowledge based on it might therefore be classified as contested knowledge. Further, it is recommended to criticise the nature of knowledge in this context before making use of it. Besides providing expert knowledge and published frameworks to communication managers, external partners could also be instructed by companies to collect data or conduct a market study. The results could contain relevant knowledge about target groups or industries. By taking that information into account for decisions, the nature of information, its methodology and analysis must be critically reviewed.

In order to achieve the research target, all the above stakeholder groups are of interest. As the focus relies on understanding strategic marketing communication decision-making, the group of internal stakeholders must be investigated in detail. Whereas determining the impact of all other stakeholder groups on the group of internal stakeholders can contribute to the context of the research aim.

2.3 Decision-making

2.3.1 Introducing decision-making

Rational decision-making can be understood as a mental process of selecting and acting among several alternatives to find a solution to a particular problem (Okike and Amoo, 2014; Peterson, 2017). The complex alignment of non-routine decisions, which impacts the organisation internally and externally as well as the organisational performance, is understood as strategic decision-making (SDM) (Dean and Sharfman, 1996; Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). They are critical and fundamental and shape the course of a company (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). They are often made under uncertain conditions or without knowledge of all possible individual facts and consequences (De Winnaar and Scholtz, 2020).

Over the course of time, SDM has emerged as one of the most active management research disciplines, which is affected by behavioural decision theory and transaction cost economies (Schwenk, 1995). Strategic decision management has been of interest for both theoretical and practical reasons for a long time (Ireland and Miller, 2004; Papadakis and Barwise, 1997a) and can be distinguished between content research and process research. Content research focuses on adapting the corporate strategy in the operative context, whereas process research deals with the influencing factors and the procedural processes (Elbanna, 2006). Examples of process research are Mintzberg and Waters (1985), Dean and Sharfman (1993), Dutton et al. (1989) or Frederickson (1985), from which the contents will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs. At any rate, the two disciplines influence each other and should not be assessed as individual alternatives (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

As SDM affects organisations internally and externally, they are usually made by top management (Jaworski, 2011; Ginsberg, 1988) and are made by the interaction and counteraction between individuals. These interacting individuals or stakeholders can come from inside or outside the organisation (Nitisha, 2014; Dean and Sharfman, 1993). The interactive process to derive strategic decisions is also called strategic decision-making process (SDPM). Managers often perceive that the decision-making process (DMP) is determined by decision-specific characteristics (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998), even though it is not always the case (Elbanna and Child, 2007). In the majority of cases, however, the SDMP influenced by the interests of involved

managers, as well as on their power relations (Elbanna, 2006) or in other words, it is characterized by political behaviour (Wilson, 2003). These effects are also linked, among other things, to organisational structures and the group's interests that go with them (Pettigrew, 2001), and it must be differentiated between formal and informal decisions (Lew, Meyerowitz and Svensson, 2019). As organisational structures are always dependent on the business needs and environmental conditions (Legerer et al., 2009; Joseph and Gaba, 2020), the process of decision-making thereby differs between organisations and is additionally dependent on influences like corporate guidelines or stakeholders inside and outside an organisation (Dean and Sharfman, 1993).

Strategic decisions are usually characterised by uncertainty (Vecchiato, 2012) and their uniqueness, distinguishing them from recurring decisions. Strategic decisions also influence other decisions and are associated with certain risks since their effect is generally not certain (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998). Furthermore, even if strategic decisions are taken, understanding strategic goals, in the same manner can be a potential challenge for management teams. A potential barrier to strategy implementation can emerge when a misunderstanding between management and operational levels exists (Rapert, Velliquette and Garretson, 2002). In this regard, analytical comprehensiveness increases the quality of decisions since managers' bounded rationality and capabilities are limited by the procedure (Elbanna and Child, 2007). In the context of this research, these issues of misperceived customer needs can arise when specialist knowledge about customer and media behaviour out of the marketing communication departments is not shared with top management.

Although decisions are not only driven by the management functions and their context, which consists of internal and external factors. The process characteristics can also influence the results of decisions (Elbanna and Child, 2007) and can have a more substantial impact on the SDP than the top management or CEO (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002). Internal factors that affect SDM are the firm's performance or the size of a company (Papadakis and Barwise, 1997a; Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998). Complementary factors such as decision quality also impact the SDM and are determined by information input (Mador, 2000).

A complimentary link must be drawn to the issue of budget allocation, as the upper management functions mainly determine the budget allocation process (Eisenmann and

Bower, 2000). Management functions integrate differently in preparing and finalising investment decisions (Burgelman, 1983b; Maritan, 2001). To support decision-making processes for budget allocations, a resource allocation process (RAP) concept was developed by Bower (1970) and was later reworked by Burgelman (1983). Even though the RAP finds its roots in the 1970s, it has also been proven that formalised and rational decision-making processes to allocate budgets analytical comprehensive increase efficiency (Strauch, Pidun and Zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2019). Also, the degree of headquarter control in relation to the independent subsidiaries can also affect the internal capital market effectiveness (Mudambi, 1999). Despite all these findings, experts state that the process characteristics of budget allocation decisions are insufficiently studied (Cho, 2015).

Despite great interest in SDMPs, available knowledge is still fragmented, and research has addressed the need to combine findings to work out a complete picture (Elbanna and Child, 2007). Researchers like Dimitratos et al. (2010) argue that more research needs to be done to understand environmental factors that affect the decision-making process. Elbanna et al. (2020) sees further need for longitudinal studies to investigate how decision formulation and the implementation of decisions are related to each other. The article also recommends and calls to transfer identified constructs of the decision-making process within other research fields. The present study also contributes to this regard.

Understanding the outcome of decisions required “to understand the factors of that shape both the interests of the different groups and their ability to influence decision outcomes” (Bitwell, 2012:1624) and available research in SDM do have limitations regarding viewing the process from multiple perspectives besides other limitations (Chakravarthy and White, 2002). The latter aspects also support the need for the present study.

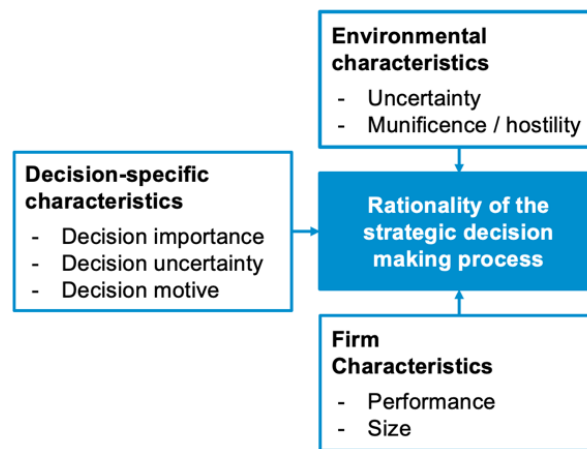
2.3.2 Influencing constructs

The effectiveness and effects of the decision is determined directly by process characteristics like rationality, intuition, and the political behaviour of involved stakeholders (Elbanna, 2006). Additional indirect influences are due to decision-specific, external environments and firm characteristics (Elbanna and Child, 2007). The external context includes economic, social, competitive and industry-specific aspects. With the

internal context, structural, cultural, and political aspects are meant (Pettigrew, 1992). Further influences on decision-making phases will come from decision control, communication and political routines (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976), as well as power relations and bounded rationality (Pettigrew, 1992). As the relationship between management and the context of decisions has been proven in various ways (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998; Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992), the influencing factors summarized in this paragraph will be described in the following.

2.3.2.1 Rationality

A key construct highlighted in the literature on strategic decision-making is rationality. Rational strategic decision-processes characteristics are dependent on external (environmental), internal (firm) characteristics as well as decision-specific characteristics (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002; Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998), as illustrated in Figure 8. Even though the impact is already proven, there is still a lack of understanding of how decision-specific characteristics impact the SDMP. One reason might rely on the fact that mostly one single decision-specific characteristic has been investigated (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998).



*Figure 8 - Rationality of the strategic decision-making process
(Source: Author's own in accordance with Papadakis and Barwise, 2002)*

As mentioned before, the SDMP is influenced by managers' individual characteristics (Papadakis, Lioukas and Chambers, 1998). The more relevant the decision, the more top management tries to make rational decisions (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002), so rationality has to be named an influencing factor on the SDPM (Dimitratos et al, 2010). The level of rationality is dependent on available human, system, financial or physical resources, but also on individuals' cognitive capabilities as well as internal politics. Acting rational requires a logical consistency of factors considered and decision processes

designed to achieve or complete goals based on a set of alternatives, comprehensive information and its analysis (Jones, Jacobs and Spijker, 1992).

Cognitive limits of decision-makers lead to systematically misperceived dynamic environments as a lack of understanding of causal ambiguity due to multiple feedback processes and non-linearities. Therefore, different people deal with the complexity of a strategic issue in different ways (Kunc and Morecroft, 2010). They try to reduce decision-making complexity by simplifying and adapting issues to familiar structures (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). This phenomenon is named bounded rationality, which is determined by the limit of cognitive capabilities and skills (Snyman and Drew, 2003; Elbanna, 2006).

It has a different relevance in stable and unstable environments, where the decision must be taken (Dean and Sharfman, 1996). Threatening environments, a high level of uncertainty in complex situations, turbulent environments or external control power negatively affect rationality in strategic decisions (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992).

2.3.2.2 Intuition

Strategic decisions are often characterised by time pressure or information overload. The resulting stress can have an additional negative impact on decision-making and quality (Phillips-Wren and Adya, 2020). Over recent years, globalisation, rapid technological changes, and an increase in economic and political turbulence have prompted decision-makers to adopt flexible and rapid approaches to dealing with the challenges outlined. Under these circumstances, decision-making is no longer only relevant for generating competitive advantages, but also determines the survivability of companies (Rahimnia and Molavi, 2021). Decision-making in this context can also be driven by intuition, among other things (Elbanna and Fadol, 2016; Miller and Ireland 2005; Sadler-Smith and Shefy 2004; Adam and Dempsey, 2020). It is powerful in volatile environments (Khatri and Ng, 2000; Keramik, 2008) and has been proven as critical to effective decision making (Salas, Rosen and DiazGranados, 2010). Even though it can have a negative impact on strategic decisions (Agor, 1986; Harper, 1989). For example, since decision speed is inversely related to decision accuracy (Dane and Pratt, 2007). Intuition is based on existing knowledge which is adapted by the decision-maker (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). Managers who use intuition to speed up the SDMP often have high cognitive ability and a high tolerance for risks (Wally and Baum, 1994).

However, it is a phenomenon that is hard to measure and observe (Sadler-Smith and Shefy, 2004), it is to be found in situations in which top management cannot rely on logical methods like a cost-benefit analysis, but complex decisions must be taken.

Especially two competencies are needed to make better intuitive decisions. First, it requires recognising patterns in disparate fields. The amount of “non-conscious” information processed helps to recognise these patterns. Second, a continuous self-assessment through the decision-making process helps evaluate the outcome of the decision (Hayashi, 2001; Dane and Pratt, 2007). However, the accuracy of decisions can suffer when acting with time pressure and intuition (Dean and Pratt, 2007). To select the most promising alternative, managers appeal to experiences, personal skills, management skills, historical data, or studies (Elbanna, 2006).

2.3.2.3 Political behaviour

Besides the described impact of organisational structure and culture, the political behaviour of involved stakeholders is affecting the strategic planning processes (Kotler et al., 2019). Research findings in this context highlight negative effects in relation to decision efficiency (Elbanna, 2006; Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992) because of power, influence and politics directed against others inside the organization (Murray and Gandz, 1980). In contrast, other findings argue that but also that these informal processes, by which decision makers can shape a common understanding, help to set goals and how to attain them (Elbanna, Kapoutsis and Mellahi, 2017).

The bigger a company is, the more internal political activities' influence is expected to be found, and with the increasing size of a company, the more dispersion of power and individual influences is to be found while at the same time, companies tend to make more rationalistic decisions (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002). This is also because organisations do not consist of unitary decision-makers. Internal politics may arise due to conflicting interests and different opinions based on the individuals' viewpoints and uncertainty related to strategic decisions, fostering internal politics, and additionally driving opinions (Papadakis and Barwise, 1997b). Also due to the consequence that personal and intellectual components thereby influence the manager's decision (Vyatkin, Fomina and Shmeleva, 2019). The level of solidarity indicates to what degree individuals can subordinate personal needs, goals, or objectives to those of the group (Adler and Kwon, 2002). Each organisation has its own structure and group of people that pursue

its goals with a certain potential of control (March, 1962; Bidwell, 2012; Kaplan, 2008; Markham, 2000). The cause of this results from different expectations of the future and personal background and standing within the organisation (Elbanna, 2006). Also, the social pressure of top management can affect this (Cortez and Johnston, 2017), or it results out of forging alliances to achieve individuals' goals (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992).

Another issue is that the set of decision-makers varies over time. Therefore, the meaning of a choice can change over time, besides the fact that a choice might end in a series of problem solving as the set of decision-makers might not differ completely (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972). Political behaviour is, therefore, a consequence of organisational structures (Bitwell, 2012), which also affect the process of information flow (Galbraith, 1974) and communication. Handling information requires addressing it to individual and interdependent roles that are affected by hierarchy and targets (Galbraith, 1974).

2.3.2.4 Decision routines

Decision-making processes are typically defined based on corporate guidelines, which can differ between organisations (Nitisha, 2014; Dean and Sharfman, 1993). Following Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret (1976), decision phases are supported by three routines: decision control, communication, and political routines. The study also summarises previous findings mentioning that group decisions are mainly affected by interaction among participants rather than the decision structure. Additionally, it is proven that individuals try to reduce complexity. They simplify and try to factor issues into familiar structures.

Making the right decisions requires access to the proper knowledge at the right place and time. The knowledge-intensive activity and the decision-making process are influenced by, among other things, the skills of managers and organisational structures, as they determine and influence the transfer of knowledge (McKenzie, van Winkelen and Grewal, 2011). By making strategic decisions, managers seek evidence that the selected strategy is working out. To avoid potential failures at decisions with high risks, managers also try to procrastinate or decline to take decisions (Wright et al., 2004; Simon, 1987).

However, it should also be noted that, depending on the situation, managers may also break out of these routines and use action-oriented forms of decision-making such as

improvisation. However, this type of action in uncertain environments is not the same as intuition, which requires processing information. However, connections between these constructs have not yet been fully explored in the literature (Tabesh and Vera, 2020).

2.3.2.5 Involvement of stakeholders

Usually, strategic decision issues are discussed by the management team, and opinions need to be explained and justified. The process of decision-making differs between organisations. Exemplary reasons are individual corporate guidelines or the influence of stakeholders inside and outside an organization (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). The CEO, as well as the top management team as both, do have a significant influence on decision characteristics. The level of stakeholder involvement differs between stakeholder groups like the CEO and top management (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002). If the management background is similar, group-thinking may accrue as a risk in connection with the strategic decision are not reflected comprehensibly as the group of decision-makers might already have a shared sense of the most preferred strategy option (Wright et al., 2004). In contrast, different opinions of managers can also lead to different decisions, making joint decision-making more difficult (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003).

In addition, the strategic decision's broader context must be considered (Papadakis and Barwise, 2002). Especially for group decisions, which are characterized by the interaction among participants rather than decision structures (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). Following Nobel (1999), internal stakeholder management can support solving the described issue by reducing the lack of knowledge. One of these conclusions is that organisations must self-educate before turning to customers. By understanding the company's strategic priorities, the tactical level can support archiving the overall targets in the most appropriate way (Rapert, 2017). Powerful stakeholder management is characterised by effective information and communication processes between management levels (Nobel, 1999).

Market-based exchanges require an external perspective (Acquaah, 2007). Following Pedrini and Ferri (2019), additional investigations are needed to understand which information is collected and used in managerial decisions to develop the right focus on communication strategies and tools for stakeholders.

2.3.3 Decision-making in B2B marketing communications

As the leading marketing theory does have its roots in Amerika, a comparison of the American and German markets must be made to prove the applicability of theory, either for marketing communication or decision-making. Especially with regard to the dependencies of decision-making and organisational cultures, a comparison must be made to analyse and evaluate the findings appropriately. The importance of the German industrial sector has been illustrated before. Nevertheless, the industry structure does not describe the motives, origin, courses of action, objectives, management philosophy or preferences of the people working and acting within the industry. For this background, the cultural background must be reviewed in addition to market structure and its importance to fully understand the market and its behaviour. The following chapter will describe the German culture by comparing it with others. In the first stage, a general cultural description will be made and compared with cultures which are dominating the key areas of literature. With regard to key area of marketing communication, emerging marketing models and philosophies out of the dominant United States will be matched with the philosophies of the German and American cultures. The key area of decision-making, which is also affected by the cultural background, will be described with the German cultural background as well.

Those responsible for strategic management decisions do not have the expertise in marketing communication (Holm, 2006). In order to make the most appropriate decision on how to develop communication channels strategically, all internal stakeholders involved have to be empowered to get a comprehensive understanding before making a decision. Not at least because personal goals can differ between individuals (Elbanna and Child, 2007). Understanding strategic goals in the same manner can also be a potential challenge. A potential barrier to strategy implementation can also be the misunderstanding between top management, middle management and the operational level (Rapert, Velliquette and Garretson, 2002). The issue of misperceived customer needs can arise when specialist knowledge about customer and media behaviour out of the marketing communication departments is not shared with top management.

A dedicated study, which demonstrates how marketing managers explain, justify and align strategic decisions to the development of communication channels against internal stakeholders, has not been conducted so far. One of the latest studies in this particular field of research was carried out by Susiva (2006). The study aims to “understand how

the B2B marketing decision-makers utilise existing resources to their decision-making” (Susiva, 2006:14), but it does not touch upon the political behaviour in the decision-making process. However, managing the increasing complexity of day-to-day business properly is just one way of looking at the development. To jointly support and achieve strategic corporate targets, decisions on communication activities also need to be coordinated, comprehensibly explained, and approved by internal stakeholders.

As different as the processes could be, the manner in which communication managers explain and justify their decisions could also differ. The issue can result from a different understanding of the top management about how customers perceive communication, while specialist knowledge about customer behaviour and media behaviour from the marketing communications department is not comprehensively shared. A distinction regarding strategic marketing communication decisions must be made between operational and strategic decisions, which significantly impact the orientation and development of a company's marketing communication in general. In terms of how companies develop their marketing communication, Hänninen and Karjaluoto (2017) have defined a grid of four stages to categorise how strategic companies define communication targets while ensuring communication effectiveness and a strategic communication channel approach.

2.4 Impact of culture

Strategic planning, which takes place in the organisation's context, is always shaped by the structure of the organisation itself, its politics, and the corporate culture (Kotler et al., 2019). One of the most widely used methods for comparing different cultures comes from Hofstede (Akande, 2009; Devinney and Hohberger, 2017). He was one of the first who studied the dimensions of culture and developed the 6-D model.

Cultural 6-D model of Hofstede

It allows a direct comparison of cultures and a society's behaviour and its transfer into organisational culture (Hofstede, 1994). It takes up a broad formulation of six major cultural dimensions, which can be used for this study and explained in this context to understand and interpret management philosophies, approaches and ethics in the field of research. Some might argue that the model is outdated (Morgeson et al., 2011; Devinney and Hohberger, 2017) and critique the approach. On the one hand, there is a debate in the literature about the reliability and accuracy of measurement methodologies

through surveys in relation to available culture models. On the other hand, later cultural models assume insufficient consideration of the complexity of national culture in the business context (Maseland and Van Hoorn, 2009; Brewer and Venaik, 2010). This refers, in particular, to the consideration of the relationship between societal culture and leadership effectiveness (House, Javidan and Dorfman, 2001). In addition, Palazzo (2002) argues that the cultural dimensions can be too unspecific and dependent on the cultures to be compared.

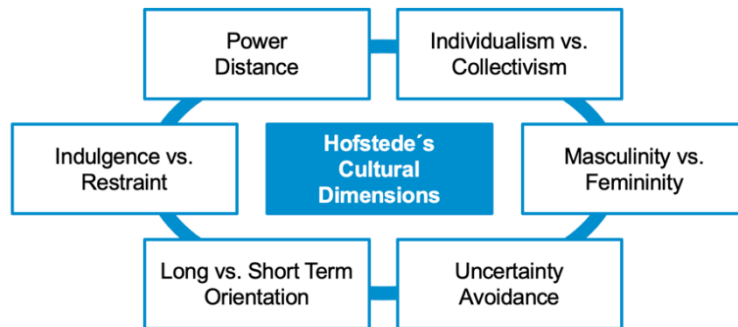


Figure 9 - Hofstede's culture model
(Source: Author's own)

Despite the criticism of the model described above, it has a good basis for the evaluation of strategic marketing communication due to its long use, the complementary references linked to it over time and its division into cultural dimensions. This is especially true because it allows for a general comparison of the theories from the fields of marketing communication and decision-making that are relevant for this study. An evaluation analysis of the cultural dimensions will therefore take place under this perspective in the coming paragraphs.

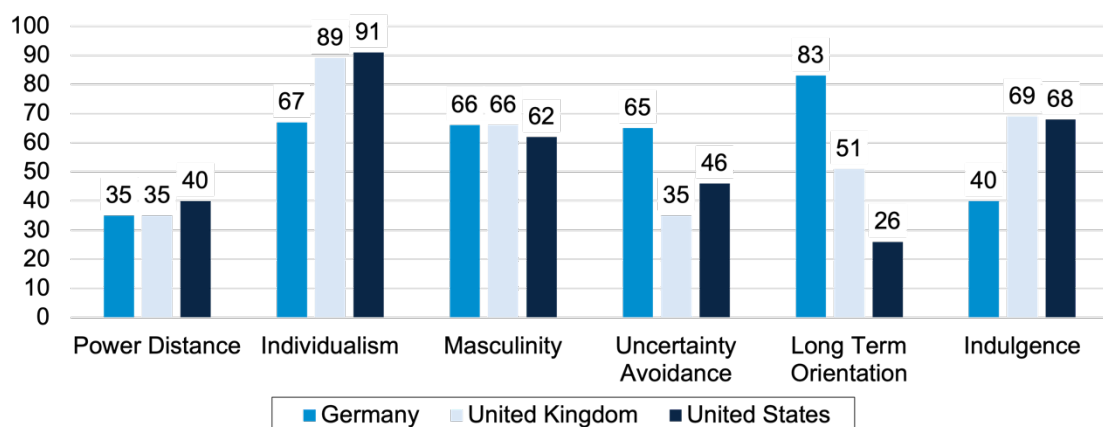


Figure 10 - Comparison of cultural dimensions
(Source: Author's own in accordance Hofstede-Insights, 2022)

Power Distance

The dimension expresses the degree of acceptance of less powerful members of the society and the degree to which power is distributed equally (Hofstede, 1983). Germany and UK ranked the same score in the dimension of power distance. The US is ranked on slightly higher ranking with 40. The results suggest that the American Culture is a bit more characterised by control and dominance of supervisors. In consequence, it is assumed that Americans more often take predetermined decisions, whereas in the German culture is characterised more by the fact that group decisions are taken, and the approaches have to be aligned jointly with relevant stakeholders. Raked with a score of 35, power distance in Germany can be evaluated as a participative communication and meeting style. Managers gain their acceptance by expertise and control is disliked (Hofstede-Insights, 2022).

Literature so far has proven, that power distance has no moderating effect on trust and marketing capabilities. In collectivistic countries, solidarity in all four marketing capabilities (4Ps) is high. It is also proven that uncertainty is low in countries in which solidarity of all four marketing capabilities is strong (Kemper, Engelen and Brettel, 2011). Trust and solidarity are more likely to develop in countries with low power distance (Doney, Cannon and Mullen, 1998).

Individualism

It determines the degree interdependences between a society and its individual members. It illustrates the relative importance of an individual person in comparison to a group of interests. Cultures with strong collectivism give more priorities to collective goals (Hofstede, 1983; Akande, 2009). The world view of collectivists is more interdependent with a collectivist national culture. The cultural imprint also informs that people prioritise collective goals over individual goals (Triandis, 2004).

By comparing the three selected countries in terms of individualism, the American culture is ranked as the most individualist culture. Transferred into business, Americans rely on individuals' expertise and expect continuous exchange of information. Employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative. It represents the Americans philosophy "learning by failing". In contrast, the German culture with a rank of 67, seems to be a society where a culture of error is less widespread. A strong belief in self-actualisation and loyalty to oneself also determines the interaction of employers and employees (Hofstede-Insights, 2022).

It also results in a direct and honest communication and the opportunity to learn from mistakes. It might result in the consequence that the success of measures has to have been proven before testing new approaches. It could also lead to the consequence that German cultural oriented companies are in general more conservative and stick to established procedures rather than adopt new communication platforms. In an extreme situation, this could also mean that a decision that has been made is not revised. Germans normally select a deductive for decision making. They ideally need full transparency before making a decision (as described in Chapter 2.2.4.3). Germans rely on employees' opinions in a trustful relationship and due to highly skilled employees (as described in Chapter 2.2.4.3).

Masculinity

The higher the score, the stronger the competition between individuals. The degree determines how a society defines itself to strive for success and being best in class instead of caring for the society itself and the quality of life (Hofstede, 1983). With a score of 66, the German culture expects high performance managers who are decisive and assertive. Moreover, the comparison is firmly anchored via tangible objects such as one's own car. The "be the best" culture is equally strong in all cultures compared. Whereas Americans show it up-front, the British will take you by surprise. The reason is based on the different degree of uncertainty avoidance. In general, a strongly pronounced dimension led to a culture, where the society wants to set the benchmark by itself. Being the best in class could also result in the desire to set up the best-in-class marketing communication measures and procedures. The "can-do" mentality and displaying of success will dominate the decision-making process in the US. By contrast, the German culture in this context is expected to be more reserved, even though the targets are the same (Hofstede-Insights, 2022).

Uncertainty avoidance

This dimension gives an indication of how much a society wants to plan for the future. A low value would indicate a society that lets the future come to it (Hofstede, 1983). Uncertainty avoidance determines therefore the degree of control needed in unpredictable situations (Hofstede, 2001) or in other words, the national culture determines the willingness taking risks under unpredictable situations (Luque and Javidan, 2004). Uncertainty can be reduced in this context by trust and solidarity during

collaboration (Doney, Cannon and Mullen, 1998). With a score of 65, the Germans' management philosophy strongly relies on answering uncertainty. As the dimension of uncertainty avoidance illustrates how strongly a society or culture want plan and control the future, the Americans by contrast perceive that the context will impact that behaviour. They are perceived as less expressive in emotions in comparison to Germans. Therefore, expectations about the outcome of measures are much more concrete in German cultures. Additionally, the control of measures is much more in the focus of the German culture. At the same time, this behaviour requires a higher demand of justification and assurance that the right decision has been made in the German culture. It additionally results in the need to invest more effort to meet and satisfy stakeholders in terms of content in a German-influenced culture (Hofstede-Insights, 2022).

Longterm orientation

Describes to which extent a society can adopt their former beliefs to present or future challenges. With a score of 83, Germany is ranked as a pragmatic society which can adapt traditions to changing conditions. By orienting themselves to a situation, context or time reference, they are able to adapt to changing conditions by showing perseverance to achieve results. As long-term orientation requires the adoption of transitions to new circumstances, as required by the fast-growing marketing communication environment, the following hypothesis can made for marketing communication. Whereas the American society is mainly driven by short-term quarterly results and profit and loss statistics, the Germans are broadly known for a long-term orientation. The distinct ability to adapt to things quickly could pose a challenge to German culture in the context of marketing communication. By contrast, Americans' are prone to test new things. The practical "can-do" mentality is not in contrast to it. They do have strong ideas about what is good and what is evil (Hofstede-Insights, 2022). The mentioned long-term orientation of German companies is also seen the ownership structure compared to the United States, resulting in less pressure on short-term targets (Festing, 2012).

Indulgence

Indulgence as dimension describes the extent of control of individuals' desires and impulses. The German culture is perceived as restrained culture with cynical and pessimistic features (Hofstede-Insights, 2022).

Cultural specifics in Germany

Chapters 2.2 and 2.3 represent the literature review regarding the selected domains of marketing communication and decision-making. The illustrated behaviours can also be mapped with Hofstede's cultural model to classify the statements accordingly. The following chapter therefore consolidates the literature findings and classifies them into the German cultural behaviour.

Major management and business ethics were adopted from the U.S. in Europe and Germany (Vogel, 1992). Germans try to shelter individuals' ethical sentiments from the public as well as restraining from sharing private information in business context (Palazzo, 2002). Based on vocational education, Germany is characterized by a higher level of employee competence (Festing, 2012). As a consequence, a more confident and trustful relationship between employees and management exists. Additionally, more informal mechanisms of social control determine the companies in Germany (Palazzo, 2002). In comparison, Germans do not have the same "can-do" mentality that Americans have. Even though Germans are more individually shaped, they tend to be even more communitarian than Americans and thus to have an attitude of "external control" (Palazzo, 2002).

Germans tend to develop a theory first, before proving it empirically (deductive). Whereas Americans normally tend to proceed inductively by developing a theory step by step based on facts. A similar contrast can be seen in approaching problems. Germans analyse the problem and subsequently implement a solution that suits the best. The same behaviour can be determined in the procedure of projects. Americans spend most of their effort in realisation and only a small share in the planning process, whereas the Germans invest most efforts for the planning. This procedure makes it possible to tackle the problem from the bottom, but it hinders to make smaller pragmatic steps (Palazzo, 2002).

By comparing the U.S.-American and the German culture with Hofstede's cultural model, concept of power distance does not explain hierarchical structures properly. Additionally, the dimension of individualism is overestimated, and communitarian structures and processes are underestimated (Palazzo, 2002). Despite critical comments on the results of the culture comparison, general differences emerge that should also be examined in the context of SDM for the further development of marketing communication.

2.5 Research gap

As stated in the introductory Chapter 1.6, the research aim is to “to explore strategic B2B marketing communication in the German industry sector”. The aim therefore focusses on generating an understanding of how companies define their communication strategy as well as how they strategically develop their marketing communication mix. The increasing relevance and need to build up marketing capabilities in firms, combined with the proven fact a positive impact on the firms’ performances (Hult, Ketchen and Slater, 2005; Katsikeas, Samiee and Theodosiou, 2006) additionally highlights the need to further investigate strategic marketing communication.

The review of the literature also identified a general lack of theoretical knowledge in the discipline of B2B marketing communication (Cortez and Johnston, 2017). The academic focus in marketing communication theory still relies on B2C, even though the economic relevance in B2B is much higher (Lilien, 2016; Backhaus and Voeth, 2011; Mora Cortez, 2019). Besides the lack of knowledge in theory, the lack of knowledge transfer from theory into practice has been also identified by different researchers. All of them call for establishing ways to bridge the gap (Baumgarth, 2021; Cortez and Johnston, 2017; Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020; Pandey, Nayal and Rathore, 2020; Wierseman, 2013).

Both points raised above combined with the conflicting goals in an increasingly complex marketing communication landscape, shrinking budgets and personal resources as well as calls for more transparency on how measures are contributing to overall company targets have been described within the German B2B context (BVIK, 2020a) and highlight the challenges in strategic marketing communication theory in practice.

Chapter 2.3.2 of the literature review discusses the constructs that impact strategic decision-making processes, namely the rationality and impact of decisions, as well the organisational and political behaviour. Not all of them were investigated in the context of strategic marketing communication decision-making. This situation therefore prompts the investigation of the constructs just mentioned in order to validate its impact in the context of strategic decision making in marketing communication while also identifying additional constructs. Combined with the observed marketing dispersion in the German B2B sector (Blachetta and Kleinaltenkamp, 2019), the question accrues who currently

influences and determines the strategic development of marketing communication within a B2B organisation.

By focussing on the German industry sector, the proposed investigation of the identified research gaps suggests a new perspective to explore the decision-making process in strategic marketing communication development. The combination of mentioned theories and the inward-looking new perspective additionally focusses on a field of research that has not been investigated comprehensively. Taking the proposed perspective for this investigation will lead to explore not only the decision-making process itself. Relating constructs can be observed as well. Resulting out of the literature findings, organisational structures, in the decision-making process involved personal skills of the stakeholders as well as the data and information usage during the decision-making process will therefore be conducted as part of the investigation.

From the combination of all the above-mentioned findings in literature and its identified lack of knowledge, a research gap in the context of the research aim of this study has clearly been derived. The review of the literature has shown that the problems described have already been investigated in different ways and partial solutions have been found. The uniqueness of the present study lies in the combination of the disciplines' strategic marketing communication and decision-making, as described above. In addition to the combination of disciplines, which is unique so far, it should also be noted that the approaches to solutions have so far been based on identified deficits. However, none of the solutions has taken operational practice and its processes as a basis and built its proposed solution on this. The solutions are based on answering the problem.

Answering the challenges is helpful for theory and practice, but without the ability to implement them, developed solutions lose potential. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on how strategic marketing communication decisions are made by combining the different perspectives of the disciplines. It is intended to give scientists an insight into how companies out of the German industry sector develop their strategic marketing communication. The results should contribute to the development of even more practice-oriented approaches to solutions in the future, from which theory and practice can benefit. It should also help to further strengthen the relevance of marketing communication in top management and to further close the knowledge gap.

This dissertation addresses this conflict of goals and aims to examine the insufficiently researched discipline of B2B marketing in the German industrial sector. The aim of the study is thus not only to derive practical recommendations for action to solve the challenges described by identifying drivers. At the same time, the findings should facilitate the transfer of marketing communication theory into practice by making it easier for researchers to formulate theoretical recommendations for action through an understanding of the procedure in corporate practice.

Exploring how companies approach the strategic development of their marketing communication will therefore contribute to literature in many ways. First, it will fill the lack of knowledge especially regarding the interface between the disciplines marketing communication and decision-making. Investigating an operational process as well as discussing which skills and organisational capabilities are involved will contribute to what kind of target group needs to be addressed by marketing theory literature. Exploring what kind of information is taken into consideration while making strategic decisions will identify a more concrete lack of theory transfer into practice. It will also allow to benchmark marketing communication decision-processes that have not been investigated in the proposed perspective. The previously mentioned contributions will ultimately contribute to the overall lack of knowledge in the B2B marketing communication discipline.

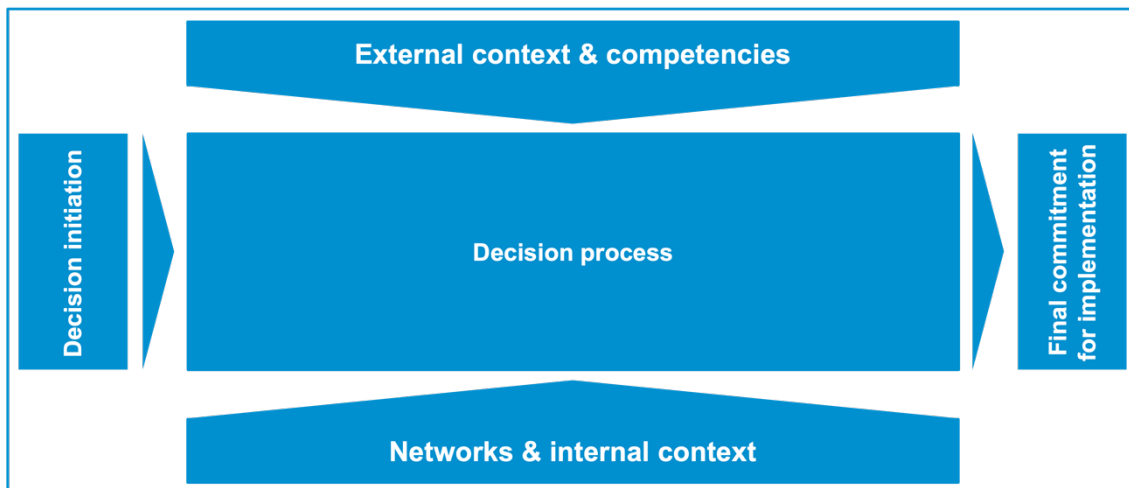
2.6 Derived conceptual framework

The multidisciplinary literature review has identified the current state of research in the disciplines of marketing communication and decision-making, as discussed in Chapter 1. In this context, Varey (2002) and Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss (2017) have shown how strategic marketing communication decisions are integrated into the corporate strategy and process. With a focus on B2B marketing communication, Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015) have shown in the literature that different business types require different communication approaches and that the complexity of marketing communication in B2B is different from that in B2C (Meffert et al., 2019; Backhaus and Voeth, 2011).

The marketing communication follows the approach of the customer journey, which is also the basis for this study, through which individual contact points are strategically

defined and further developed within the framework of the interaction with a customer or prospect.

It has also been shown that strategic decisions are subject to a process of selection and coordination between different alternatives and options (Okike and Amoo, 2014; Peterson, 2017; Dean and Sharfman, 1996; Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976) and are influenced by different internal contextual factors, as well as external contextual factors and managerial competencies (Elbanna, 2006; Papadakis and Barwise, 2002). The decision-making process, which is characterised by the initiation of a decision, the processing of information and its coordination in process steps as well as a final commitment of all to the decision made, is thus used as the basis for the present investigation (see Figure 11).



*Figure 11 - Decision process framework
(Source: Author's own, based on Jocusen (2002) and adjusted to study needs)*

Constructs identified in the literature were placed in this framework and the subject of marketing communication, so that a complete answer to the research questions and objectives is possible. The picture completed in this way lead to the conceptual framework, illustrated in the following Figure 12.

Here, the formulated research objective of understanding the decision-making process (RQ 1) is decisively shaped by the process steps themselves (RQ 2), since every decision-making process must be initiated and, after the decision-making process, there is a commitment and action to the decision made. It can be assumed that organisational as well as personal skills of acting persons, as described in Chapter 2, have an impact

on the decision-making process (RQ 3) and that the actions of the individuals at the same time depend on their level of information and knowledge (RQ 4).

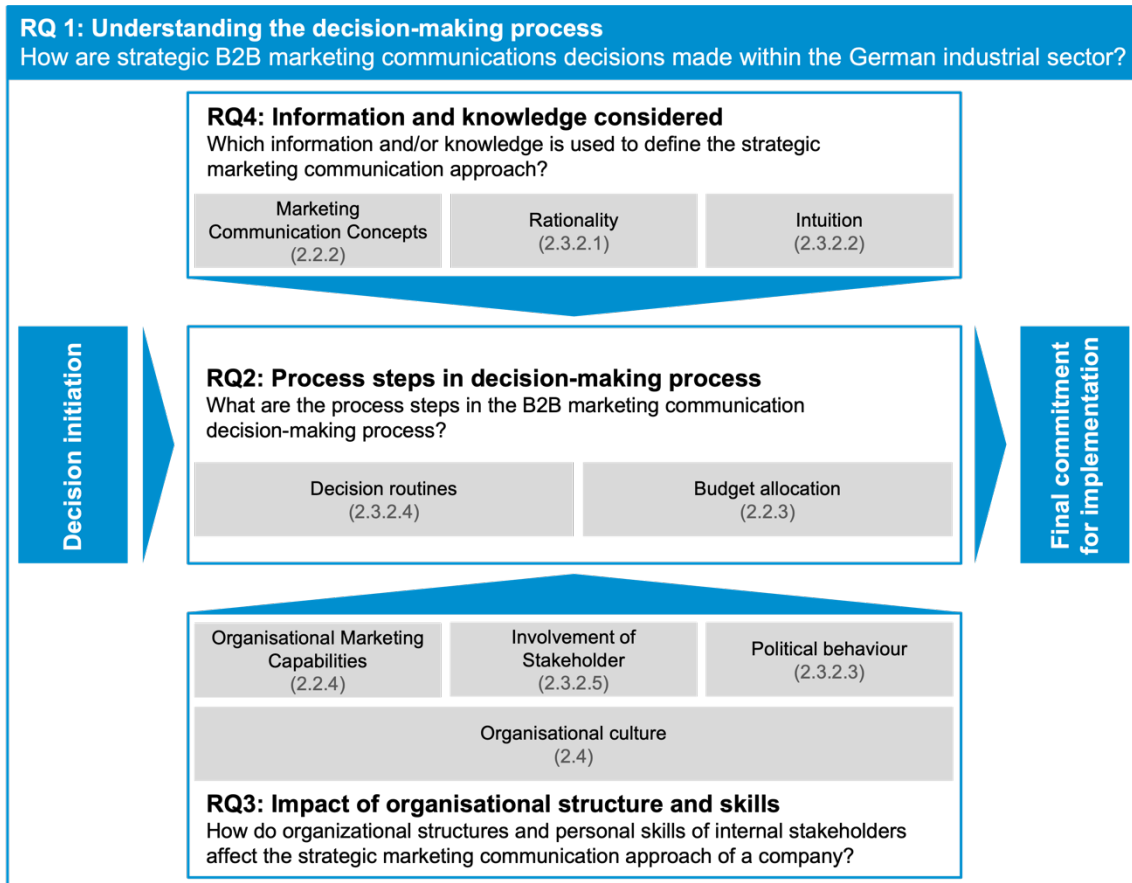


Figure 12 - Conceptual framework
(Source: Author's own, based on Jocusen (2002) and adjusted to study needs)

2.7 Chapter summary

To sum up, Chapter 2 presents an as-is situation of strategic decision-making marketing communication in theory and practice. Theoretical possibilities, generated findings in research and operational practices have outlined that further need of investigations does exist, contributing to find solution approaches for managerial challenges in the discipline of marketing communications. The multidisciplinary literature review has thereby highlighted how strategic planning of marketing communication activities is connected to the corporate strategy process as well as by which main concepts (customer journey) it is determined to define the ideal selection and mix of communication channels to approach its customers and prospects. Additionally, the focus on B2B and its specifics has been highlighted in Chapter 2.2. Regarding decision-making, the literature review in Chapter 2.3 has worked out which relevant factors influence the decision-making process. In addition, Chapter 2.4 has outlined that those strategic decision-making processes are also dependent on the (organisational) culture.

With this, the connections between the research disciplines have been described in a compressed manner and have proven that the research strategy could combine the disciplines of strategic marketing communication and strategic decision-making as the focus of this research relies in the decision-making processes that result in a strategic development of marketing communication. Combining both disciplines also makes it possible to answer the research objective defined in Chapter 1.6 based on the derived conceptual framework, illustrated in Chapter 2.6. The literature review thus provides a sound basis for deriving the research strategy to achieve the research objectives.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction of chapter

In line with the formulated objective of gaining a deeper understanding of the strategic decision-making process, Chapter 3 presents the differentiated debate on the selection of the methodological approach for the study. Against this background, Chapter 3 forms the basis for the intended methodological approach by justifying the research philosophy, approach, and strategy. Chapters 3.2 to 3.4 describe the deduction of the research strategy based on the philosophical assumptions and therefore sets the guidance to the research design. The specific description of the procedure enables a justification of the proposed research process (Crotty, 2014).

From Chapter 3.5, research choices, onwards, the derivation of the methodological approach is combined with application of the derived approach for the present investigation. The derivation and discussion of the case study research approach, its possibilities as well as limitations at the beginning of chapter are followed by the sample discussion, which includes both the approach and selection of cases and participants in Chapter 3.5.4. Subsequently, it is described how and under which methodology the data collection process is carried out. Details can be found in Chapter 3.6 and Chapter 3.7, before the previously derived components and contents to conduct the case study are described in Chapter 3.8 combined with the pilot test to validate the data collection approach.

The research project thereby followed a previously defined research plan (see Appendix 1), described in Chapter 3.9, as well as a defined set of data analysing techniques, which are discussed in Chapter 3.10. The chapter ends with a discussion about the limitation of the selected strategy for the investigation in Chapter 3.11 and a summary in Chapter 3.12.

3.2 Research philosophy

The literature review and findings of Chapter 2 set the basis to select the most appropriate research strategy in accordance with the research paradigms and philosophical assumptions. Because individuals engage by communicative interactions, organisational processes are socially constructed realities (Rapert, Velliquette and Garretson, 2002). At the core of organisations as acting units are individuals who communicate with each other. To understand an organisation, the process between individuals as well as the interaction between them in the context of the organisation must be examined. Understanding this provides the basis for being able to penetrate the decision-making process of an organisation (Simon, 2021). Considering the ontology or nature of reality in this regard, the reviewed decision-making theory has outlined that managers or individuals perform their jobs in an individual way by creating mining to its job and field of responsibility. Due to the mentioned aspects a subjectivist view is taken for this research as the reality is socially constructed based on how individuals live their responsibilities (Ritchie et al., 2014).

The SDMP on the marketing communication strategy of a company also applies to these socially constructed realities as multiple opinions and perspectives of the management and stakeholder team result in joint strategic decisions, which must be made to strategically develop the company's marketing communication. The process is determined by individual objectives and opinions of all involved stakeholders. The selection of the research philosophy therefore requires considering these multiple perspectives and realities of everyone involved in the decision-making process. The opinions and objectives of all involved individuals, their personal capabilities and backgrounds are relevant to deeply understand and comprehend the decision-making process and influencing characteristics. The same applies to the organisational background – especially regarding its organisation structure and culture (Luhmann, 1984). This approach is also in line with Simon's (2021) organisational theory, which views organisational structures as an influencing factor that affects the relationships between different interconnected organisational units. Secondly, it is based on the understanding that the purpose of an organisation is based on the selection of alternatives under uncertainty. If there were no alternatives for market participants to choose between, there would be no uncertainty and there would be no need to make decisions about the right alternative. Knowledge is thereby created by the perception individuals and thereby crucial for the definition of the epistemology of this study

(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The core of decision-making processes lies in the fact that individually acting persons establish connections between events, objects, and situations, which thus make the content meaningful. In this way, reality is created through the actions of individuals (Pels, 2006). To achieve the research objective of understanding strategic decision-making in German mechanical engineering, therefore, an investigation of decision-makers and their individual actions or approaches must be undertaken.

The most appropriate approach, considering multiple perspectives and realities, is the constructivist research philosophy. It highlights that the reality is created by each individual (Hansen, 2004). Constructivism focuses on the interaction between humans and the world around them. This also results in the belief of constructivists that meaning is constructed and not discovered (Crotty, 1998). The intended research approach fits into this scheme because the individual share on the strategic decision as well as their bounded rational behaviour is decisive for the outcome of the decision made.

Compared to a positivist approach, which pursues statistical significance, reliability and generalisability, a constructivist approach focusses on a deep understanding of a dedicated event and its context (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This context is given by the SDMP and the researcher aims to understand it. This requirement on the selection of the research philosophy is also not given in an interpretivist approach, which deals with the internal reality of participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Due to the focus of this investigation – the individual behaviour and its influence on the decision-making process – the other approaches, which focus more on how an individual action, derived from the internal reality, are less suitable and therefore waived for this thesis.

The paragraphs above describe not only the perspective taken for this research from an ontological view and define the epistemology of this research. They also affect the axiology as personal values determine their action and thereby shape their decisions and social surrounding (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). For the consideration of these values, the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1994) considered in the literature review are used to evaluate the axiology.

3.3 Research approach

After classifying the research philosophy of the study based on the research topic, it is now necessary to select the appropriate research approach. The focus here is on answering the research objectives described above. As described in Chapter 2.3.2.4, decision-making processes as well as the involvement of stakeholders differ between companies as well as the kind of decision itself. Additionally, Chapter 2.2.1 has described the current difficulties, especially the missing transparency, within measuring the effectiveness of marketing communication. This leads to the conclusion that the choice of the most efficient and effective approach to achieve one's communication goals, quantitative facts as a basis for decision-making in marketing communication only reflect a certain extent of information. Against this background, a purely quantitative approach for this research is ruled out and a qualitative research approach that critically questions which information is used for decision-making needs to be chosen.

A qualitative approach also allows the researcher to deeply understand the conditions under which involved decision-makers make strategic marketing communication development decisions. Another reason to select a qualitative research approach relies on the opportunity to identify constructs that have not been identified before (Yin, 2018). It supports to answer the research objective to identify who and how involved individuals affect the strategic decision-making process. As formulated in the research aim, the constructs identified during the literature review set the basis for the investigation, but it is also a task to explore the strategic marketing communication process by identifying the most relevant influencing constructs. The description of the procedural approach should also identify which stakeholders influence strategic decisions with which skills and knowledge. Understanding these circumstances will help to identify the issues companies deal with when transforming their marketing communication activities to a more strategic process. Based on these findings, approaches can be derived on how to face the identified challenges.

An in-depth understanding of individual realities and motives to become involved in strategic marketing communication decisions will be generated because of the proposed philosophical research approach. The research philosophy implicates a qualitative research strategy and an inductive research procedure. This procedure is characterised by identifying patterns and associations throughout the investigation of events (Ritchie

and Lewis, 2003). Identified patterns allow an interpretation of the observed phenomenon and theoretical explanations can be built (Tharenou, 2007).

3.4 Research strategy

To identify patterns, a variety of decision-making processes has to be investigated. To deeply understand the SDPM, motives and solution approaches of involved decision-makers and stakeholders have also to be considered in this investigation. A case study approach proves to be the most appropriate research strategy to fulfil the previously described requirements (Yin, 2018). It is utilised to generate an in-depth understanding about a specific case (Bromley, 1986). Furthermore, the research design has the aim of generating an in-depth understanding about a specific case and event (Bromley, 1986). It is characterised by the fact that the researcher himself investigates the phenomenon without controlling it. Both targets are given within the research frame. Moreover, the application of the present research project allows to observe the decision-making process and procedures without direct influence, rather it only requires access to contemporary data (Yin, 2018). To summarise, case study research contributes to organisational and management studies as the methodology helps to understand the dynamics of events conducted in real-life situations (Eisenhardt, 1989), on the following page more arguments for this strategic approach have been collected.

Case study research is a proven method in organisational research (Yin, 1981; Eisenhardt, 1989). The methodology should be used primarily for descriptive purposes, especially in areas where theory is still emerging or for the exclusive study of individuals (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). In general, different types of case studies do exist (Yin, 2012). As the study context to be investigated deals with the decision-making process in the context of marketing communications, an explanatory case study is the most appropriate type of case study research to be selected. Explanatory case studies help to understand why a phenomenon takes place and how organisational dynamics as well as social processes within an organisation work (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). The research strategy was utilised in the context of decision-making from multiple perspectives. In management theory, these different perspectives of individuals and their mutual behaviour contribute to a closer understanding of the social behaviour of groups and institutions due to actions and counteractions within the framework of game theory (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1995; Webster, 2019). In this context, case studies have also proven to be a helpful tool in decision-making, as they contribute to the

understanding of the behaviour of individual stakeholders (Samsura, Van der Krabben and Van Deemen, 2010).

Measuring the effectiveness of strategy implementation is limited to a certain extent in terms of concrete aspects, as it happens continuously (Brauer and Schmidt, 2008). It can result from a multitude of decisions, which in sum lead to further development. Against this background, the foundations on which the decisions are made must be examined and understood. To observe the phenomenon of each characteristic involved, several decision-making processes need to be investigated. Two possible approaches can be selected in this regard. The first opportunity consists of repeating the SDPM within a defined case several times. It requires several investigations over a prolonged period. For this investigation, normally only a single case will be selected and analysed. The second opportunity is to investigate the same process in a variety of cases to identify patterns. In comparison, a cross-sectional investigation is made at a specific point of time (Yin, 2018).

As the aim of this research focusses on understanding how companies are executing strategic marketing communication development processes, a consideration of different decision-making approaches in data collection would allow for the identification of more detailed aspects and patterns. The consideration of strategic decisions to find out how companies want to develop therefore demands that the second approach be selected – investigating the decision-making process in a variety of cases. The comparison of different decision-making processes from different companies makes it possible to analyse similarities and differences and general conclusions can be drawn out of the intersecting set. It is the most suitable way to understand the decision-making process in different groups of organisations (and therefore different people as organisations are defined as communication of people). Selecting this approach also means to select a multiple case study as research method. It would lead to the opportunity to compare observed cases and thereby the deduction of characteristics that might have a general impact on the decision-making process. Further details of the research design will be explained in the following Chapter 3.5.

With the help of the formulated research objectives, it is necessary to select the right object of investigation for the study. To achieve a deeper understanding of strategic decisions in the context of strategic B2B marketing communication, it is therefore

necessary to select several companies from different industry segments in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the German industry. By investigating different cases, multiple decision-makers, and stakeholders, who are involved in the process, will be observed. The investigation allows one to observe individual realities and the interaction of individual goals and (marketing communication) skills, combined with insights into organisational structures and corporate culture, which have been identified as relevant aspects in Chapter 2 while investigating the formulated research objectives. The chosen strategy is further supported by the fact that decision-making processes in companies differ. Reasons for this can lie within the individual corporate guidelines or the influence of stakeholders inside and outside an organisation (Dean and Sharfman, 1993).

3.5 Research choices

3.5.1 Case study approach

Case study research as a method is defined as a detailed description of a situation or event by which a researcher investigates how and why relationships are formed (Karlsen, Græe and Massaoud, 2008). The method finds its origin in the early 1900s and was shaped by the works of William Thomas and Robert Parks. It enables the analysis of the context and processes of events and thereby illustrates the research background being studied (Yin, 2018). The method therefore enables researchers to generate understanding of complex issues and contributes or supports already existing knowledge. The investigation of dedicated phenomena on certain events enables a comprehensive understanding by considering all involved variables and interactions of relationships without concurrently deriving a generalisation or prediction. It therefore encompasses one or more cases to be investigated and can contain qualitative, quantitative or both types of data (Dooley, 2002). A case study can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. The research approach delivers explanations of a certain event rather than creating new questions. In contrast to an experiment, which is not able to handle the number of variables, the case study method is also characterised by a high number of variables compared to the number of observations (Yin, 1981).

A suitable case for case study research examines a real-life situation, in which individuals are dealing with problems, conflicts or certain events. The investigation itself allows a reflection of this real-life situation to determine successful and non-successful courses of the situation. In addition, cases usually contain multiple perspectives (Merseth, 1994). The case study method allows both – testing and building theory (Yin, 1994; Burgelman,

1983a; Dul and Hak, 2007; Schwandt and Gates, 2018). In contrast to grounded theory, the emerged theory through case study research is dedicated to the phenomena and bounded to the limitations of the investigated cases (Glaser, 1978). It also requires a continuous comparison of the proposed concept and collected data to elaborate theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lynham, 2000).

Previous studies such as Bidwell (2012) have also demonstrated that the inductive case study design is appropriate for the study of organisational dynamics. In Bidwell's case, a single case study of organisational decision-making with semi-structured interviews and multiple roles as well as individuals involved in the decision-making process were conducted. A multiple case study approach with inductive design using primary data from interviews was also selected to understand how B2B companies process social media communication strategies (Cartwright, Davies and Archer-Brown, 2021).

3.5.2 Theory building

In unexplored research areas, case-study research can also be the basis of theory-building by addressing “how” and “why” questions (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2017; Edmondson and McManus, 2007). Building theory requires sampling of cases appropriate to the research background (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2017). It also requires a level of generalisability, which can be achieved with the observation of a single case over time or the observation of different cases, which allows one to observe the same phenomena under similar conditions (Dooley, 2002).

For theory building, multiple case studies typically provide a stronger basis, as the findings are replicable in several (and most likely slightly different) cases (Yin, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1991; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). Due to these facts, the sampling process for a multiple case study is also more complex (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The structure to derive theory from case study research needs to be considered while defining the procedure for the case study method. Table 2 illustrates the process of building theories from case study research as defined by Eisenhardt (1989). The sequence of process steps described in Table 2 is also applied throughout Chapter 3 by linking the research choice discussion to the present study context.

Step	Activity	Reason
Getting started	Definition of research questions Possibly a priori construct Neither theory nor hypothesis	Focuses efforts Provides better grounding of construct measures Retains theoretical flexibility
Selecting cases	Specified population Theoretical, not random, sampling	Constrains extraneous variation and sharpens external validity Focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases, that is, those that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories
Crafting instruments and protocols	Multiple data collection methods Qualitative and quantitative data combined Multiple investigators	Strengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence Synergistic view of evidence Fosters divergent perspectives and strengthens grounding
Entering the field	Overlap of data collection and analysis, including field notes Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods	Speeds up analyses and reveals helpful adjustments to data collection Allows investigators to take advantage of emergent themes and unique case features
Analysing data	Within-case analysis Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques	Gains familiarity with data and preliminary theory generation Forces investigators to look beyond initial impressions and see evidence through multiple lenses
Shaping hypotheses	Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct Replication, not sampling, logic across cases Search evidence for "why" behind relationships	Sharpens construct definition, validity, and measurability Confirms, extends, and sharpens theory Builds internal validity
Enfolding literature	Comparison with conflicting literature Comparison with similar literature	Builds internal validity, raises theoretical level, and sharpens construct definitions Sharpens generalisability, improves construct definition, and raises theoretical level
Reaching closure	Theoretical saturation when possible	Ends process when marginal improvement becomes small

*Table 2 - Process of building theory from case study research
(Source: Author's own, based on Eisenhardt, 1989)*

3.5.3 Multiple cases

The case study method enables the testing of theories by looking at multiple perspectives on the theory (Campbell, 1975) by analysing standardised data sets. Potential biases could emerge, when only a single case study is analysed and generalisability could be in jeopardy, because an observed situation or event might be misjudged (Tversky and Kahneman, 1986). A multiple case study approach allows to reduce these biases as well as to strengthen external validity of the phenomenon investigated. The reason for this is the deduction of patterns, constructs or themes based on multiple cases (Leonard-Barton, 1990; Boonstra, 2003) and assured by a cross-case analysis (Dooley, 2002). An analysis of multiple cases implies a repeated observation of phenomena and can be compared with conducting an experiment multiple times to prove if the results are similar or contrary (Yin, 1983).

Based on the already described fact that reality is constructed by each person, multiple views need to be considered to understand the SDMP to be investigated. As

contemporary data is required to investigate the phenomenon, as stated in Chapter 3.4, primary data must be collected for this research and the evidence increases by the number of views (Boonstra, 2003). A quantity of 4-6 cases can be designed to detect different patterns of theoretical replications. If it turns out that all cases conducted provide compelling support of the prepositions taken, 6-10 individual cases conducted are appropriate. If it turns out that the cases are contradictory to each other, this will require a revision of the prepositions as well as a new test of the study with another set of cases (Yin, 2018). Therefore, the present research contains six cases, each consisting of 3-5 in-depth interviews. The number of 3-5 interviews per cases is caused by the organisational structures and decision-making channels. Further details about the selection of cases as well as participants itself will be discussed in the following Chapter 3.5.4.5 and Chapter 3.5.4.5.

Conducting multiple case study research can be mainly clustered into three phases, as illustrated in Figure 13. First, the design of the case study itself. In the second phase, the designed case study must be conducted for each individual case. It also requires an analysis of each individual case. Matching the findings across all conducted cases builds the third phase.

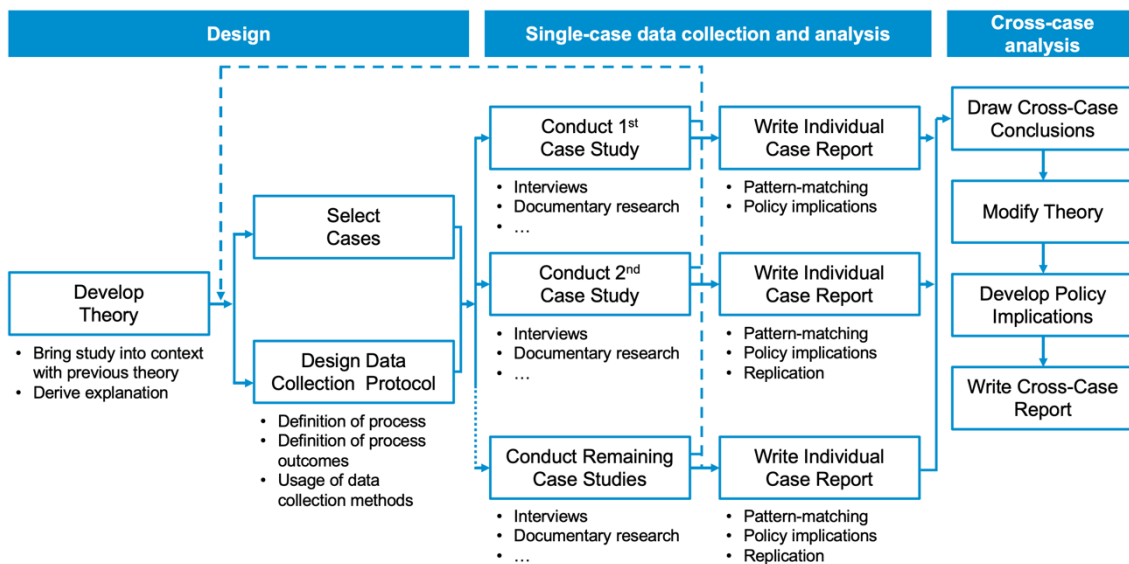


Figure 13 - Case Study Method
(Source: Author's own, based on Yin, 1989:56)

A variety of data-gathering techniques can be used for case study research. The phenomenon investigated makes it possible to focus on a contextual analysis and can be executed by a single person or a group of people (Dooley, 2002). For this research,

the selection of a group of people, who are involved in the decision-making process, is the most appropriate way to analyse the decision-making procedure.

To ensure the success of a case study, the observed event, problem, or discussion must be well-defined. This can be ensured through a comprehensive literature review on the investigated field. The object of analysis can, for example, consist of a person or a group of people, as intended for the investigation (Dooley, 2002). For the present research, the requirements for investigating SDMP must be defined, to also ensure a comparability between the cases selected. Afterwards, the investigation of the case is required. Depending on the approach, a situation, an event, or participants can be the object of the investigation to gain representativity (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). To answer the research objectives and questions in the consecutive steps, the object and its characteristics can be analysed with a variety of data-gathering techniques (Dooley, 2002). The analysis follows a strict procedure during the research process. Pioneer work in this context, for instance, was made by Yin (1994) and Eisenhardt (1989). The multiple case research focuses on a contextual analysis of the defined and limited number of situations or events to identify patterns and build relationships between variables. The procedure always considers the context of the phenomenon. In contrast, the approach opposes experiments, which isolates the phenomenon (Dooley, 2002).

In a nutshell, the case study method does not focus on identifying exceptions by analysing standardised data sets. They focus on the process of pattern recognition to develop a theory (Campbell, 1975). In comparison, action research seeks to understand people's goals through the study of action and reflection on practical knowledge by a participatory process (Reason, 2001). Based on the research aim to contribute to B2B communication literature, the cross-sectional approach seems to be the most appropriate one, because a punctual investigation in various businesses can be made. The number of available resources will define the number of parameters for observation as well as the significance of the external construct validity. The described aspects of the procedure can be clustered in three major phases of case study research. After designing the case study, the data collection as well as an analysis per case needs to be executed. As a third step, a cross-case analysis can be conducted (Yin, 1994). A cross-case analysis in this case is required to comprehensively identify patterns in the strategic development of marketing communication of all cases. It additionally allows to reduce biases.

3.5.4 Sample discussion

3.5.4.1 Addressing potential cases

To delineate the scope of the investigation, a restriction to B2B is applied in terms of the market. Measured by its contribution to the overall economy, the industrial sector in Germany is ranked as the biggest worldwide (VCI, 2021). Against this background, the German industry sector will be selected for investigating how strategic B2B marketing communication is implemented in practice.

The limitations of the investigation are determined by the researcher's resources as well as on the number of companies volunteering to participate. In this type of approach, the cases are not defined in advance. Companies that are interested in the topic are encouraged to actively request participation. The number of cases will also be determined by the number of interviews per case as well as the overall time constraints of the thesis. A more in-depth explanation is given in the subsequent paragraphs. Based on the conflict of the resource limitations on the one hand and the necessity to gain enough data to accomplish generalisability on the other hand, an overall quantity of 5-6 cases is targeted. The definition of the quantity is based on the scientific basis for conducting case studies in Chapter 3.5.1.

The heterogeneity of the German industry makes it hard to detect similarities in its market environment and conditions between sectors, as described in Chapter 1.4. To delineate the scope of the investigation, a restriction to B2B is applied in terms of market and industry. Therefore, a broad range of companies out of the German industry sector can be addressed to select the most appropriate cases for this investigation. In the following, different routes of addressing those potential cases as well as the selection criteria will be described.

The selected research approach requires access to the necessary data per case. Industry networks will be used to recruit participants. To achieve this goal, two ways of approaching potential cases have been chosen:

- 1) Direct contacting:** As practitioner in the industry, the author of this thesis belongs to different German industry networks. These networks are business networks and industry relevant associations, but also professional social media business networks like LinkedIn. These networks will be addressed in the role of 'researcher'. To reach the relevant gatekeepers, search opportunities on the web or via business networks like LinkedIn (global business network) or Xing (biggest German business network based on quantity of members) will help get in contact with appropriate companies. In addition, already existing personal contacts and relationships will be used to share the research idea and to become eligible for participation in data collection. To address this target group, personal messages in the form of e-mails or direct messages in online media and networks will be used. Sample letters for a formal and informal address can be found in Appendix 6.

- 2) Indirect contacting:** By using industry networks or associations, personal contacts will be used to share the research idea. The known contact persons should act as distributors within the network to call for participation. The two examples of VDMA (Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau, Mechanical Engineering Industry Association) and BVIK (Bundesverband für Industrie-Kopmmunikation) are representative of the German industrial sector. The VDMA association represents the most relevant industry network in Germany in this context, with more than 3,300 members (VDMA, 2021). The BVIK network mainly consists out of sales and marketing addicted managers, who would like to share their experiences with others (BVIK, 2021). A sample letter to share the research idea with this target group can be found in Appendix 7.

Making use of direct contacts within the mentioned industry networks to share the research idea and to call for participation has the benefit that receivers of the request are already familiar with the researcher in person. The relationships could thus facilitate access to potential companies, as the proposal to participate in the study comes from

within the company rather than being solicited externally. The researcher's business network is used as a basis for identifying potential cases. All cases will be selected and validated via a validation call with the main contact person out of the organisation of the case. The main target person for this pre-assessment is the person responsible for marketing communication (likely the marketing communication department head).

Since the personal network is limited in its coverage, the indirect contact route via the previously described associations is used to achieve the necessary reach to achieve the desired number of cases. The selection of cases and thus interview partners via the described path of personal networks has been chosen because the research project is independent of companies, sponsors, or institutions. Accordingly, the researcher is dependent on the voluntary participation of companies to be able to carry out data collection. The procedure selected has the advantage that the companies might be more motivated to participate out of their own interest. It can also be assumed that the research purpose is seen as relevant in the participating companies and that they hope to gain new best practice insights through the exchange and participation.

3.5.4.2 Participation requirements

In general, the scope for this research has been set by selecting the German industry sector in terms of the regional limitation. In addition, the following requirements have been formulated for participation:

- As the focus of the analysis relies on the German industrial sector, the company's headquarters and all participants also must be based in Germany.
- The company must have a marketing communications department that contains more than just a manager responsible for marketing communication.
- A minimum of three volunteers needs to be identified that represent a decision-making chain within the organisation (ideally 4-5 volunteers to incorporate a minimum of one stakeholder).
- The company needs to have a general interest in contributing and supporting this research project.

Other key performance indicators, like the annual turnover or the quantity of employees, were not defined as selection criteria. The most important thing, as mentioned in the list above, is to reconstruct and understand the decision-making process for marketing

communication activities. For this, the minimum quantity of volunteers has been defined. The composition itself is explained more in detail in the following Chapter 3.5.4.5.

3.5.4.3 Incentive for participation

Since the author has written the thesis on his own responsibility and without a sponsor, the benefits of voluntary participation are limited to the following components:

- a joint exchange and food for thought.
- receiving the research results exclusively directly after completion of the thesis
- a compilation of findings in relation to their company.

Providing a compilation of individual recommendations for actions is therefore the key element to convince the main contact person when asking for participation. It should be considered as compensation for the time the company takes to conduct interviews.

3.5.4.4 Sample description of the present study

Based on the previously described approach to address the potential sample as well based on the selection criteria, six cases could be identified and used for the present investigation. All of them do find its origin in mechanical and plant engineering context and were founded more than 60 years ago. Likewise, all companies could show international or global sales activities with more than 20 global sales locations each and, in some cases, a country presence in more than 100 countries. A classification of all companies according to their business type and general size as well as further company-specific key facts can be found in Table 3. The key facts listed are based on the figures published for the 2020 reference year when the data collection was carried out.

Parameter		Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
Annual turnover	< 0,5 Bn. €		X		X		
	0,5 - 3,0 Bn. €	X				X	X
	> 3,0 Bn. €			X			
Number of total employees	< 3.000		X		X		
	3.000 - 15.000	X				X	X
	> 15.000			X			
Type of business	Public company	X		X			X
	Private company		X		X	X	
Business type	Product business		X				X*
	Project business	X		X	X	X	X
	Relational business						
Participant allocation	Responsible in company holding for multiple brands and business units						X
	Responsible in corporate group with one major brand for multiple entities				X	X	
	Responsible in a company or a single business unit for one brand	X	X	X			

Table 3 - Summary of company parameters
(Source: Author's own)

* Possible change in business type based on diversification of business over the last years.

Based on the classification of the companies presented in Table 3, it can be noted that in most of the companies, the brand is often managed within a company or a business unit. In addition, it can be noted that the *project business* type is more pronounced. Regarding turnover and the number of employees, a certain dependency can be observed. The key facts presented are used during the evaluation to explain the findings.

3.5.4.5 Selection of participants

It was assumed that contact persons and companies already show a basic interest when making an enquiry for participation. Based on this initial enquiry, the more detailed framework conditions were clarified by an initial conversation. The contact person for this initial appointment was in each case a person who is currently steering the marketing communication activities in the respective company. The aim of the initial appointment was not only to give an overview of the research project. It was also used to check the participation criteria mentioned above as well as to induce an interest in and commitment to participating.

Based on the mentioned initial conversation and throughout presenting the general idea behind the research project, the main contact persons were asked to select a set of potential interview partners could represent the needed set of participants to represent the decision-making process within the company. It is also at the discretion of the main contact to define whether supplementary interviews should be conducted with other persons from the targeted functions and roles below. The reason for this lies in the

internal knowledge about the general process of strategic planning, which is not yet available to the researcher prior to the study.

Generally, all the stakeholders involved internally in the decision-making process are of relevance to generate the intended case insights. To generate the most comprehensive insights about the decision-making process, ideally all kinds of stakeholders per case should be part of the investigation. All kinds in this regard are understood as stakeholders along the strategic decision-making process chain described in Figure 2 (Chapter 1.1) and as suggested by Papadakis and Barwise (2002). For a general description of what the researcher understands under the required process chains including stakeholders and their possible organisational relationships, the following Figure 14 sets the basis for the initial exchange.

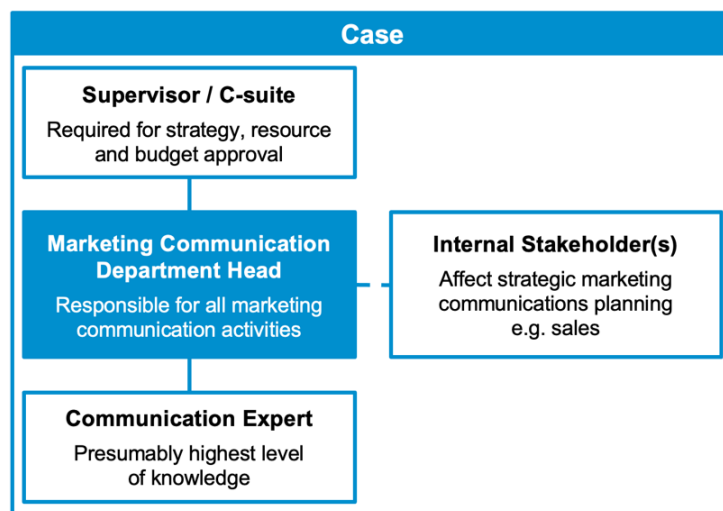


Figure 14 - Requested set of interview participants per case
(Source: Author's own)

The process chain described here follows the general assumption that a communication expert drives the further development of a communication channel, the communication manager is responsible for the overall picture of marketing communication and, in turn, must coordinate the team's ideas and approaches in terms of budget and resources with the authority above him or have them approved. In addition, internal stakeholders who influence the decision-making process should be interviewed to also understand how marketing communication activities are affected by other departments. Dependent on the availability and interest of voluntary participation, the roles might also differ due to organisational structures. Nevertheless, the briefly described roles generally represent a general present function within the decision-making process.

A more detailed description of the potential set of participants is given in the following:

1) Marketing Communication department head

The marketing and communication management functions will likely be the main gatekeeper to request approval for participation in the research study. As this target group oversees planning, steering, implementing, and developing the firm's communication channels they are most relevant to the study, these individuals will act as the main case contact for (1) getting the required internal approval for participation, (2) indicating which colleagues should be included in the study, and (3) providing the relevant documentation.

2) Communication expert out of marketing communication department

These individuals usually have the highest level of knowledge of the communication channels and can provide insight into what information you are contributing to the decision-making process.

**3) Internal stakeholder outside of the marketing communication department
(e.g. sales managers, business line heads, etc.)**

This group affects the decision-making process with subject-related marketing communication knowledge, individual targets, personal skills, and opinions. The main reason for investigating this group is to gain insights about formal and informal process flows and power relations between all involved.

**4) Final instance of planning and budget approval
(Presumably C-suite individuals)**

Investigating this group should also provide information on subject-related marketing communication knowledge, individual targets, personal skills, and opinions. As the releasing authority for resource and strategy approval, this role must be understood due to fact that they are the ultimate decision-makers who determine strategic development. As described in Figure 1, the most important characteristic and function of this role in the context of the investigation is that it is disciplinarily superior to the marketing communications department head. In many cases, this can be a member of the management board or C-suite.

However, the structure shown is only intended to serve as an orientation. The essential aspects here are that different operational levels with different decision-making competences as well as external functions influencing them are considered in the participant set. Besides the already described evaluation of the data collection method and influencing factors, the interpretation and knowledge generation of the data represents the next possibility of incorrect interpretation. Used data and generated knowledge of the marketing communication head then results in an opinion and hereby a decision approach, which forms the basis for the justification to internal stakeholders. For getting an alignment with the stakeholder, the described influencing variables must be considered when creating the explanatory approach. The marketing communication head often makes use of the described frameworks and models of external organisations because they support their decision approach. To benefit from it, the framework or model must be accepted and understood by all stakeholders. The described phenomena point out that knowledge could be valued differently, and decisions could be made by prioritising contested knowledge, because the trust in other sources of knowledge does not have the same importance. Reliability is also dependent on the knowledge and involvement of the interview participants. For this reason, the most appropriate stakeholders involved in the decision-making process have to be selected for conducting this study.

Because the researcher is not aware of the internal processes per case, the selection is attributed to the person responsible for marketing communication, as he or she has the necessary knowledge to make the selection in the organisation. A guideline is provided for selection, which prescribes different perspectives in relation to the research question as a selection criterion. The potential interview participants will be then contacted internally by the person responsible for marketing communication asking for voluntary participation. To ensure the voluntariness of all potential participants, an interview request letter was distributed by the marketing communication department towards all potential interviewees (see Appendix 8). In addition to the request letter, a more concrete description of the research aim, procedure and support needed by the main contact for this investigation was provided.

Shared documents were:

- 1) An e-mail draft for the main contact person to forward the research request internally to selected people and ask for voluntary participation (see Appendix 8)
- 2) Information sheet about the study that summarises the research aim and procedure (see Appendix 9)
- 3) Consent form to actively confirm and take note of the procedure with personal data (see Appendix 10)
- 4) Participant Information Sheet containing the privacy notice and data storage information (see Appendix 11)
- 5) Interview guide to give the potential interviewee a feeling of what kind of questions the researcher will ask during the interview as well as to allow preparation (see Appendix 3)

From this point onwards, the coordination of interviews as well as all communication activities were directly handled between the researcher and the participant to ensure data privacy. Once a voluntary participant has indicated his or her willingness to participate in the study, it is ensured that the volunteer receives the initial documents. The participant is then asked to sign the sheet to confirm their participation and the interview slot is scheduled.

3.6 Data collection procedures

3.6.1 Selection of procedures

The ability to refer to multiple sources as well as the opportunity to make use of multiple data collection methods is one major strength of the case study method (Dooley, 2002). It allows one to observe the same phenomena with multiple cases by underlining the results with multiple methods. This includes all relevant techniques that contribute to the analysis of the phenomenon (Franz and Robey, 1984) and often results in descriptive research in a narrative form (Merseth, 1994). To collect the data, a broad investigation of all involved individuals is necessary to understand how they act and how they construct their reality; this is typically done by comparing the findings to look for similarities and differences.

A limitation of the case study method and data collection is usually given by the quantity of cases and consequently, in the number of observed events, phenomena, or situations

(Dooley, 2002). Eisenhardt (1989) recommends four to ten cases to get good results by taking the effort into account as well as the diversity within the results. The definition of the quantity of cases needs to be carried out during the research process and justified, as recommended by Stake (1995). The selection of cases is also affected by the expected amount of data. It is in the nature of the method that a lot of data will be collected due to multiple sources. The concrete end and amount of data collection therefore depends on practical limitations as well as theoretical considerations (Dooley, 2002). Limitations of instance could be resource issues related to time or budget (Stake, 1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) additionally illustrate that data collection should be stopped when the data sources are exhausted, the knowledge production no longer increases, an overstretching would be the consequence due to the lack of data sources or when regularities emerge.

To ensure within-case evidence, different approaches are feasible. Besides collecting qualitative data in a narrative form, it is also adequate to tabulate qualitative data (Miles, 1979). Following Yin (2018), the data analysis can contain the following approaches to analyse the data:

- Gathering collected data into arrays to identify schemes
- Contrasting categories by creating a matrix
- Analysing data visually by creating flow charts, spider graphs, or other graphics
- Tabulating data
- Scheduling data into helpful sequences

Individual case study analysis can be extended by cross-case analysis to examine evidence. For cross-case evidence, Miles (1979) suggested to define guidelines for the cross-case analysis upfront. It must be defined how to handle unique and context-specific narratives. By doing so, generalisations across cases can be made (Yin, 2018). The analysis of a case study can also be differentiated between a structural and a reflective analysis. The structured analysis is characterised by the fact that the case is examined for patterns, events or phenomena and is normally used for examining case study data. In contrast, the reflective analysis is used for qualitative research methods like conversation analysis or ethnoscience (Dooley, 2002).

To spread the collection method to the defined research aim, a case-comparison approach as well as a structural analysis will support the achievement of the research aim. The context of per case needs to be fully understood before comparing the decision-making process between cases. This requires a structural analysis with defined standards. With this procedure, commonalities to deduct a framework for communication managers, explaining and justifying transparently their allocation approach, will be possible.

Research in the B2B context often selects qualitative and case-based research methods. They often consist of observations, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, or document analyses (Lilien, 2016). Observations often require extensive resources to achieve required results. With regard to the limitations in terms of this research, an observational approach is deselected. Especially because of long lasting decision-making periods, the outcome of observations is rather limited in comparison to in-depth interviews. For this research, questionnaires and interviews seems to be the most appropriate research methods in terms of the availability of existing research resources. Especially interviews fully allow access to required data (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976).

The procedure of Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret (1976) will be selected to investigate strategic marketing communication decision-making processes in a narrative form. The narratives, resulting out of the interviews, are structured by guiding questions which make it possible to comprehensively understand the decision-making process. Additionally, it must be mentioned that observing decision-making processes does not require coordinating the timing of the interviews. Especially in the context of the present research, there is no time dependency, since the general research question is focusing on when, how and in what context strategic marketing communication decisions are made. As a variety of decisions is involved in this and processes depend on the organisational structures as well as on the voluntary participation of participants, no specific timing and single process will be determined for this study. The description of processes and approaches can be independent from the point of time, when the final decision was made, as a general picture of the process can still be achieved (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976; Lucena and Popadiuk, 2020).

Document research can support the reliability of the study, if appropriate documentation is available (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). In context of the selected

decision-making process, several constructs must be considered. Since the level of detail is not compulsory between the organisations, it is expected that not all cases selected will have this documentation at all. The same applies to personal backgrounds and skills of the participant. The level of documentation might differ here as well. For this reason, document research will be excluded due to lack of comparability.

Selecting in-depth interviews as a data collection method allows to individually question relevant aspects and will contribute the most to a comprehensive and comparable picture. Two typical types of errors can occur when collecting data through interviews. These are distortions and memory failures. Distortions can arise by using incomprehensive questions and terms during the interviews (Toneatto et al., 1997). In comparison, memory failures do arise for several reasons and do require multiple approaches to be reduced in occurrence or ideally avoided. Examples of memory failures could arise by unreported process steps or unsuccessful described process steps (Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret, 1976). Both kind of errors can be reduced by selecting a multiple case approach as well as by the quantity of interviewees. In addition, a pilot study can ensure to use comprehensive questions and terms (Dikko, 2016). Further details about the pilot study findings can be found in Chapter 3.8.

3.6.2 General conditions and procedure of the interviews

The procedure of communication between the voluntary participant and the researcher followed the displayed process below in Figure 15. The exchange of documents and setting the interview date followed the participant's voluntary willingness to participate. The participant was given the opportunity to schedule an appointment with the researcher prior to the in-depth interview. This appointment was intended to provide the volunteer with the possibility to ask questions about the research background, the process, or the handling of data.

Chapter 3.6 - Data collection procedures

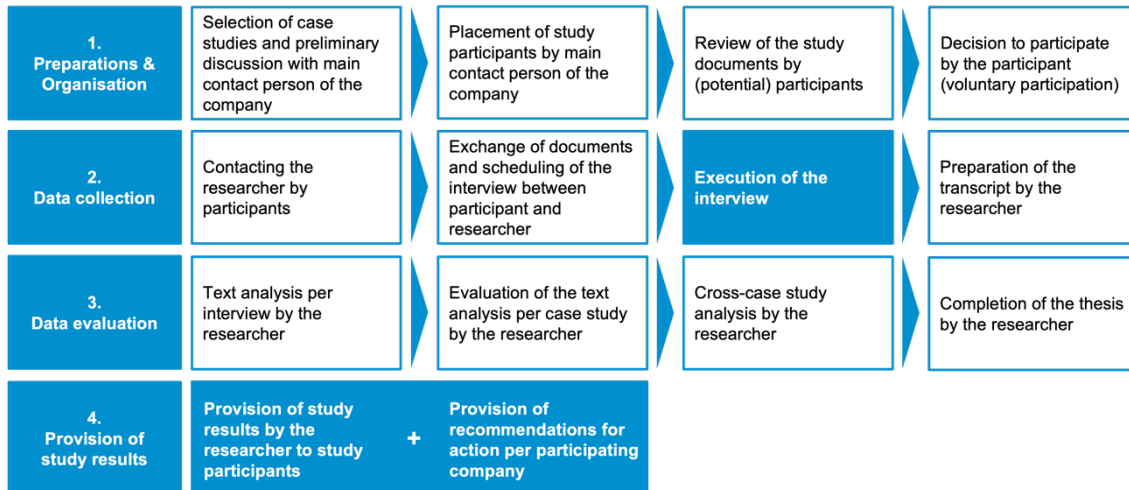


Figure 15 - Data collection procedure
(Source: Author's own)

After clarifying all questions of the participants towards the study conducted, the interviews were scheduled individually. Since the planning of the data collection as well as the implementation took place during the Corona pandemic, face-to-face meetings to conduct the interviews were excluded from the beginning. However, this fact does not jeopardise data collection. Communication, data exchange and data collection can be done via media instead of face-to-face. Based on the explained circumstances, the execution of in-depth interviews was planned via video conferencing tools. The video conference tool selected is Microsoft Teams, which was provided by the university. It is also considered the leading video conferencing tool in Germany. Using the video streaming and conference tool has the advantage that both parties are able to exchange acoustics and gestures with each other without being located at the same place. It also allows parties to share documents interactively as well as the opportunity of recording the interview procedure. Limitations are to be made with regard to environmental factors. The researcher can have less influence on this. Video conferencing tools offer advantages in terms of recording options and flexibility, as the interview can be conducted regardless of location.

Every appointment was scheduled for 1.5 hours. The researcher asked the interviewee to schedule the interview ideally on a date without being in rush or between two important meetings to ensure that the participant could engage with the topic. The procedure of the interview then followed the following process:

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Recap of information provided in advance (study background, process of in-depth interview and data handling, repeatedly obtaining confirmation of participation and consent form)
- 3) Clarification of open questions before the interview, if needed
- 4) Conduction of semi-structured interview
- 5) Closing

By executing the steps 1-3 of the interview procedure, the researcher additionally ensured that the participant participated voluntarily and without obligation when explaining the procedure of the interview in the beginning. When starting step 4 of the interview process, the participants had to give their approval again for the screencast (audio + video) of the MS Teams session. Should a participant not accept the screencast, an audio-only recording would be accepted as a fall-back solution.

Following the interview, the researcher created a short memo to record his thoughts about the interview. The memos give additional guidance within the data analysis and also allow the researcher to critically reflect the data collected. Examples of transcripts from different roles conducted can be found in Appendix 12-15.

3.6.3 Data handling

3.6.3.1 Confidentiality

Key issue of the present research approach are corporate processes and relationships between in the process involved individuals for strategic B2B marketing communication development. In this context, internal processes need to be analysed and company data as well as personal data will be collected. As in-depth interviews are selected as the research method, the voluntary participation as well as the correspondence of participants must be handled confidentially. This also includes dealing with a possible withdrawal of the participant, which he/she can make in relation to the interview but also

the data transcript. This confidentiality is ensured by an exchange that takes place exclusively between participant and researcher directly. The needed in-depth understanding of how companies define their strategic marketing communication approach requires the investigation of cases and events within the described context. Because real operational issues will be observed, interviewees will describe organisational interconnections or organisational structures. In this context, it cannot be ruled out that persons and concrete functions are named. Correspondingly outlined contexts must also be treated confidentially.

From an ethical point of view, it is required to protect the individuals observed as well as the company / cases itself. To protect company secrets and to ensure privacy of individuals, all company and personal data will be handled confidentially and anonymously. The details are explained in the participant information and privacy notice sheet (see Appendix 11). All details on the procedure will be shared directly after receiving the participation request. All data collected is completely anonymised so that no conclusions can be drawn about individual persons, the company or even the specific mechanical engineering sector. These measures are required to ensure the authenticity of individuals by creating an environment where critical opinions and individuals' perspectives without biases can also be mentioned. It also ensures that the published thesis cannot be used by competitors to generate competitive advantages resulting from the elaborated findings.

3.6.3.2 Anonymity

Ethical issues in this context might arise on company's but also on individuals' level. To avoid any kind of bias as well as ethical issues, all cases need generalization. The publication of company data itself will be also avoided to ensure that no conclusions on the participating case are possible. Since a model for the German industry sector should be derived, the findings might be also of interest for other industries. Against this background, the used data must not be traceable to a company to avoid competitive advantages for those, who did not participate. This includes a general description of the company or specific industry sector within the German industry sector as well as mentioning economic figures.

Anonymity also must be ensured during the whole data collection process itself. For this reason, the coordination and exchange of information for the purpose of data collection

is limited to the interviewee and researcher. The handling of data as well as the exchange process itself is additionally regulated and described by the Participant Information Sheet. After the interview, the anonymity of the interviewer is preserved by anonymising all statements and using the transcript exclusively marked by an index. This index contains two digits (e.g., Participant 2-3): The first digit refers to the case itself. The second digit refers to the order of interviews conducted within this case with reference to the interview order, based on the order of the interview appointments. Thus, an evaluation per case can be ensured within the analysis. However, it is not possible to draw conclusions about an interview person within the case, as the order of the interviews is based purely on the time availability of the participants and thus differs between the cases.

Within the transcript, mentioned names, including people's and company names, as well as product segments or locations have been generalised by exchanging this specific attribute by something general. The exchange has been highlighted by the rephrased word in brackets (e.g. instead mentioning a "city", the word has been exchanged by "[Location]"; instead of mentioning the "person's name", the transcript contains the rephrased term "[Participant x-x]").

Collected data during interviews on individual level, e.g., sensitive information about the process, perceived power relations, activities on formal and informal way, etc., needs to also be handled sensitively. It requires ensuring data privacy for all interviewees aligned in advance to avoid personal biases or any organisational consequences resulting from the narrative answers of the interviewee. This procedure ensures that any possible biases of participants are minimised.

3.6.3.3 Data storage

The requirement to handle company and personal data leads to the issue of handling collected data, which is not released for external use, sensitively and aligned with data protection and confidentiality regulations. During the data analysis, the original data will be encrypted in dedicated steps. The results of the cross-case analysis with fully anonymous case base references will be mentioned in the published thesis.

All collected data itself will be stored on a Microsoft OneDrive folder, provided by the University of Worcester, until completion of the thesis. The cloud storage allows to

ensure access to data as well as to secure the availability of data during the writing and evaluation phase of the thesis. The access to this OneDrive folder is limited to the researcher himself. The original interview data (containing video recording of interview as well as interview memos and e-mail histories with participants) will be disposed of after the thesis has been awarded.

3.6.3.4 Disposal

The transcripts produced will be anonymised and thus kept for three years after completion of the thesis without any interface to interviewees or the company. They will be stored on the researcher's One-Drive cloud, so that they are protected against interim data loss. The duration of three years can be explained for several reasons. First of all, the storage offers the possibility to prove relevant findings again over the course of time, should other researchers have queries about the published thesis. After three years of storage, it can be assumed that the findings have changed due to rapidly changing requirements and market conditions and are therefore outdated.

3.6.4 Research ethics

3.6.4.1 Consider guidelines and the avoidance of concerns

The quantity of voluntary companies and participants for this investigation might be limited. One of the reasons could be the fear of disclosing critical information. Therefore, the researcher must make sure that contact persons directly understand that the data will be handled in a confidential and anonymous way. The same applies to the storage of the data itself. The data collection and the anonymised data used in the thesis do not pose any threat to the participants and companies. To ensure this, the data will be treated securely and confidentially within the framework of data protection regulations and the confidentiality declarations. The most relevant guidelines regarding data protection and ethics considered in this research are:

- "General Data Protection Regulation" (GDPR) 2016, valid for the European Union and controlled by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the United Kingdom.
- "Institutional ethical guidelines" as provided by the University of Worcester
- "Ethical guidelines for educational research" as provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA)
- "UW Ethics Policy" to ensure the highest standards of integrity

Irrespective of whether the generally applicable guidelines are adhered to, there could be potential ethical issues in sharing information with participating companies during the evaluation. Despite the prior agreement that all interviews will be anonymised and conclusions about a participant are to be excluded, questions could be asked regarding who might have made corresponding statements about the process. In the event of such a request, the researcher must again refer to the agreed data protection agreement and preserve the anonymity of the participants.

3.6.4.2 Dilemmas and biases

Conducting a study in a business environment as well as critically questioning daily routines, processes, and approaches on how companies steer their marketing communication activities could lead to ethical issues in both ways. Both for the company and for the participants. To avoid any kind of biases and ethical issues for the intended research, it is therefore necessary to anonymise the data. The most appropriate way to do it, is to generalise the findings to a degree that still allows a comparison of cases itself. The level of insights must be critically questioned to avoid that any conclusions regarding a specific company are possible. At the same time, the level of insights must allow a comprehensive comparison of cases. It is also important to protect the anonymity of participating companies so that sensitive information is not passed on to the direct competition. This approach includes, for example, the indication of industries or general economic figures. Therefore, no specific description of the company is given.

To avoid any kind of ethical issues regarding the participant itself, the research has to ensure that participants feel comfortable to freely answer the give questions and debate the issues investigated. This can be ensured by informing the interviewee previously to the interview about the research, data handling and anonymity. During the interview, the researcher must be careful and empathic to avoid the interviewees biases (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Potential biases will be mitigated in a variety of ways, which will be described in the following:

- Potential biases arising from the fact that the interviewee cannot express his or her opinion on the issues to be discussed will be mitigated by an agreement between interviewer and participant to schedule the meeting ideally in the beginning or end of the business day, so that the interviewee can conduct the interview in a place of his or her choosing and without possible external listeners.

Chapter 3.6 - Data collection procedures

- The approach of communicating, exchanging data as well as the handling of data can also contribute to avoid biases, as described in Chapter 3.6.2.
- To create a trusting discussion around the guiding questions, the handling of the data is explained again at the beginning of the interview; it is explicitly pointed out that the statements will remain exclusively between the interviewer and the interviewee. In addition, it is pointed out again that the entire interview is anonymised with the creation of the transcript and thus no conclusions can be drawn about the interview partner or the company.
- The guiding questions are formulated openly so that the interviewee does not have the impression that certain questions allow conclusions to be drawn about his or her person.
- The leading questions and ad hoc questions are selected by means of a test run in such a way that all questions can be answered or discussed within the set time slot without any time pressure. If the interviewer realises during the interview that time is running out, he can adjust the number of further inquiries depending on their relevance. This avoids time pressure and ensures that the interview partner is given sufficient time to answer the guiding question.

A potential dilemma could also arise in terms of the company's commitment to participation. It might be the case that a company initially confirms its participation and ultimately, the main contact person or even a participant must withdraw their statement. In general, the researcher has to consider this risk. Depending on the reasons given, the researcher may try to find a solution to the concerns through dialogue with the person. In addition, it is important to have a backup solution not only in the case of the interviewee, but also for companies, during the preparation and conduction phases of the data collection process.

To avoid the mentioned ethical issues, the researcher must raise his awareness for all mentioned ethical issues and must deal with them appropriately. This concerns the conduct of the interview and the questions asked during the interview by the researcher. Collecting the data requires the researcher to be aware of his own role, the role of the external observer, during the data collection process as well as during the data analysis process. To reduce arising biases in this perspective, the insider researcher must become aware of his role again before, during and after every data collection and data analysis step. In concrete, expectations about the outcomes of an interview will be noted

before the investigation to avoid discussion during the interview session. The evaluation will additionally follow the mentioned guideline of the previous paragraphs to ensure leaving out personal opinions or biases of the insider research.

Since the data collection takes place during the Covid-19 pandemic, potential distortions regarding the marketing communication mix must be questioned critically. One example for the potential distortions might be the increase of intensified use of digital media – also a result of the absence of live events. The extent to which these distortions have a lasting effect must be questioned.

3.7 Data collection techniques

The requirement for the data collection methodology is to fully understand the defined case and to prove this based on data. For this, relationships and dependencies within the decision-making process need to be explored as well as general environmental factors of the organisational context need to be considered. It has also been argued in previous chapters that personal skills and information considered for the decision-making process are necessary constructs to comprehensible investigate the research aim. Based on these requirements, a selection between the most appropriate documentary research, survey or interview method will be evaluated in the following.

From an organisational point of view, helpful information could be found in organisational charts (to understand the structural power relations as well as hierarchies inside the organisation), formal process descriptions (to understand information processes and decision-hierarchies), job descriptions (to also understand the responsibilities and power relations), as well as curricula vita (to understand the formal skill set and the documented experiences). Gathering this kind of information and to get a better picture of the individuals concerns, documentary research would be a suitable data collection method (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). However, collecting data in this way would have the disadvantage that while the formal processes descriptions and organisational charts could possibly describe strategic decision-making processes, they do not allow one to detect the informal networks of an organisation (Rank, 2008). By this, documentary research does not create the necessary comprehensible picture of organisational capabilities and personal skills, as required from the research objectives. The same applies to the comprehensive identification of constructs influencing the decision-making process, which cannot be evaluated through document analysis. Formally described

processes might only be described in high-level information. The same applies to the curriculum vitae of the participants. It displays the development as well as experiences in business as well as in theory, but it does not explain the peoples' motives or behaviour patterns when making decisions or during decision-making processes.

The most appropriate data collection method for the present study is to conduct in-depth interviews or surveys. Both make it possible to discover the phenomenon of the decision-making process by investigating all relevant stakeholders involved in the process more in-depth. The survey method is recommended to discover relationships between variables and prepositions (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2019). It also allows a direct comparison of opinions to dedicated aspects of the decision-making process and approaches adopted by communication managers. Nevertheless, the survey method would require a standardised set of questions and only allow a certain degree of flexibility when questioning the standardized set of answers (Dul and Hak, 2007).

Whereas interviews and specific semi-structured interviews would allow the researcher to respond to the situation and handle the use of defined questions flexibly (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). To comprehensively understand the operational handling of decisions, the decision-making process itself, as well as the motives of the people involved by questioning the participants' answers, in-depth interviews seem to be the most appropriate data collection method. Interviews represent an already often used primary data collection method for case studies (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2017). The method allows one to generate deeper insights by comprehensively analysing collected contents (Wierseman, 2013). Even though interviews generate rich and insightful empirical data, there are weaknesses in this data collection method as well. These could not only be biased due to inadequately formulated questions, but also biases of the interviewer might affect the given answers (Huber and Power, 1985). These biases can be limited by selecting different and ideally well-informed interviewees. Of course, the quantity of interviews additionally helps to balance individual insights. Within this context, different interviewees are understood as multiple perspectives on the same facts. These multiple perspectives could result from different hierarchical levels or organisational functions, geographical backgrounds, or different levels of experience (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

In addition, a multi-perspective approach can also indicate the differences between formally defined processes and actual processes. It would allow one to understand power relations and it would also make it possible to understand the role of participants and their responsibilities more comprehensively in comparison to a survey or documentary research approach. Lastly, the interaction between the participant and researcher also allows one to question the context, background, or history regarding the investigated process if the necessity arises.

Observing a phenomenon from multiple perspectives, as intended for this research, by taking multiple perspectives and dimensions into consideration could also result in a mixed methodology approach (Dooley, 2002). Mixed methods would make it possible to make use of qualitative and quantitative data to understand a phenomenon. Combining methods also increases the case validity (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). For this research, the triangulation of data does not consist of matching quantitative and qualitative data generally. As the focus relies on exploring the decision-making process, qualitative data must be the determining source of data. Nevertheless, combining multiple perspectives in a case also leads to a triangulation of data. Comparing the findings between cases in the end could partially contain a quantitative indication to a certain degree. However, the described triangulation of data also presupposes that the same topics and contents are discussed across all interviews. To ensure this, an interview guide is used as part of the interviews. The contents are derived from the research questions and the literature review. The derivation of the research questions from the literary review can be seen in Table 4 in the following Chapter 3.8.

3.8 Contents of case study

In Chapter 3.7, the reasons to select in-depth interviews as the most appropriate data collection method have already been described. Consequently, the method will be used to achieve the defined research objectives.

The contents of in-depth interviews are derived from the theoretical foundations of Chapter 2. The following Table 4 and Table 5 schematically derives constructs to be investigated from the topic clusters. In accordance with a semi-structured interview procedure, the interview questions are derived from those clusters and form the interview guide illustrated in Appendix 3. The additional linkage of the research questions to the overall research objectives can be found in Appendix 4.

Primary data – Topics to be conducted during the interview:

Discipline / Origin	Guiding theme	Description	Consequence of data collection	Resulting interview question
(Strategic) decision-making	Role of interview partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic decisions are usually made by top management (Chapter 2.3.1) • Position of the interview partner provides information about the functional importance of the person in the decision-making process (Chapter 2.3.2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of function and significance • Clarification of power relations 	(1) Please briefly introduce yourself with your professional background and describe your tasks in the company.
(Strategic) decision-making	Consistency of (marketing communication) strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of adopting marketing communication strategy can determine the overall success (Chapter 1.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse management turnover & frequency of adaptations to evaluate consistency 	(2) How long have you been working in this position?
(Strategic) decision-making	Organisational capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationality of decision-makers depends on individuals' capabilities and skills (Chapter 2.3.2.1) • The level of rationality is dependent on available resources that can make their contribution to the decision (Chapter 2.3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about marketing communication skills and background 	(3) Please describe your (academic) knowledge and skills in the field of marketing communication.
	Stakeholder & marketing communication team capabilities			
(Strategic) decision-making	Organisational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structures are dependent on business needs (Chapter 2.3.1) • Decisions are made by interactions and counteractions of management (Chapter 2.3.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof impact of construct on decision-making process 	(4) For classification purposes, can you please also describe where you are located organisationally and how your structure is built around the department of marketing communication?
(Strategic) decision-making	Organisational Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning is impacted by (organisational) culture (Chapter 2.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof impact of constructs on decision-making process 	(5) Please describe the organisational culture in your company.
	Stakeholder Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting activity to reduce lack of knowledge (Chapter 2.3.2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check how knowledge transfer is anchored in the company philosophy 	
	Managerial behaviour / Social capital of top management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust determines the culture of failure and mistakes (Chapter 2.4) • Trust supports the ability to act effectively and efficiently in marketing communications (Chapter 2.2.7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked about the level of trust. • Evaluate level of trust from top management on experts 	
(Strategic) marketing communication	Importance of Marketing Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of discipline within the organisation provides information about the organisational capabilities (Chapter 1.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine relevance of marketing function within organisation • Proof of attention of top management on marketing communication function 	(6) Which importance does marketing communication have in your company? (7) Please use an example to describe the importance of marketing communication in your company as just described.

Chapter 3.8 - Contents of case study

Discipline / Origin	Guiding theme	Description	Consequence of data collection	Resulting interview question
(Strategic) decision-making	Necessary future skills required in marketing communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rational vs. intuitive decision-making (Chapter 2.3.1) Decision-makers marketing communication skills and capabilities Networking capabilities (Chapter 2.2.7) Solving of current challenges (Chapter 1.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand department needs and current challenges 	(8) What skills and competences do you see as necessary in marketing communication in the future and why?
(Strategic) marketing communication	Evaluation of marketing communication mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of marketing communication theories and models to determine communication mix (Chapter 2.2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand context and business type needs 	(9) Which communication channels do you currently use in your company and with what goal? (10) Which (three) touchpoints do you consider the most important for your type of business and why?
(Strategic) marketing communication	Changing market environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macroeconomic factors like digitalisation or unforeseen events impact strategic decisions and communication behaviour (Chapter 1.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of impact on decision-making process 	(11) Do you see a change here in the relevance of certain communication channels due to the Covid-19 pandemic?
(Strategic) marketing communication	Intuition in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of tacit and explicit knowledge (Chapter 2.2.7) Usage of intuition to cope with complex situation (Chapter 2.3.2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate managerial knowledge Derive recommendations for action and identify room for improvement 	(12) How do you evaluate the extent of your marketing communication mix? (13) Are there things that you miss?
(Strategic) decision-making	Planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top-down vs. bottom-up planning approaches of marketing communication measures (Chapter 2.2.5.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand planning process and identify formal process informal networks Identify management style and corporate culture 	(14) Could you please describe how you as a company determine your marketing communication channel mix and your communication measures?
	Speed in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision speed is related to intuition, managers cognitive abilities and tolerance of taking risks (Chapter 2.3.2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how many and what kind of process steps it requires to take strategic decisions Investigate frequency of alignment meetings, etc. 	
	Decision routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on corporate guidelines and differ between organisations (Chapter 2.3.2.4) Decision processes are designed to achieve certain goals (Chapter 2.3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify formal process informal networks 	
	Budget allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top management's approves budget and therefore influences marketing communication resources. (Chapter 2.3.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate process and relevant stakeholder 	

Chapter 3.8 - Contents of case study

Discipline / Origin	Guiding theme	Description	Consequence of data collection	Resulting interview question
(Strategic) decision-making	Political behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic decisions foster internal politics and drive opinions (Chapter 2.3.2.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify role and impact of each stakeholder involved Identify differences between formal and informal process 	(15) Are there internal stakeholders who influence this and if so, who and how?
	Stakeholder composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structures and power relations impact decision-making process (Chapter 2.3.2.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate an understanding of power distances Develop an understanding how relevant is your interviewee within the decision-making process 	(16) (Are there other people who additionally influence the marketing communication approach?)
(Strategic) decision-making	Information considering & processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of marketing metrics to determine communication mix (Chapter 2.2.7) Usage of benchmarking to improve organisational capabilities (Chapter 2.2.7) Intuition vs. rationality of decisions (Chapter 2.3.2.1, 2.3.2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what kinds of information gathering techniques are used Determine degree of fact-based argumentation 	(17) What information do you take into account when defining and planning the company's communication channels, touch points and measures? (18) Do you formulate communication goals for the individual measures? (19) (What are these goals?)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of managerial tie utilisation to understand customer needs (Chapter 2.2.7) Usage of external information and supporting (re)sources e.g., agencies (Chapter 2.2.7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify where and how management takes up market and customer insights 	(20) Where do you get the information you use in setting and planning? (21) Where do you obtain new knowledge?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of marketing communication theories and concepts (Chapter 2.2.5) Different concepts and models help to structure and optimise marketing communication activities (Chapter 2.2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask about concepts and models in use to optimise marketing communication activities to deduce level of theoretical foundation of activities 	(22) (What role does marketing theory play in this?)
(Strategic) marketing communication	Customer knowledge/ Relationship management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage of networking capabilities to understand customer needs (Chapter 2.2.7) Business type determines communication approach (Chapter 2.2.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how and why communication needs differ between business types Understand how companies use customer insights for marketing communication purposes 	(23) How would you describe your knowledge of your customers?
(Strategic) decision-making	Decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding strategic goals (Chapter 2.3.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify if strategic planning incorporates strategic development 	(24) Could you please describe how you strategically develop your marketing communication with an example or a channel?
(Strategic) marketing communication	Room for improvement/ Intuition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rely on intuition in complex decisions where logic measures are not reliable enough (Chapter 2.3.2.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify business needs and organisational challenges Investigate handling of marketing communication 	(25) Where is the greatest need to develop and adapt your marketing communication at the moment?

Chapter 3.8 - Contents of case study

Discipline / Origin	Guiding theme	Description	Consequence of data collection	Resulting interview question
(Strategic) Decision-making	Power relations/ Political behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several internal stakeholders determine the strategic marketing communication planning because of corporate processes and individual goals (Chapter 2.3.2.5, 2.3.2.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate which relevance do es marketing communication have for the stakeholder Evaluate level of stakeholder involvement in decision-making process Investigate reasons of influencing the decision-making process 	(26) How do you personally and your department influence strategic decisions in the field of marketing communication? (27) How would you describe your (personal) influence on it? (28) How does your influence differ centrally and into regions?
	Social capital of top management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solidarity within the relationships will help to ensure an effective collaboration between involved parties and throughout the collaboration a smooth implementation of measures (Chapter 2.3.2.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different opinions also might result in different decisions 	
-	-	-	-	(29) Is there anything else you would like to say about the development of companies' strategic marketing communication?

Table 4 - Mapping of literature review and interview guide questions
(Source: Author's own)

Secondary data – Topics to be identified separate to the interview:

Discipline / Origin	Guiding theme	Description	Consequence of data collection	Method to collect secondary data
(Strategic) decision-making	Industry sector and business type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry sector determines the business type of a company and provides information about customers (Chapter 2.2.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-check of collected data Understand business context and marketing communication needs Classify cases to ensure comparability of cases 	Document research / Online research
(Strategic) Marketing Communication	Managerial capabilities and consistence of strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals' capabilities and skills impact the decision-making process (Chapter 2.3.2.1) Frequency of adopting marketing communication strategy can determine the overall success (Chapter 1.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-check of collected data Understand managerial capabilities and their impact on decision making 	Document research / Online research

Table 5 - Secondary data conducted
(Source: Author's own)

The schematically derived questions from the theoretical foundations of the thesis were checked for technical correctness and comprehensibility by a pilot study. For the pilot study, a case out of the German industry sector was selected using the same conditions as for the other cases. The aim of the pilot study was not only to evaluate the content of the interviews. It also gives the opportunity to check the feasibility of the interview as well as the general procedure to conduct the in-depth interviews. By this, the research was able to prove how the formulated questions were understood by the interviewees to avoid potential misunderstandings. The pilot study led to the opportunity to refine the questions in accordance with the research objectives. In addition, the question sequence and duration of the interview were critically scrutinised and evaluated. The question sequence is based on a balance between the content-related question structure and the complexity of individual questions. When conducting the pilot study, care was also taken to ensure that the entire procedure was the same as for the other cases of data collection. In this way, general challenges in the overall process of data collection can also be identified and adjusted in advance.

The pilot study participants confirmed that the interview process and preliminary clarifications were perceived well. Both participants appreciated the transparency of data handling as well as the process of communication itself. Both felt well prepared for the interview by the documents sent in advance. During the pilot study interviews, the given answers to the derived questions generally confirmed that the content was relevant to the formulated research questions. The questions were understood as expected by the researcher. Nevertheless, the pilot study also showed the necessity to adjust some of the questions to ensure that the intention of the question was comprehensive and without any misinterpretation.

To avoid a misinterpretation for the most relevant constructs mentioned in the guiding questions, definitions for the terms organisational culture (Question 5), marketing communication (Question 6), marketing communication mix (Question 12) and strategic development (Question 24) were added. The pilot study revealed the need for definitions to allow the participants to give appropriate answers. Overall, two questions were split to obtain a targeted and precise answer. In addition, three questions were newly included in the interview guide based on the feedback to ensure a comprehensive answer to the research questions. Some adjustments were also made in wording. The changes also entailed an adjustment of the order of questions. The adjustments were made to obtain

a flow of the interview like in a conversation. To ensure this flow, a broad set of questions were formulated in the interview guide to also allow the interviewee to prepare thoroughly. The detailed interview guide therefore gives on the one hand, the interviewee an idea of what topics are of interest for the researcher. On the other hand, it also gives the researcher a detailed guide to ensure that all aspects of questions have been answered appropriately while conducting the interview. In total, 29 questions were defined in the interview guide. This set of questions also contained the questions 16, 19 and 22 in brackets. During the pilot study, the researcher expected answers to the questions asked beforehand, but the pilot study participants did not answer as expected. To concretely request an answer for these aspects required that the questions in brackets were asked optionally, depending on the given answer in the question before.

The recorded duration of the pilot study interviews was 45 minutes. It must be said that no additional explanations were needed as a detailed introduction of the background of the study and processes was made before each interview. It is assumed that the extensive pre-discussion, including a description of the set of questions and the intention behind it, also led to precise answers while the interview was conducted. Against this background and assuming that not every participant will prepare himself to the same degree, regular interviews were expected to last 60 minutes. The experiences were also confirmed by other multiple cases studies conducted on interviews as a data collection method, in which each interview lasted between 30-90 minutes (Boonstra, 2003). Detailed notes about the adaptations of the interview guide, general feedback of the pilot study participants as well as thoughts about the research after the pilot study interviews were conducted can be found in Appendix 5.

3.9 Timing of case study

After the approval of the ethics committee, the pilot test was scheduled for August 2021. The iteration of the case study contents, its pre-test and iteration process will be described in the next chapter. The initially proposed time frame for the data collection was scheduled for the timespan of August 2021 until October 2021. Finally, the data collection of all cases took place between the middle of November 2021 and the middle of March 2022. A complete interview appointment list can be found Appendix 2.

Due to the pandemic and resulting consequences for the economy, internal projects and restructuring have made communication with target companies and contact persons

difficult, leading to a delay within the interviews. Furthermore, contact with originally promised participants broke off completely and new companies had to be found in the period between August and November. Both reasons led to an overall delay in data collection, but not to a qualitative deficit. On the contrary, the participants of the companies confirmed their interest in the results. Thus, it has been reaffirmed that participation was both voluntary and based on the participants' intrinsic motivation.

3.10 Data analysing techniques and process

The data analysis gives meaning to a collected impression (Stake, 1995). The objects and characteristics can be performed by a variety of data-gathering techniques (Dooley, 2002). For the analysis of qualitative information, analysis methods can be used within the case. Additionally, cross-case methods and pattern matching can be used to generate insights (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018; Stake, 1995). The systematic procedure of data analysis defined for the present research will be debated and comprehensively explained in the next paragraphs.

In order to analyse the data in a structured and comprehensive way, the following 4 steps of preparing the data for the analysis must be taken (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014):

1. **Data reduction:** To define which of the collected data answers the research questions the most, the right data has to be selected, condensed and simplified out of the raw data collected.
2. **Data display:** In the second step, the reduced set of data must be compressed, structured, and coded in a way that the identification of themes as well as a conclusion is possible. In this step, the compression of data could already result in diagrams, charts, matrixes, or texts.
3. **Data categorisation:** This step contains the aggregation of themes into categories to allow comparisons or distinctions.
4. **Data contextualisation:** Finally, the condensed set of structured data will relate to the external context by identifying relationships with events and contextual conditions.

A summary of the above-described steps to prepare the data for data analysis in the context of the present study is described below. The condensing and compression process of data within this study is also supported by using the analysis software NVivo.

It supports by handling collected interview data in a comprehensive way (Yin, 2018; De Massis and Kotlar, 2014).

For this research, a contextual analysis of the phenomenon investigated will be selected as data analysis strategy. It has been argued that in-depth interviews are the most appropriate research strategy. As a result of the conducted interviews, verbatim transcripts can be created. These transcripts constitute the basis for the analysis. Analysing the verbatim transcript allows for a systematic and perspectival holistic review as the content allows one to analyse the companies' decision-making process from different perspectives. By observing patterns, emerging propositions must again be evaluated in the context of the literature selected for this investigation. It is also required to extend the literature basis by the new findings to get even deeper insights into the data collection. Enriching the literature additionally leads to increased internal validity and to a broader generalisability (Eisenhardt, 1989). In addition, it might also point out further interfaces to other theories, which haven't been discovered in the literature review.

Analysing a multiple case study also requires caution while describing the findings – especially when building theory is intended. Instead of describing narratives of each case, a balance between the rich empirical evidence and research objectives must be ensured (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). To avoid potential biases in the research, the study follows the principle that “no construct is guaranteed a place in the resultant theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989:536). This ensures that the overall case is understood rather than just parts of the case (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). Additionally, it will ensure not to affect the outcome of the study by avoiding taking theoretical perspectives within the data analysis.

To avoid possible misinterpretations and to ensure that the statements are as precise as possible, all interviews are conducted in the participants' mother tongue, German. The same applies to the analysis. For the thesis itself, relevant passages and terms will be translated into English to check the statements. This approach additionally creates a more familiar conversational environment for the participant and avoids a possible language barrier. The selected data collection method allows the researcher to investigate operational lived processes instead of formally described ones. By doing this, influencing factors on the decision-making process can be determined, roles and its

power relations and impact on decisions can be analysed, and organisational capabilities can be detected. As described in Chapter 3.5.3, the individual cases are first examined individually before a cross-case comparison is carried out afterwards. Conducting a multiple case study also enables the analysis of the data in multiple ways. For this case study and in accordance with the defined research objectives (Chapter 1.6), the procedure of pattern matching is the most appropriate way to analyse the collected data from all six cases. The analysis follows for major steps, which are described in the following paragraphs and are illustrated in Figure 16.

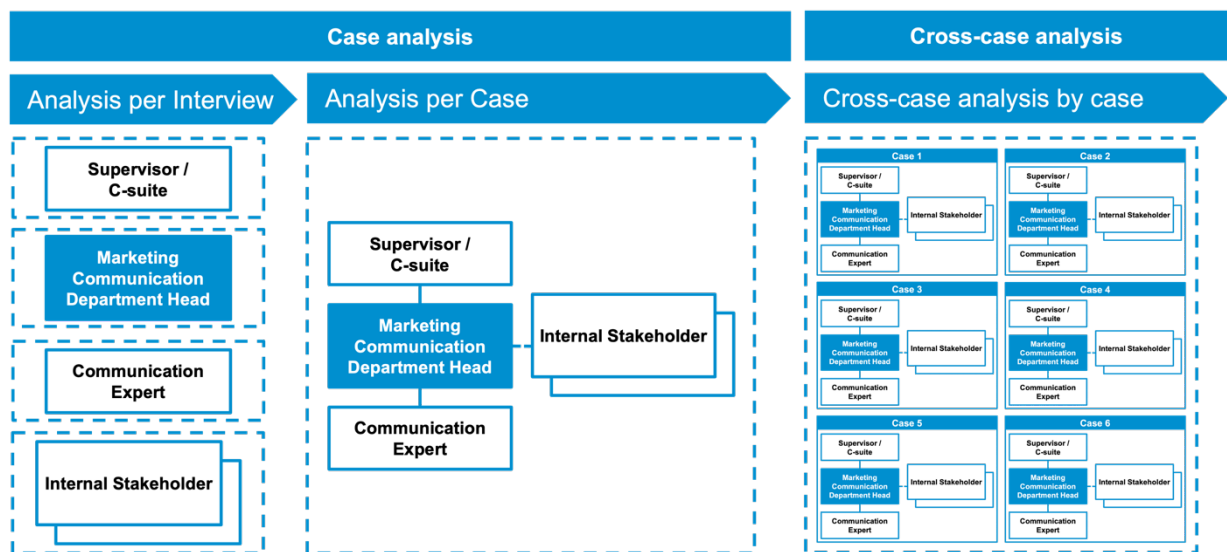


Figure 16 - Procedure of data analysis
(Source: Author's own)

First step: Case analysis

First of all, each conducted interview will be reflected on and evaluated by itself. To reflect on the interview before starting with the objective analysis, the recorded memo has to be reviewed. It should give guidance on which aspects should be kept in mind while conducting the analysis. It contains the first impressions that arise after conducting the interview. Those can be, for instance, the mood or openness of the participant. In the first step and based on Table 4 - Mapping of literature review and interview guide questions, the interview guide contents, each question will be segmented on the basis of structuring the interview contents. This procedure is the first iteration phase, before identifying patterns. In the second step, the interview itself will be evaluated in accordance with the three mainly identified research question categories:

- Decision-making process
- Organisational structure and skills

- Considered information and knowledge

Again, those are also related to the raised interview guide questions so that mapping and evaluation follows a structured approach. Details of the structure can be found in Appendix 4. In addition to the three research question categories, a general conclusion will be made on how the participant perceives the impact and relevance of marketing communication within his corporation. After conducting and analysing all interviews of a case, all perspectives will be matched and analysed as group of data. This analysis of course will once again reflect the question categories. The consideration of the categories therefore allows the researcher to complete the picture of how strategic decisions to develop B2B marketing communication are made in the investigated case through the analysis. The pattern matching process uses different formats for the evaluation:

- **Decision process:** A flow chart diagram allows one to map the described decision process executed from different perspectives. It makes it possible to compare different perspectives comprehensively within a case, but also across cases. The flow chart could also detect process flows that are formally intended by the structure. Especially this analysis represents the basis to derive appropriate recommendations for action.
- **Organisational structure:** The decision process flow chart in combination with the described organisational structure might explain the decision process itself. It brings the decision-making process into the required context to understand the framework of making decisions. Therefore, the organisational structure will be illustrated in an organisational chart and mapped with the participants responsibilities in the decision-making process. It is also linked to the organisational culture, which must be considered in this part of the analysis as well in order to additionally understand the factors affecting the organisational structure comprehensively.
- **Skills:** All skills mentioned and detected during all interviews represent the range of the organisational capabilities. To identify similarities between roles and cases, an overview will be created to categorise and compare roles and cases. It also contributes to comprehensively understand the organisational capabilities in terms of marketing communication.

- **Information:** Which information will be taken into consideration to make strategic decisions might also be dependent on several aspects like existing capabilities or general access to required data. For the evaluation, the frequency of mentioning will be illustrated in a word cloud to detect the most relevant information sources from a qualitative perspective. Taking this perspective especially takes up the connection to the other stakeholder groups of this research. It illustrates the importance and contribution of external agencies, marketing theory as well as the impact of customers and knowledge.
- **Knowledge:** Existing knowledge to make strategic decisions might also differ between roles and cases. Therefore, an analysis to detect similarities and differences on the most appropriate way must be created additionally. It again contributes to comprehensively understand the organisational capabilities in terms of marketing communication.

Second step: Cross-case analysis

The described procedure for analysing a single case in terms of deriving consequences out of all interviews about the main research objectives, needs to be replicated in the next step for a cross-case comparison. The procedure remains the same for the pattern matching itself. In addition, questions asked to understand the organisation itself well needs to be compared here. Examples for the analysis are the organisational culture or the generally perceived importance of communication within the company.

The cross-case analysis is also a summary of all the results of the analysis and enables a limited generalisation of the findings to answer the research questions of this thesis. After the cross-case analysis, the consolidated findings will define the basis to answer the formally defined research questions of this study. To exclude misinterpretations, a 3-step analysis procedure was chosen:

- 1) Assignment and initial classification of questions and themes based on excerpts from the transcript (with context to the statement).
- 2) Breakdown of individual messages according to interview guide questions and topic clusters.
- 3) Summary of interview guide questions to research questions 1-4.

3.11 Limitations of methodological approach

3.11.1 Handling of contested knowledge

From a research point of view, it should be noted that marketing managers today see one of their biggest challenges in measuring the return on investment of marketing activities (hubspot.com, 2018). At the same time, a growing marketing technology landscape, which enables marketers to use a broader range of tools measuring the success of their marketing activities, enables the managers to collect and interpret manifold data. A lot of parameters are defined, but it is currently not possible to determine the concrete effect of one parameter to the return on invest on marketing activity.

The validity and reliability, as well as the objectivity of knowledge, generated through prospect and customer feedback, is in most of the cases not in relation to the effort of collecting it. Consequently, the direct determination of figures is economically not reasonable. As communication needs to put the customer in the centre of all measures, an indirect or auxiliary framework is necessary to determine the effect and communication actions have on the customer.

The defined group of internal stakeholders instead has an impact on the selection and usage of a model or framework, which should be used to align communication managers' decisions internally. Group decisions, based on individual knowledge, are always based on a compromise of all involved stakeholders, due to their individual targets and personal opinions. In consequence, the mentioned perspectives on a framework must be considered during research to create the right approach. The nature of knowledge itself is therefore complex and constitutes a separate section of research. Because the models were developed internally, the accessibility and transparency of background information as well as its development methods will not be given in all cases. The challenge for research therefore consists in the correct evaluation of models and its targets. The validity and reliability can only be proven via reference cases.

The use of theories, frameworks or models outside the scientific context usually provides insights into the methodology of these models. However, the practical applicability is not always given in an operational context. In general, this type of knowledge is most appropriate for research because it is most consistent with academic standards.

3.11.2 Limitations

Since the number of cases is limited due to the extent of this investigation, general conclusions are also limited regarding the overall validity of constructs and generalisability. Nevertheless, the selected methodology can identify further implications for future research. A final evaluation needs to be made after the research has been conducted. Limitations also have to be made for the scope of the research. The same applies to the transferability within the German industry, as it might face completely different decision processes in different sectors. The transferability of the results to a different market can only be discussed and evaluated once the study has been conducted fully. The results are for the German market and a transfer of general or single results needs to be checked point by point. As described in Chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**, the B2B segment is too broad to possibly derive general conclusions, but the B2B business type concept allows at least some generalisation for those types conducted.

3.11.3 Establishing validity and reliability

The case study method has proven itself for testing and generating theory multiple times in the context of strategic management. Most of the time, it is used to investigate situations in management practice (Dul and Hak, 2007). A key strength of the method is that it also considers the context compared to other research methods that only consider the research phenomenon. Considerations regarding validity and reliability during the research design, data collection, and analysis phase must be ensured by the researcher, in order to justify findings and derive further implications for research. The reliability in this regard ensures the procedure of conducting the data collection comprehensively and transparently, to ensure repetitiveness and thereby to minimise errors and biases (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). In terms of validity, a distinction must be made between construct validity, internal and external validity (Gibbert and Ruigrok, 2010) and all are of relevance, because a particular finding with a high internal validity does not automatically result in a generalisation outside of the study context (Onwuegbuzie, 2000).

Internal validity is described as "the condition that observe differences on the dependent variable are a direct result of the independent variable, not some other variable" (Gay and Airasian, 2000:345). In other words, internal validity is about plausible construct relationships. This can be ensured by explanation built per case, pattern-matching as

well as with cross-case comparisons or data triangulation through multiple perspectives. Pattern matching can be done either with predefined patterns but also with patterns from previous studies and from different contexts (Gibbert, Ruigrok and Wicki, 2008). A combination of multiple data and sources is also known as triangulation, in a broad sense, and it can be seen as additional measure for validity (Webb et al., 1966; Denzin, 1978; Golafshani, 2003; Jick, 1979). It therefore takes advantage of several data collection processes.

In addition, external validity is defined as "the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to and across populations, settings, and times" (Johnson and Christensen, 2000). It describes the generalisation of findings and can be achieved by using a multiple case study with a replication logic. Also, the use of emerging theory to describe the phenomenon can support external validity. The validity of the results increases with each interview per case, as different perspectives on the same issue are superimposed (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2018; Stake, 2013).

Construct validity "pertains to the degree of correspondence between constructs and their measures, [and is therefore] [...] a necessary condition for theory development and testing" (Peter, 1981:133). It highlights the quality of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the research by proving if the right measures have been selected or if they are subjective. Multiple sources and data triangulation can prove the construct validity based on the convergence of results (Denzin, 1978; Golafshani, 2003). Additionally, construct validity as well as reliability can be ensured throughout an appropriate coding process (Yin, 2018).

3.12 Chapter summary

Chapter 3 was used to evaluate and define the research methodology and strategy of the present study. The result of the evaluation is the selection of case study research. It has been shown that this methodological approach best meets the research objectives. The reason for this is that the processes lived in everyday business life are to be analysed and that these findings can best be captured in this way. In order to derive appropriate conclusions from the results, a cross-case analysis was chosen in order to critically question whether the processes and opinions identified could also be found in other organisational structures. Even if the generalisability is limited. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that recommendations for action for the strategic development of marketing communication can be derived from the analysis, which are helpful for all participants, but probably also for many other companies in German industry.

At the same time, the chosen research strategy ensures that the research questions can be answered without circumventing the ethics of science. This should be emphasised especially because individuals and companies are being analysed in their everyday context, so that the protection of these individuals and companies must be ensured through anonymisation. The chosen approach has so far provided a clear view of the detailed problem and contents for the case study have been derived ensuring to answer the research questions. In addition, the pilot test as well as the sample discussion have shown that the requirements to fulfil the intended research objectives can be fulfilled by the selected case study approach. The implementation of the data collection thus forms the basis for the subsequent data analysis and thus evaluation of the present study in Chapter 4.

4 Data analysis and evaluation

4.1 Introduction of chapter

The data analysis follows the structure of the research objectives in line with the derived interview guide questions, so that primary questions are examined in Chapter 4.2.1 and all supplementary defined questions and thematic blocks that arose from the literature research as well as to put the data in the context of the organisations investigated in Chapter 4.2.2. Table 6 should be understood as an overview of the following chapters.

Research Objectives:		To identify decision-making process steps in order to define the strategic approaches for B2B marketing communication planning.	To identify which way organizational structures and skills of internal stakeholders determine a firm's strategic marketing communication approach.	To identify which information and/or knowledge is taken into consideration by the involved stakeholders to strategically define the firm's strategic marketing communication approach.
	Organisational context	Decision-making process	(Organisational) Structures & Skills	Information & Knowledge
Primary		Planning and decision-making process (Q14)	Organisational capabilities and skills (Q1, Q2, Q3)	Information considered (Q17)
		(Strategic) communication mix planning (Q24)	Organisational structure (Q4)	Information processing (Q20)
Secondary	Understanding of the term marketing and responsibilities	Most relevant communication channels (Q10)	Future Skills (Q8)	Obtaining new knowledge (Q21)
	Current extent of marketing mix (Q9; Q12)	Involved stakeholder groups (Q15; Q16)		Marketing communication theory (Q22)
	Missing elements in marketing mix (Q13, Q25)	Political behaviour (Q6, Q7, Q26, Q27)		Customer knowledge (Q23)
	Digitalization of marketing communication activities	Formulation of communication goals (Q18, Q19)		
	Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Q11)	Budgeting and regional influence (Q28)		
	Organisational culture (Q5)			

Table 6 – Primary and secondary data analysis structure
(Source: Author's own)

After the completion of the data analysis in the aforementioned structure, a discussion of the findings of the analysis and its critical evaluation and classification in current literature follows in Chapter 4.3. The result of this discussion is the conceptual model derived from the study, which is illustrated in Figure 20. Finally, Chapter 0 summarises the analysis and evaluation of the study conducted before critically reflecting on the selected research design in Chapter 5.

4.2 Case evaluations

4.2.1 Analysis of primary questions

4.2.1.1 Decision-making process

To identify the decision-making process steps taken to execute the strategic marketing communication planning, two main questions have been discussed during the interviews to define those. Interview guide question 12 thereby addressed the general planning process and its procedure. Interview guide question 24 additionally asked how the responsible are approaching the strategic development of their communication channels in addition. The findings of both questions will be described in the following paragraphs.

Planning and decision-making process (Q14)

From the interviewees' descriptions, it is generally noticeable that the planning process is becoming more professional and that marketing communication teams have to select and prioritise measures due to a lack of resources (Participant 1-4; Min.: 25:43; Participant 6-3, Min.: 44:00). The generated insights from all six conducted cases have shown that annual planning procedures focus on a 12-18-month planning process which is especially driven by the contents a company wants to communicate. The procedures on defining the contents during the planning process are generally follow the described theories from Chapter 2. In some of the cases, theories like customer journey or integrated marketing communication are used as a general guidance without concrete defined procedures for implementation (e.g., Case 1, Case 2, Case 4), sometimes self-developed templates are used to ensure managing communication planning in accordance with these theories (e.g., Case 3, Case 5). The analysed marketing communication planning process outlines similarities, which are illustrated by a simplified process flow in Figure 17.

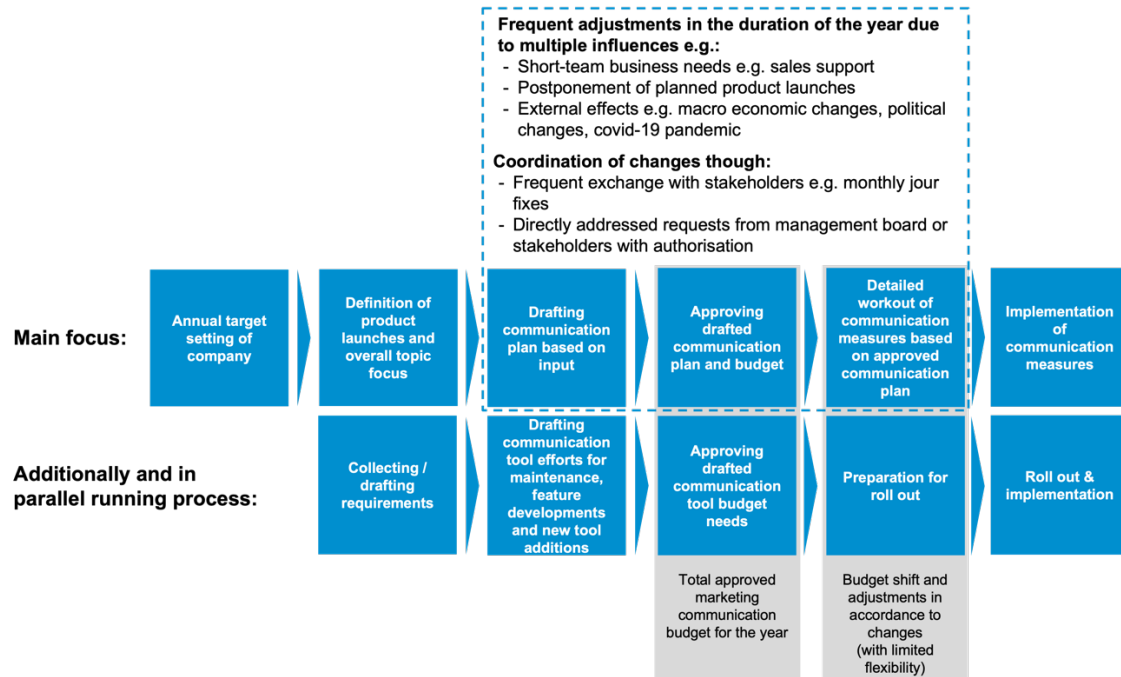


Figure 17 - Annual planning process

(Source: Author's own, based on interview statements. Further details and not integrated differences can be found in Appendix 22)

All companies confirmed that ideal planning is not possible because product launches often change, or new topics change the planning at short notice (see Appendix 22). Nevertheless, trade fairs offer a rough structure and deadlines for the planning and creation of communication measures in terms of content, as these public events always force the communication team to plan their communication approach as well as to define their key messages (Participant 4-3, Min.: 50:53). According to the statements, the consequence of short-term reactions consists of a balanced measure based on available resources. However, the control is often carried out "manually" and not via a content management system. The exception here is Case 6 with an established editor structure.

Often, it's simply like this: because of the lack of feedback or the lack of briefing, we just implement it the way we think is right so that something gets done [...]. We must make sure that we can still be perceived externally and then try to make use of the few fragments that were given to us as a briefing, whether it's this PPT or I don't know, if it's some ad hoc word shells from the meeting. We make the best of it and decide a lot of things on our own. Which is good, I think, so that something happens. So that something gets done. But it could certainly be more of a partnership or should be more of a partnership.

Participant 4-4, Communication Expert, Min. 56:45

The decision-making and communication channel planning can additionally be linked to the CJ and IMC theories described in Chapter 2.2.5. Across all cases, consistent communication messages in multiple communication channels (referring to ICM) as well as the planning based on customer touchpoints along the CJ were mentioned. Even though the CJ was mentioned several times, most of the companies use the concept to plan the digital journey and experience, but do not use the CJ as a holistic concept considering all customer touchpoints with the company. The data highlights practical challenge to handle contents cross channels and regions. The steering of subsidiaries around the globe was often mentioned as a challenge. Some participants stated that they do have the authority, some mention that at least frequent exchange meetings are hosted to explain and provide newly created materials and outline upcoming campaigns. Having IMC in mind, the potential to optimize the process of steering communication measures jointly can be improved in nearly all companies with content management systems or product information management systems, which were not mentioned by participants during the investigation. Also, IMC was always seen as something similar compared to a customer journey or user journey. The 4C in Case 3 or the Message House concept in Case 5 are therefore best practice examples to define not only communication messages in accordance to target groups but also the communication channel mix.

Additionally, the accompanying challenges regarding the planning and implementation process is that marketing communication departments often face the challenge of a lack of customer insights, a comprehensive briefing or feedback to improve in the future – whether this is coming from an internal stakeholder or marketing communication metrics (see Appendix 23). In some cases, a learning and best practice sharing culture has been established, so that the last-mentioned aspect at least diminishes. Likewise, the channel prioritisation and selection of measures is primarily based on experience and less on facts according to the participants' descriptions.

That has a lot to do with people, with human behaviour. If you think that something is mathematically exact, you might be able to see some effect. Where does it really come from? And I would be careful about that. That would really be research work to see where one can, how one can really reconstruct? (-) Which approach? Which measure has led to what with a time lag? If you can do that, you'll become a multimillionaire. (-) Well, I haven't seen anything that really works.

Participant 6-3, Marketing Communication Head, Min. 55:09

Strategic marketing communication development (Q24)

Regarding the strategic development of the communication channel itself, different approaches have been identified in this study. The strategic communication channel development procedures in the set of the six investigated cases vary from non-structured, to purely project based if needed, to agile development processes. While investigating the strategic development process in marketing communication, the following patterns have been identified (see Appendix 23):

- 1) Activities are closely linked to corporate strategy and a general mid-term strategy for marketing have been derived as a guiding scheme without formulated milestones to achieve these objectives (→ Cases 2, 3, 6)
- 2) A corporate strategy does exist, and a concrete and formulated vision of marketing communication department head does exist and drives the department`s strategic development activities (→ Case 5)
- 3) A corporate strategy does exist, and marketing communication contents are derived from it, but no concrete marketing communication targets are determined upfront (→ Case 1)
- 4) No corporate strategy existed during the investigation, but the company has planned to establish a corporate strategy. A fact-based argumentation to develop marketing communication up to now was therefore more challenging (→ Case 4)

Following these identified patterns, the companies or business unit strategy turns out as a guiding orientation for the strategic direction of marketing communication and marketing communication channels, and a lack of orientation has been identified as challenge to develop marketing communication strategically.

“Which is also necessary, because currently we don't have a proper corporate strategy. Hopefully, we can finally derive our marketing, our marketing strategy from that, so that this grey mass becomes a little more concrete and the grey fog also clears a little. Yes, otherwise it's also push and pull. So a lot of things come, some come from departments that want to try out new things, want to go new ways.”

Participant 4-4, Communication Expert, Min. 51:27

This missing guidance has especially been mentioned as challenge for justification purposes. It means that in this case no development took place. Also in Case 4, multiple examples were mentioned. Nevertheless, according to the analysis of the statements,

these developments are dependent on the opinion and support of the relevant stakeholders.

4.2.1.2 Organisational structure and skills

In addition to the strategic decision-making process steps, the research objective was to identify which way organizational structures and skills of internal stakeholders determine a firm's strategic marketing communication decision-making approach. In this regard, interview guide questions Q1-Q3 about personal as well as organisational capabilities and skills have been asked and are analysed in the following paragraphs. Additionally, the organisational structure (Q4) will be analysed to comprehensively answer this research objective in the following paragraphs.

Organisational capabilities and skills (Q1-3)

Descriptions of the responsibilities of individual interviewees, the team composition, and its consistency in terms of their interaction over time are further detailed in the following chapters and analysed in detail in relation to the research objectives. For a first impression, the following Figure 18 first shows superordinate values without an analytical description.

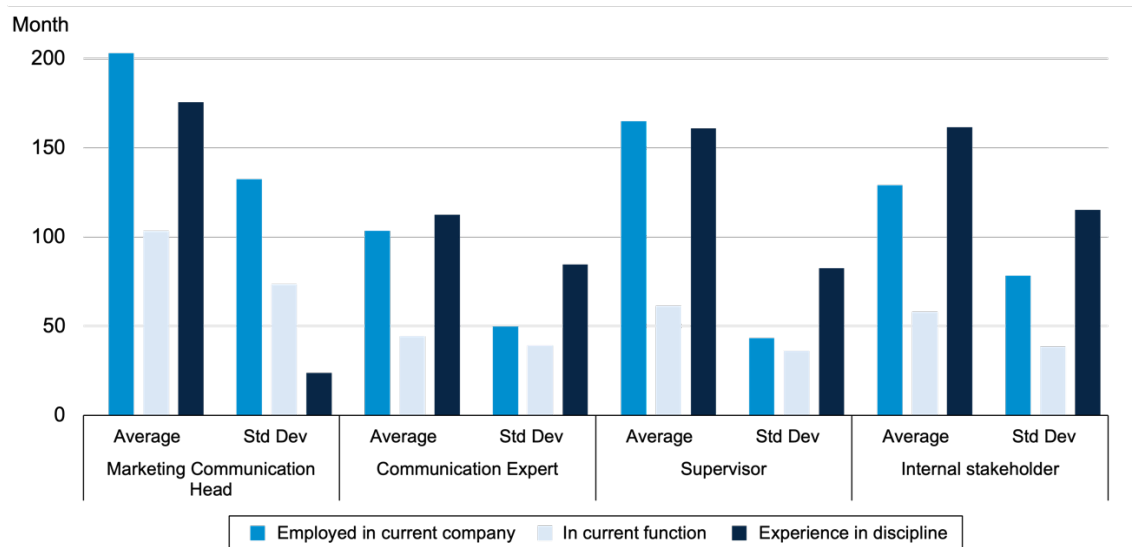


Figure 18 - Experience of the interview partners by role

Source: Author's own, based on interview statements and LinkedIn search. Further details can be found in Appendix 18)

A closer look at Figure 18 and the following Table 7 leads to the conclusion that interview participants from the field of marketing communication, i.e., as a role channel expert, have been working in this field for the most part since the beginning of their professional careers.

Chapter 4.2 - Case evaluations

Participant	Time	Role	Responsibilities
Participant 1-1	00:32	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for marketing and communication for the whole corporate group consisting of 6 brands - Responsibility contains creation and steering of internal and external communication measures
Participant 1-2	03:01	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for social media channels - Responsibility contains campaign creation, acting as project manager, content creation, coordination of agencies
Participant 1-3	00:54	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for global sales activities (contains generation of order intake until customer interaction and customer satisfaction)
Participant 1-4	00:18	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for corporate strategy, marketing communication and corporate communication
Participant 1-5	00:00	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approves marketing communication plan, main messages and budget
Participant 2-1	00:23	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part of the strategic marketing team and market intelligence - Responsible for market and competitor intelligence, involved in marketing roadmap planning as well as interface towards subsidiaries
Participant 2-2	00:47	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of marketing and communication - Ad interim manager for marketing overall - Marketing teams contains the subdepartments marketing and communication, strategic marketing and training
Participant 2-3	00:02	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for digital marketing, mobile applications and apps, campaign management
Participant 2-4	00:33	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approves marketing plan and budget
Participant 3-1	00:36	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team lead for business unit communication - Responsible for all internal and external business unit communication activities
Participant 3-2	00:18	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible to steer communication strategies from the planning process until implementation and success evaluation - Sparing partner for communication trends and innovation within the business unit
Participant 3-3	00:20	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for product and vertical communication (with a sub team within the communications department)
Participant 3-4	00:18	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing team head and responsible for marketing / commercialization of a product segment
Participant 4-1	00:18	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering of product management activities for products, components and service products
Participant 4-2	01:03	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for all marketing communication activities of company
Participant 4-3	00:19	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global responsibility for sales - Product management and technology centre also in the responsibility
Participant 4-4	00:18	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for corporate, internal and external communication activities - Delegate for press activities, responsible for media planning and strategic development of media mix
Participant 5-1	02:07	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department head for all live marketing activities
Participant 5-2	00:17	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for all marketing communication activities of the company and company group
Participant 5-3	00:12	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of online shop - Part of strategic marketing unit and therefore part of marketing communication planning
Participant 5-4	01:04	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall responsible for business unit / business segment
Participant 6-1	00:25	Internal Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for complete internal and external communication (70% internal communication focus)
Participant 6-2	00:11	Communication Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for all digital communication channels (except social media) and their (technical) development
Participant 6-3	00:14	Marketing Communication Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global responsibility for all marketing activities with specific focus on public affairs, representative in associations and customer relationship management

*Table 7 - Participants role and responsibilities
(Source: Author's own, based on interview statements. Further details can be found in Appendix 37 and Appendix 38)*

An examination of the stakeholder groups allows similar conclusions to be drawn. A longer occupation can be found especially in the supervisor role. This exceeds the duration of the marketing communications manager in all cases. The length of time that the communication managers have already been in their current company is longer on average than the other groups of people studied. This basically leads to the conclusion that a marketing communication strategy may have been in place for some time and that the company is strongly influenced by the strategy of the marketing communication manager.

Differences are noted in relation to the development of responsibilities of people in their respective roles. Individuals from the marketing communications field have often already worked in another function in the marketing communications field of the company itself. Internal developments within their own team can be identified. In comparison, the stakeholder functions were often employed in their current function and role directly upon joining the company. In terms of responsibilities and the composition of the study participants, it should be noted that the role of the marketing communications manager is expected to focus on external marketing. The stakeholders interviewed have a sales or product management background and thus represent further areas of the 7Ps of marketing.

The previous sections have already shown that the involvement of individual stakeholders in marketing communication issues depends on their own capabilities and preferences, and that the political behaviour of the stakeholders involved also varies. With regard to organizational capabilities, reference is made to the findings described in the following paragraphs. Regarding the function of the marketing communication manager, it can also be said that the management function often corresponds to a mixed academic background in marketing communication and engineering sciences. Professional experience, coupled with theoretically acquired knowledge, also confirms that management functions often do not have an explicit marketing background. From this, it can be interpreted that certain overall contexts may also be too complex for all stakeholders to make qualified statements when making strategic decisions. A similar interpretation could also be made for communications experts who have channel responsibility but have not acquired any explicit academic knowledge about their specialist area in their careers (see Appendix 18).

An increase in interest in marketing communication within the organisations studied is perceptible. According to the participants, the increased interest is also due to the metrics that are now more comprehensively available and can be monitored transparently, especially in the digital communication channels. The change in communication through social media has also led to increased interest on the part of management. Consulting services are, however, still needed to establish managers as opinion leaders in the B2B context, as Case 3 is already doing. These findings therefore support the latest conducted studies in the B2B context, stating that the role of social media could become even more critical due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Gavin et al., 2020) as well as the aspect that it has a high priority in the management and purchasing and decision-making process (Kumar and Sharma, 2022). At the same time, however, these research areas, which have increased in relevance among practitioners, also show that practitioners are very selectively interested in theory. Despite increasing publications of academic papers, practitioner interest remains limited and supports the findings of Tzemplikos (2022).

In this context, another construct was identified through data collection, which also introduces the topic of the next paragraph: organisational learning culture. Many of the marketing communication sectors are increasingly committed to promoting organisational learning in a variety of ways. This can include internal training (Case 1, Case 6), actively encouraging team development through participation in conferences and the like (Case 2), or targeted training and development initiatives based on skills matrices from marketing communications leaders (Case 3, Case 5). However, this learning culture is not limited to the marketing communication teams themselves. As a best practice, Case 3 mentions that organisational learning is also an established aspect of the corporate strategy and is promoted through cross-business unit exchange rounds and external key notes.

Organisational structure (Q4)

The objective of considering the process chain of strategic marketing communication decisions in the data collection resulted in the minimum number of interview partners per case as well as the composition as ideal in the organisational context. The formulated idea resulted in an organisation-specific participant composition through the support and dissemination of the promotion project internally by the marketing communication head and voluntary participation of the interviewees. The organisational charts in the following Figure 19 show the organisational integration of the marketing communications head

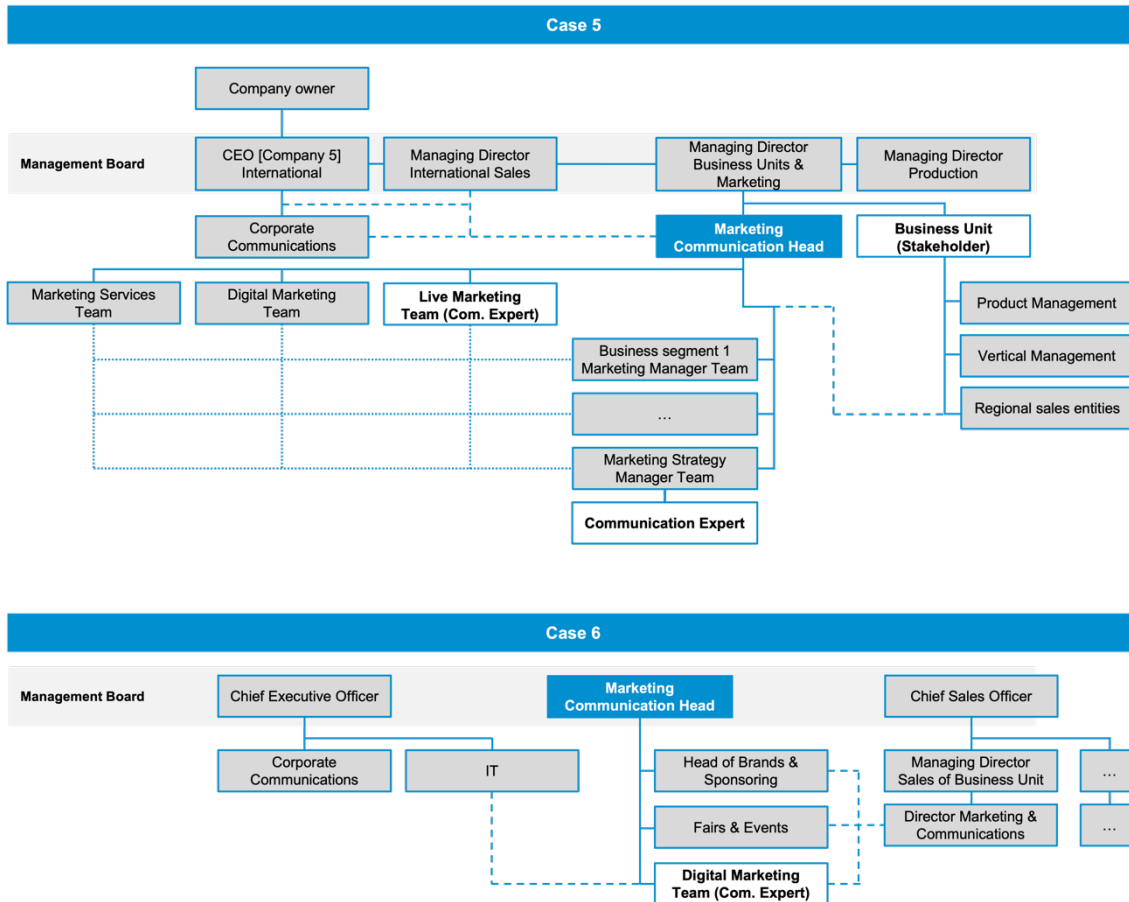


Figure 19 - Participant composition of all case studies
 (Source: Author's own, based on interview statements. Reference list can be found in Appendix 17
 organisational structure – Reference list)

Following the organisational setup, the marketing communication function is also seen differently. In Cases 1 and 5, the number of customers is very limited. As a result, the role of marketing communication is essentially limited to the control of communication measures and to view that area as a supporting function of sales, which defines the topics. Information on the products is provided by stakeholders such as product management or engineering for the creation of communication measures. Against this background, the data basis does not allow any comprehensive conclusions to be drawn. Nevertheless, one conclusion from the available data would be the assumption that the organisational classification of the marketing communications department depends on the type of business (set of customers, kind of product) and its sales strategy. In this context, parallels can be drawn with the classification by business type presented by Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015), who recommend the need for differentiation in the marketing communication approach depending on the business type. The dependency between business type and organisational classification would thus represent an extension.

As already described in Chapter 4.2.2.2, the set of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process also differs due to a similar presumed relationship. Differences that have not yet been described more comprehensively can be found in terms of responsibilities as well as marketing communication department size. The team sizes of the investigated cases vary strongly and can therefore not confirm the figures mentioned in the BVIK (2021) study (see Appendix 30).

The distinctions in responsibilities are also reflected in the structure of the departments. As an example, the creation process and the responsibilities in the creation of communication measures are mentioned here in particular. In the case of Case 3, for example, there is a strict separation between the responsibility for the creation of content (Marketing Manager) and the implementation of communication measures (Communication Manager) in the channel mix. In contrast, a “Campaign Manager” in Case 5 is supported in implementation by channel managers from Live Marketing, Digital Marketing and Marketing Services (matrix structure). Again, in Case 1 and 4, corresponding campaigns are solved holistically as a marketing communication team (see Appendix 17).

Further differences in terms of organisational structures can be seen especially regarding the separation of marketing communication and corporate communication. The organisational separation into two departments under different management was found in Cases 1, 3, 5 and 6. This was not the case in Cases 2 and 4. The size of the area can be cited as possible causes of the merged structure in Cases 2 and 4. In addition, a holding structure with several business units and/or brands can be found in Cases 1, 3, 5 and 6. These findings also support that the business type influences the structure and responsibilities of the marketing communication unit.

4.2.1.3 Information and knowledge considered

After evaluating how stakeholders, their capabilities and the organisational structure influence the decision-making process, the final primary research objective aims to identify which information and knowledge is taken into consideration by the involved stakeholders to strategically define the firm’s strategic marketing communication approach. Directly linked to this question, the present chapter analyses the questions asked about which information is generally considered when making decisions (Q17), how is information is processed (Q20), how stakeholders obtain new knowledge (Q21)

as well as which relevance marketing communication theory plays (Q22) in such decisions. The analysis of the mentioned questions follows in the next paragraphs.

Information considered (Q17)

Looking at what information is included in the planning of the communication channel mix also reveals comparable patterns. Most respondents indicate that product experts (e.g., product management, engineering, R&D) are consulted for the design of communication, as they have the best understanding of the complex product and its features and benefits. In addition to technical input, the sales department is also consulted for the inclusion of customer needs. Both perspectives are then combined in marketing communication by the communication experts and prepared, published and monitored for its implementation via the communication mix, considering channel-specific insights and experiences (tacit knowledge) as well as based on existing KPIs (explicit knowledge). However, the use of KPIs or even internal information tools depends on the state of the tool landscape and the resources generally available in the area (see Appendix 41).

In addition, it can be noted that specialist teams from the holding organisation are often also involved with specific questions and equally act as input providers. From the statements of the participants, in comparison, the (media) agencies often play the role of an implementing and partly creative body. Furthermore, to the stakeholder groups and their input, there are two other sources of information mentioned. These include benchmarking with the peer groups (see Appendix 41), but also comparison with the B2C segment (see Appendix 42).

Information processing (Q20)

The exchange and transfer of the information interfaces described above often takes place verbally and at project level. At project or campaign level, different information processes can be observed between the cases. An example is the “Message House” concept in Case 5, which defines campaign goals, target groups, communication channels, the scope of communication activities and the resulting budget. Another example is the 4C model in Case 3, which defines “Customer, Country, Costs and Channels” when formulating measures. In addition to these examples of planning and managing communication measures based on templates, there is a lack of systems for structured dissemination of customer/target group information (see Appendix 43).

Obtaining New knowledge (Q21)

In addition to the foundation of internal knowledge through exchange rounds, the learning culture mentioned, or participation in training courses and seminars, the participants were asked separately about the way in which they acquire new knowledge. Benchmarking with the peer group was mentioned, but also the comparison with B2C was made again. Depending on the integration and the relationship with agencies, these were also mentioned. Only rarely did the participants mention reading trade magazines or doing their own research. The reason given for this was the lack of time / available resources, but also the general information flight that the interviewees are confronted with in their everyday business and in the core of their activity. Especially the latter confirms the findings of Baumgarten (2022), who tries to facilitate the transfer of new knowledge from theory to practice (see Appendix 44).

Marketing Communication theory (Q22)

The latter also describes the use of marketing communication theory. Except for a few interview partners, most of them stated that they did not deal frequently with marketing communication theory. The reasons given were not only the lack of applicability due to the rather pointedly formulated research questions, but also the fact that no suitable information medium for B2B marketing communication could be found or was described as not practice-oriented. Exceptions are inputs coming from trainees or students who support the teams for a certain period or writing their thesis in relation to a specific practice-relevant question. This immediately confirms the calls from academia to bring theory and practice together more closely (Baumgarth, 2022). Of all 24 interview partners, only one person specifically mentioned the medium Horizont, which, however, due to its B2C focus, also has only a limited use for marketing communication professionals in B2B. A perceived helpful take-up of marketing communication theory is noted in Case 5. Through regular projects with universities or consulting projects by professors, a close exchange with theory is maintained in this case. The findings support Dziubaniuk et al. (2021), who discovered that practitioners show little interest in academic journals. Marketing communication theory is not used to the same extent, but rather as a basic input in connection with final theses with company-specific questions (see Appendix 45).

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“That has a different weighting and we are often asked spontaneously in meetings. Are there certainly studies [...] on how an advertisement should be structured for reasons of advertising psychology? And stories like that, and it would definitely, (-) yes, I think it would increase the value of our work a bit. One should actually trust the people, because they are actually the experts in the respective field. Actually, I wouldn't need that right now. I would trust the people. But it would help us if we had a stronger link to theory.”

Participant 4-4, Communication Expert, Min. 33:57

Despite the lack of a comprehensive transfer from theory to practice, there is a fundamental interest in marketing communication theory among the participants. Not least for the reason of transferring new knowledge into practice through procedures. There is also a need to justify measures and further developments to internal stakeholders. This is precisely where the participants see great potential and a need for action on the part of academia.

Finally, the interviews lead to the conclusion that due to the described challenges in use and applicability from an operational perspective, there are significant time lags between existing knowledge on the academic side and its implementation in practice. On the one hand, this highlights the need for action already described in the literature research. However, a possibly much greater danger is to assume that theoretical knowledge has already been overtaken by the time it is transferred into practice due to the fast pace of the marketing communication landscape (e.g., Participant 4-2, Min.: 21:51, 24:38). This tendency is particularly noticeable in concepts such as IMC or also relationship marketing regarding the data collected.

From the point of view of the interviewees, it can also be noted that they see B2C as a pioneering position (see Appendix 42). From an academic point of view, this pioneering role can be confirmed regarding the research. However, due to the described convergence of B2C and B2B marketing (see Chapter 2.2.3), it remains to be clearly stated that the decisive hurdle is the complexity in relation to the buying centre and lengthy purchasing processes. Fundamental adaptations from B2C would be possible in principle. These findings lead to the conclusion that practice is subject to a misperception in this regard and that a contribution from theory to overcome this hurdle would provide added value for practice as well as theory.

4.2.2 Analysis of secondary questions

4.2.2.1 Organisational context analysis

For a more comprehensive understanding of the primary questions, further analysis results on the organisational framework of the companies studied are described in the following chapter. In particular, they describe the framework in which decisions are made and how marketing communication is set up and aligned.

Understanding the term marketing

The first finding from the data collection in this context is the name of the marketing communications department and the way the terms are used. The companies investigated mainly do not differentiate between marketing and marketing communication except Case 3, in which both functions fulfil different roles. Even though the department is called marketing, most of the marketing tasks like pricing, placement, etc. are the responsibility of sales and product management. Most of the interview partners therefore understand the term "marketing" to mean external marketing through communication activities of the company (see Appendix 29). However, it can also be seen through the data collection that not only communication activities fall within the scope of the "marketing" area. Such areas of responsibility include, for example, online communication channels and platforms such as online shops, where communication and sales, which is often responsible for "placement", overlap (see Appendix 30).

“And I think it's important to approach marketing structurally and analytically. That is often underestimated. And I think that's one of the achilles heels of marketing. That's why it's not looked at in the same way as other topics. That's why it's often seen as lightweight, especially in B2B. B2C is certainly different. In B2C you see a much more fire-powered approach [...]. But I don't think that the importance will diminish at all in the future. Marketing is important [...]. I'll make it very simple: [It] brings people into the shop. The task is still there, because there are many shops. I want him to come to my shop and then when he buys.... It's a mixture of marketing and sales.”

Participant 6-3, Marketing Communication Head, Min. 66:55

Current extent of marketing mix (Q9, Q12)

The interview partners across all six cases perceived the extent generally as good, as all mentioned that they fulfil requirements. Most of them are of the opinion that it is always possible to do more if resources were available. Independent of the limited resources, there are also limitations to some extent like missing interfaces for creating more

synergies between platforms. The interviewees mentioned multiple times that additional efforts in enriching digital communication channels would be helpful. A common sense solution to a portion of the cases is to invest more in online advertising and SEO (see Appendix 33).

“So, I think this is something that we could also set up more professionally and more clearly in terms of communication technology, or with more manpower. Especially in the direction of SEO, so that we become stronger. And I also believe that this is of course - I know - not yet so well positioned, probably the company has not yet been consciously aware that this is missing.”

Participant 5-3, Communication Expert, Min. 16:27

These results of the data collection seem surprising at first glance, precisely because SEO in B2B is one of the most effective channels based on current research findings (Yolyan, 2019; Lundin and Kindström, 2023). One of the reasons why the SEO and SEA is not used broadly might result out of the fact that in most of the cases conducted, the budgets are in the responsibility of a country or region that might perceive it differently in relevance. Reasons for this perception could be a lack of knowledge about the functionalities as well as the effect (Participant 6-2, Min 47:08).

Missing elements in marketing mix (Q13, Q25)

Companies perceive that there is room for improvement regarding their executed communication measures in multiple ways (Appendix 34). About really missing communication channels or elements in the channel mix, the participants' comments concentrate on three things: some of the companies do have the willingness to build up an online sales channel as they currently do not have one (Case 2, Case 4, Case 5). Additionally, an online customer portal to engage, demonstrate and communicate the latest innovation as well as to sell were mentioned as missing elements in the communication channel landscape of the companies investigated (Case 1, Case 5). Also building up corporate influencer in a structured way is a topic that currently drives some of the interviewees (Case 1, Case 3). Besides these three cases of identified missing elements in the communication channel mix, individual companies think that social sales (Case 3), using podcasts (Case 4) or building up a corporate blog as well as rolling out companywide newsletters (Case 5) would enrich their communication channel mix (see Appendix 35).

Digitalization of marketing communication activities

Even though the focus of this analysis relies on digitalisation within the field of marketing communication, it must be mentioned that digitalisation is currently affecting all conducted cases in general and a recognisable hurdle for organisations. Since marketing communication is challenged by significant changes (see Chapter 1.3), it can be described as one of the main drivers for current developments.

There are already, there are now also opportunities or opportunities are opening up. You can then, you have to look at how you can then - that is then company policy, also often, of course, how you then play it. Because it's becoming more digital all around us somehow. So, every department is introducing certain processes somewhere or is trying to digitalise them. And of course, you can position yourself cleverly as a marketing department. In the case of the chatbot, for example, it doesn't necessarily have to be a marketing expert, it can just as easily be a sales or service use case. We have already started. That can be good for us now because we are well positioned. It can be bad when we have all the work. I think you have to balance that out within the company. But I would actually like to shape it.

Participant 6-2, Communication Expert, Min. 57:00

One of the reasons can also be seen in the previously mentioned quote that companies are generally in the digital transformation. The companies surveyed thus represent the current status of German industry, which rates the current state of digitisation as only average and cites costs, complexity and a lack of resources as reasons for the slow pace of further development (DIHK, 2021).

Another reason is the measurability and tracking of activities in the online channels, according to the participants (Participant 3-4, Min. 16:09). The digital transformation of the companies as well as the shift in the use of digital channels is subject to a different status in each of the cases examined. Depending on the market environment, the live marketing channel was quantified as the one with the largest investment (Case 4, 5, 6). Reasons given for a lower relevance of live marketing are, for example, oligopolistic market situations on the supplier and demand side (Case 1). Nevertheless, these companies also indicated a currently sustainable shift towards digital communication channels. In contrast, Case 3 indicated a share of investments in digital communication channels is already by far the biggest.

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“But also in topics, if you look more closely now, we are rather economical there. And I personally - and I also know that I agree with many in marketing, with many other opinions. But, as it has grown so beautifully historically for us, we also spend a lot of money on live [marketing]. To put it the other way round: we don't actually spend a lot of money on live. We spend too little money on the other channels.”

Participant 5-1, Communication Expert, Min. 26:41

The findings illustrated, as outlined above, that the interviewees think that direct and live marketing activities remain relevant to build relationships. Nevertheless, a shift towards digital communication channels should be critically questioned with regard to budget discussions, as stated in the quote. Adopting new digital communication channels does not always mean that the efforts of marketing communication will be reduced somewhere else, so that a budget shift can take place without compromising previous performance. The shift towards digital communication channels therefore could also require a mindset change regarding the communication budget and the necessity to increase budgets if the relevance of other communication channels remain.

An additional finding of the study is that communication in the context of digitalisation is often mixed with multiple other disciplines. Mostly, because digital tools are interpreted as tools to communicate and engage with the customer. This discipline overlap can also include examples like online shops, digital customer portals or sellable digital products that generate value for the customer, as mentioned in Appendix 30.

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Q11)

Independent of the generally confirmed shift towards digital communication channels across all cases, the coronavirus pandemic was perceived as an additional accelerator of the sustainable change described above. The pandemic has led many stakeholders to engage more intensively with digital media (to a certain extent), which has also led to a better understanding and greater acceptance of digital communication channels and their relevance within the organisation itself. In addition to increased acceptance and anticipation, the pandemic has also led to companies adapting other digital communication channels for themselves. Digital trade fairs, general online platforms and the establishment of web goods were used as a result of cancelled events.

Another, broadly tested and used channel, mentioned by the participants, are webinars. Due to the environmental effects of the pandemic, most of the participating companies

mentioned that the newly established channel allows them to effectively transfer information to customers. According to the interview participants, the possible trade fair of KPIs as well as the comprehensible success indicators have encouraged many to continue using these platforms and channels in the future. Virtual trade fairs are the exception here (see Appendix 36).

Despite the encouragement through the pandemic to use additional digital tools as well as an openness for testing additional tools, the use of them in future remains a challenge for marketing communication departments. With the growing demand to support additional communication channels, efforts within the marketing communication departments have increased as well, as they are seen as an additional channel and not as a replacement at all. Nevertheless, the available resources did not grow in accordance to the additional efforts (Participant 6-2, Min 44:08, Min 56:08).

BVIK's (2021) research that the available resources are being built up in digital communication channels seems to support the general trend towards digital communication channels. However, the extent to which resources are being built up is rated as too low by the departments themselves. This bottleneck also increases the challenge in prioritising communication activities. The findings of Cortez and Johnston (2020) can also be confirmed by the present investigation. All participants stated that the pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of marketing communication. Mostly, webinars have been established as an additional channel to communicate and inform customers about the latest technical updates or to train virtually. In Case 4, the investments in virtual showrooms have also been expanded and has now been established as the main touchpoint.

Organisational culture (Q5)

The analysis of statements on corporate culture shows that all companies are currently undergoing a cultural change towards more transparency, openness to test things and more trust in the abilities of teams. In all cases, the long-standing tradition of the companies is mentioned, which in the view of the participants is slowing down the transformation. Especially in owner-managed companies (Case 4 and 5), the opinion of the owner is often not congruent with that of the interviewed persons or teams. A similar parallel can be observed from different receptions between the management board and teams regarding the existence of silos. In general, it can be assumed that the different

views are at their core caused by generational differences and general change. Owners and higher management functions largely belong to the baby boomer generation. Companies, such as Case 3, where the unit head already belongs to Generation X and the management style seems to be characterised by more transparent communication, lower power relations at an earlier stage. In addition, it can be noted that the marketing communication teams studied often already perceive themselves as freer and more creative in the implementation of measures than the perceived situation in the company. The reasons given here lie in the cross-functional cooperation and responsibility (see Appendix 19).

General differences or increased manifestations can be observed in the following respects:

- Case 3 is characterised by a strong focus on learning culture, empowerment of employees and the reduction of power relations with management through appropriately established processes.
- The already mentioned owner-managed companies (Case 4 and 5) showed a stricter management culture as well as medium to long-term orientation in the study.
- The culture perceived in Case 6 is conditioned by acquisitions and the investor structure. In addition, silos are conditionally permitted to allow different business areas to have a certain speed in decision-making.

A connection of the mentioned cultural aspects regarding a learning culture has also been described in connection with the use and inclusion of information in the decision-making process in Chapter 4.2.1.3.

4.2.2.2 Analysis of supporting questions

After explaining the organisational framework as well as the culture, this chapter will examine the decision-making processes for planning and further development. Basically, it should be noted that all the cases examined regarding planning and decision-making processes are primarily focussed on defining communication topics and contents as well as the coordination of its implementation. The further development of communication channels was characterised here by changing sales and customer requirements through operationally planned projects or the vision of the marketing communication department

head. For further analysis, however, decision-making frameworks are first presented below.

Most relevant communication channels (Q10)

The interviews generally confirmed the most relevant communication channels identified in B2B literature mentioned in Chapter 2 (Lichtenthal and Eliaz, 2005; Lichtenthal et al., 2003; Deng et al., 2021). Across all cases, personal exchange or relationship management is perceived as the most relevant task in B2B for communication. The opinions on whether the important point of contact is direct sales contact, live events and trade fairs, or online communication channels did differ slightly in the set of participants and cases surveyed. Communication channels and platforms with direct interaction are especially perceived as channels for relationship marketing, networking, image, or awareness reasons. A general tendency, however, towards online communication channels is recognizable through the quantity of mentions and therefore support studies like Hänninen and Karjaluoto (2017) or Lundin and Kindström (2023). Especially because also these channels are perceived as channels with the possibility of interaction. The benefit related to trade fairs and events as well as direct contact nevertheless remain in such that interviewees mentioned that the quality of relationship building is different. With regard to online communication channels, the corporate website, the social media channel LinkedIn and e-mails or newsletters have been mentioned frequently by the participants. These channels have especially been mentioned with regard to generating awareness, reach and image (see Appendix 31). The consideration of the use and objectives of communication channels also lead to the same conclusion. In general, a similar understanding of the objective of measures via the communication channels can be found among all respondents. Nevertheless, the use and priorities differ from case to case depending on the market and customer environment (see Appendix 32). These findings therefore confirm the cited theory of Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015), explained in Chapter 2.2.4.

Involved stakeholder groups (Q15, Q16)

The main stakeholder involved in the decision-making and planning process also differ. Across all six cases, two stakeholder groups always involved in the decision making/approval/budget process were the management board itself as well as sales department. In the event of an organisational structure with business units, the business unit heads were also involved. Differences are especially identified by the involvement

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of product management, corporate communication, strategic marketing, IT and the company's subsidiaries. Also, the involvement of service is partially noticeable but does not span across all cases (Appendix 20).

Case	General Guidelines, Defining/ approving marketing communication plan by content and budget	Content Creation (Input)	Customer Insights (Input)	Other (e.g. provision of tools, additional communication)
Case 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Board • Sales • Strategic Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Management • Sales • Engineering • Strategic Marketing • Digital marketing team (Corp. level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales / Key Account • Service • Digital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Communications (Corp. level) • Management of Subsidiaries
Case 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Owner • Management Board • Sales • Customer Relations Board • Product Management • Service • Subsidiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Company Owner • Management Board • Product Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Management • Sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT
Case 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Communication • Corporate Communication (Corp. level) • Sales Marketing Promotion • Sales • Business Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Marketing Promotion • Product Management • Sales • Business Development • Corporate Communication (Corp. level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Marketing Promotion • Corporate Communications (Corp. level) • Sales • Business Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Business Unit Marketing Communication Teams • Corporate Communication (Corp. level)
Case 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Board • Sales Division • Product Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Management • Sales Division • Global Customer Service • R&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Division • Service Division • Product Management • Digital Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -
Case 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • CSO • Management Board • Company owner • Business Unit's Sales • Business Unit's Product Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Company Owner • Management Board • Product Management • Corporate Communications • R&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Product Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Communication • Corporate Strategy
Case 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO • Management Board • Corporate Marketing (Corp. level) • Corporate Communication (Corp. level) • Business Unit Head • Business Unit Marketing • Business Unit Sales • Portfolio Manager • Business Unit Controlling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Management • Sales • Content creators in specialist departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Management • Business Unit Marketing • Business Unit Sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT

Table 8 - Involved stakeholders

(Source: Author's own, based on interview statements. Reference list can be found in Appendix 20)

Regarding product management, it should be noted that the influence on marketing communication strongly depends on the organisational classification. Accordingly, this stakeholder group is sometimes only consulted for the creation of content through its

expert knowledge or is itself involved in the decision-making process to determine measures. Parallels can also be seen here with IT. Depending on the extent to which IT is responsible for the tools used by marketing communication and their further development, or can influence the tool landscape, its influence in the decision-making process varies. The involvement of stakeholders can also be related to the responsibilities of the marketing communication department itself. For example, the integration of marketing communication into sales through the responsibility for the sales channel online shop or the interface to corporate IT are mentioned as depending on the in-house IT competence and the responsibility for the further development of communication channels (Appendix 20).

As an additional finding, the involvement of management functions in the decision-making process was also mentioned as something dependent on managers' marketing and communication affinity. Stakeholders especially want to be involved in topics that affect their area of responsibility as well as where they would like to integrate their opinion. (Case 5 example: Company owner is involved in brand management, whereas the management board responsible for sales is involved in communication channel planning).

"But I think it is very important that sales and marketing work closely together. The classic. That may be banal, but it is not always the case."

Participant 6-3, Marketing Communication Head, Min. 66:02

Regarding the content creation and execution process, similarities across all cases are found in the functions of product management and sales. Both functions are deeply involved in determining the annual communication measure plan, the contents as well as the channel mix to implement the communication measures. Also, the involvement of technical departments like R&D or Engineering was notable multiple times, depending on the organisational structure and responsibilities itself. As input for determining messages that meet customers' requirements the most, sales and product management across all cases were mentioned as the main source for customer insights. The described interactions between the specialist departments, but also their involvement and responsibilities, confirm the "dispersion of marketing" by Blachetta and Kleinaltenkamp (2019) with this research.

In terms of further interfaces, agencies were also mentioned for the implementation of communication measures, but also as input providers for new ideas. Both aspects mentioned also apply in different ways to the cooperation and interaction with the holding company of the company under review. The support of human resources by the marketing communications department was also frequently mentioned, as well as journalists as an external stakeholder group (see Appendix 21).

Political behaviour (Q6, Q7, Q26, Q27)

As described in Chapter 2.3.2.3 of the literature review, organisational structures affect the behaviour of individuals and therefore also drive political behaviour. The data analysis identifying the same phenomenon can be confirmed in two ways. First, individual targets and power relations drive the influence on the marketing communication decision processes conducted. Independent from the fact whether this is driven by an individual stakeholder or by the function itself (see Appendix 37, Appendix 38).

It turned out that individual characteristics also determine how decisions are made. On the one hand, there are supervisors who make the final decision based on their perceptions by potentially ignoring the input and expertise from the marketing communication experts (e.g., Case 1, Case 2). On the other hand, there are organisations who rely on the expertise of the specialist marketing communication department and the actions they take, and in which approvals are made upfront only to set the general guiding theme in terms of budget and resources (e.g., Case 3, Case 4).

In context, the questioned status of marketing communication is also worth mentioning. Even if from the point of view of supervisors and stakeholders it was frequently mentioned that the significance of marketing communication is high, a somewhat more critical attitude is perceptible in the group of communication experts. This somewhat more critical attitude is not only often due to arguments about available resources and capacities, but also because of the opinion that the added value as well as the complexity of the field is less acknowledged by management (see Appendix 39). How strong this challenge is for marketing communication departments in detail, however, depends on the attention marketing communication has in top management itself. These findings, among others, support another statement made by Participant 5-2:

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“So it's the classic case that I've encountered in most companies and also as a consultant over many years: we have poor marketing controlling, so this is an instrument that could ultimately help us to achieve more budget allocation.”

Participant 5-2, Marketing Communication Head, Min. 20:56

Formulation of communication goals (Q18, Q19)

When asked which goals are pursued with communication measures and which KPIs are the most relevant for measuring success, the common opinion across all cases was quite focused on generating business (measurable via qualified leads), gaining attention (e.g., measured by followers on LinkedIn) and intensifying the customer relationship (e.g., measured by newsletter opening rate or number of customer magazines sent). In addition to the KPIs just mentioned, other, channel specific KPIs are also frequently used as control variables by communication experts. However, these were often not mentioned by other interview participants, which is why control based on this at the operational level is only attributed to the channel experts themselves. These include, for example, click-throughs, engagement rates, website visits or costs per lead (see Appendix 27).

The KPIs just mentioned are also used in different ways to control communication measures. Frequently, interview partners in the cases examined stated that there are generally defined goals (see above) for marketing communication, but no measure-specific ones. However, companies such as in Case 2, 3 or 5 stated specifically that objectives are defined in advance at the measure level, such as campaigns, and that measures are thus also actively controlled. In other cases, such as Case 6, two reasons were given for not defining campaign-specific metrics: stakeholders, as well as sales, often find it difficult to provide concrete targets. But also, the false accuracy due to interactions makes the detailing of key figures difficult. This challenge has especially been perceived with regard to social media (see Appendix 28).

Budgeting and regional influence (Q28):

This subjective influence can also be seen in relation to the budget approval processes. One of the challenges mentioned is a marketing controlling that is so comprehensive that it would allow concrete calculations of the return on marketing communication investment (see Appendix 24). Additionally, differences are identified in the allocation of budget itself. In the cases investigated, a budget allocation of the marketing communication budget in sales (Case 3), or also the allocation of the budget of digital

tools in IT was identified (Case 6). Also, tool costs were sometimes allocated in the holding structure instead of in an operational marketing communication unit (see Appendix 25).

In all cases conducted, the annual planning of the marketing communication budget is based on the previous year's figures as well as stakeholders' experiences. Larger investments, such as those in a modern CRM system or other tools for marketing communication, are always planned separately as special budgets. Depending on the company within the marketing communication department or as a separate special budget. However, this formally structured planning is also a challenge for the marketing communication teams, as shown in Figure 17, because the planning needs to be adjusted regularly due to stakeholder or external influences on the organisation (see Appendix 25).

It should also be noted that budget planning has an influence on the strategic development of marketing communication in the foreign subsidiaries. In the cases examined, the planning of marketing communication budgets is decentralised, and to a certain extent, the definition of measures and investments is also decentralised. The budget planning structure, which is often determined by profit and loss, can thus also be identified as an influencing factor on the strategic development of marketing communication (see Appendix 26).

Future skills (Q8)

The challenges of the marketing communications areas already described are also reflected in relation to the question of future relevant skills within the communications teams. Due to the increasing complexity of the marketing communications landscape, analytical skills are required about the penetration of CJs and the use of different communication channels. Analytical skills are also required in terms of evaluations, which are also becoming increasingly complex due to the interconnectedness of communication channels. These demands go hand in hand with the expressed need for marketing communications teams to position themselves more broadly in order to be able to generate networked knowledge within the teams. In addition to this, skills in the area of IT and digital communication channels and their modes of operation were highlighted in particular (see Appendix 40).

Customer knowledge (Q23)

The target group-specific creation of communication measures was identified as a challenge. This can be explained by insufficient briefings of stakeholders with customer contact, or the lack of customer insights being passed on to the marketing communication department. Two groups of cases were identified during the investigation. The first group, already actively working for CRM data for marketing purposes. This group also stated that they do have a comprehensive picture of the customers, even though it can always be improved. The second group of cases is currently not able to work with CRM data. In this case, participants often stated that comprehensive information is available, especially in sales and product management departments, but it is firstly not well shared and secondly unstructured information (see Appendix 46).

“Aligning the whole thing more with the customer or the target group. And that's the biggest lever, because we need to know, firstly, "Who is the target group?" And only then can we also do targeted marketing and also evaluate and track and evaluate it accordingly. And only in this way can we actually work professionally as marketing and no money is then wasted on any unknown constants. Where we don't know whether this measure really works, and I think that's the biggest lever. And that happens through transparency in sales, as far as customer data and a CMR are concerned.”

Participant 4-4, Communication Expert, Min. 54:59

This lack of customer insights is thereby based on missing information processes as well as the availability of supporting information systems. Participants admitted that the risk of even losing customer knowledge as well as the failure of realising business due to a lack of sharing and processing contact leads does exist. A lack of information processes has especially been mentioned in the context of the interface between sales and marketing communication. This again supports the stated need to strengthen especially this interface in practice, but it also outlines the existence of cultural and political behaviour in practice and its impact on marketing communication. By this, a negative impact on strategic decision-making is confirmed by the present study (see Appendix 46). The main hurdles perceived in practice for this current challenge is seen both in the incentive for sharing data and in information power political behaviour of people:

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“I believe that these KPI systems, the ones we have learned, will no longer work. So, if I really only focus with sales on the topic of incoming orders, then that is exactly the point. Then they have no interest in entering data and then it will be difficult to make [...] this attractive, because the added value is not that great.”

Participant 2-2, Marketing Communications Head, Min. 46:32

With regard to the lack of tools in practice to manage customer information for all internal stakeholders, it can hereby be stated once again that there is a deficit in the digitalisation of the German industry. Half of the participating companies stated that they currently do not store any marketing communications-relevant data in the CRM system, or that they do not have comprehensive access to customer information at all. In addition, most companies stated that they are currently investing in CRM developments or further (country) rollouts. Besides the fact, interviewees also see the availability and usage of CRM systems for marketing communication purposes as one of their main challenges (see Appendix 34, Appendix 47).

However, the challenges described above are perceived differently depending on the role interviewed. Interviewees in direct contact with customers (e.g., sales department, product management, key account, management functions) perceive customer knowledge as good, whereas marketing communication experts stated that they are lacking insights to execute target-group oriented communication measures (see Appendix 46). An overview about the usage of CRM systems and customer data for marketing purposes can be seen in the following Table 9.

Case	CRM system available	Investments into CRM system planned	Data usage for marketing communication
Case 1	X	X	
Case 2	X		X
Case 3	X		X
Case 4		X	
Case 5	X		X
Case 6	X		X

*Table 9 - Usage of CRM system data for marketing communication purposes
(Source: Author's own, based on interview statements. Further details and not integrated differences can be found in Appendix 47)*

The conclusions are additionally supported by the participants' statements that customer information is unstructured in the departments. In connection with the increasingly broad digital communications landscape and the availability of data, it can be concluded that companies will face even greater challenges in managing customer relationships and customer data in the future as their digitisation is delayed. In B2B, big data analytics is cited as one of the most important sources of information for analysing and deriving customer measures in relation to customer relationship management. Particularly in the

USA, where 84% of the companies surveyed state that they have already launched their first big data initiatives, there have been successes in terms of more targeted decision-making with more efficient use of resources (Hallikainen, Savimäki and Laukkanen, 2020). In comparison, the prioritisation of the topic of data use seems to be different for most of the companies surveyed. Only Case 2, Case 3 and Case 6 indicated that they already access CRM data for marketing purposes.

As stated by Möller and Parvinen (2015), CRM is more than just implementing a tool to efficiently management customer data for better targeting customers. It is also about establishing a customer-driven culture by combining multi-disciplinary organisational perspectives.

4.3 Discussion

In total, 24 interviews in 6 cases have been conducted in this study. The cumulative interview duration is 23 hours and 51 minutes. The median duration of all interviews conducted is 59:37 minutes (Standard deviation: 14:46 min.; Variance: 9:05 min.). The shortest interview had a duration of 23:21 minutes. The longest interview had a duration of 83:40 minutes. The relatively short interview can thus be explained by the preparation of the interviewee as well as the time available. The reasons for interview times above the average can be explained by the amount of discussion and the interest of the interviewee (see Appendix 2).

The involvement of interviewees as well as their interest was additionally high. The majority of interviews mentioned proactively during the interview that they are interested in the study results and looking forward to receiving them (see Appendix 16). The expressed interest shows that there is a need for further investigation not only from a theoretical point of view. It also shows that the research gap identified also goes to the heart of a challenge in practice. Based on these outcomes, the fulfilment of the defined research objectives defined as well as the derivation of conceptual model can be evaluated in the following:

Research objective 1: Understanding strategic planning process

The case evaluations in Chapter 4.2 have shown that an understanding of the process steps taken in the marketing communication planning process as well as which stakeholder is influencing the process based on what level of information was possible.

Additionally, insights have been generated about the overall organisational marketing communication capabilities by this study. Internal and external influencing factors were additionally identified by the investigation so that the main research objective, to understand the strategic planning process can be evaluated as fulfilled.

The available results have thus shown that marketing planning as stated by Morgan et al. (2019) gains more attention and becomes a part in the corporate strategy planning process. The findings have additionally shown that strategic marketing communication planning can and should be a part of the corporate strategy process, as addressed by Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017. Also due to the fact that divers management levels are involved in the strategic planning process (Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss, 2017) and as illustrated in the present research in Table 8.

Research objective 2: Identify process steps and decision-making processes

In summary, the decision-making and planning process turns from a focus on the operational planning of marketing communication measures such as campaigns. The issue of steering according to predefined goals has also been given short shrift in communication so far due to a lack of transparency in measurement. Nevertheless, budgets and projects for the development of, for example, digital communication media are also planned. However, the annual planning processes and the involvement of stakeholders were perceived differently from the descriptions. The impression was that this part of the planning often comes primarily from specialist departments such as digital marketing or strategic marketing. In addition, the influence of stakeholders, budget planning and political behaviour was described. The role of the corporate strategy and vision of the marketing communications department head was described as a key construct. Due to the differences in handling, it can be concluded that marketing communication must become a relevant stakeholder in the corporate strategy process. Especially, due to its multiple interfaces and dispersion of activities, marketing communication can contribute to the strategy process by providing communication channel know-how as well as cross-functional expertise and a holistic customer-focused view.

The investigation therefore does support literature like Laverie, Humphrey and Bolton, (2018) or Finne and Grönroos (2017), as it confirms that the currently broadly in the literature discussed marketing communication concepts CJ and IMC also determine the

planning approaches in practice. In addition, the findings show that the decision-making process in practice is becoming more professionalised and being more integrated into the corporate strategic planning process, as requested by Tomczak, Reinecke and Kuss (2017). Even though it findings have also shown that the integration of strategic decisions in marketing communication is integrated to varying degrees into the company's strategy process. The data analysis has identified different levels of professionalisation as well as decision-making processes that need to be further confirmed and investigated. In this regard, no specific support in literature could be identified so that the classification made in the present study needs to be investigated more broadly. For example, the influence of agile development methods in the area of digital marketing, shown in Case 6, should be mentioned here. Additionally, the research has shown that decisions about content and the further development of platforms are two separate processes. In this form, the present work demonstrates a new contribution to literature which must be further investigated.

Besides a process description itself, the set of involved stakeholders as well as their responsibilities were investigated. The evaluation has outlined differences in the planning process and additionally confirmed the influence of external and internal constructs identified in the conceptual framework. Against this background, the research goal to identify the process steps has been achieved.

Research objective 3: Impact of organisational structure and skills

Organisational structures investigated have shown that they differ from case to case as well as the classification of the marketing communication departments. Parallels between the organisational structure, the responsibilities, and the impact of the personal skills of the marketing communication head have been identified though the data analysis. The presented findings confirm that the third research objective was also fulfilled: structures and skills effect the strategic decision-making process.

Worth highlighting in this context is the fact that the marketing communication function depends on the type of business and thus supports the classification approach of B2B companies for marketing communication purposes from Backhaus and Muehlfeld (2015). Each case considered deals with the function depending on the business orientation. This is also linked to team size and available resources.

Additionally, it should be emphasised that in the cases examined, the marketing communication managers have often been in this function longer than their managers and thus have been shaping the strategy for longer. This finding also shows what a formative and strategically important function the marketing communications manager has in companies. In contrast to Krasnikov and Jayachandran (2008), who have come to the conclusion that frequent changes in marketing strategy have a negative impact on business performance, it could also be countered that the ability of marketing communication to innovate in the face of dynamic changes is possibly limited by the long responsibility of one person. However, the results of the analysis in this study are indifferent in this respect. However, what emerges from the results of the analysis is that the marketing communication head significantly influences and shapes the degree of innovation and adaptation.

By looking at the careers of the participants, it has been noticed that the academic background is often mixed and many team members have both technical and business knowledge. Whether this is common practice in B2B is not documented in the literature. However, it could be suggested that mixed academic profiles are also more in demand due to product complexity. At the same time, however, the degree of specialisation of required skills in marketing communication teams would become an increasing challenge. Marketing communications managers who recognised this and fostered team skills and the general department and communication development through a strong learning culture (cases 3, 5 in this study) could thus promote the success of the companies in the long term and adapt organisational capabilities to the new circumstances. In this regard, there is evidence in the literature that shows a positive correlation between a learning culture, job and business performance as well as higher employee satisfaction during changes (Lin and Huang, 2021; Xie, 2019).

The evaluation of the stakeholders and their integration into the decision-making process has shown that their involvement in the decision-making process is strongly dependent on their personal interests and capabilities. This shows that interest at the management level can have a different significance. The results thus support the statements of Dziubaniuk et al. (2021); Gleichauf (2016), Zerfaß and Volk (2019) or Day (1994) that the relevance of marketing communication is not equally important.

Research objective 4: Information and knowledge considered

Based on the collected data, a variety of information sources were identified and opinions about the extent of customer knowledge were discussed. The described findings also support the conceptual model so that the research objective is also seen as fulfilled. The data analysis has shown that the use of knowledge from marketing theory, but also from other sources of information, is limited and thus potentials are not fully utilised in practice. The challenge remains, as described by Baumgart (2022), the lack of time and an information overload to filter out and implement the relevant things. This was also confirmed by the participants in the survey. The focus in everyday life is on operational business issues and the time to pick up on trends in the marketing communications world is primarily spent in exchanges with service providers, but less on following scientific discussions.

In the literature, the demand for more intensive cooperation between marketing communication and sales was highlighted by Backhaus and Voeth (2015a). On the one hand side, the findings have shown that customer information is only available in a limited form and thus makes it difficult to carry out targeted measures. Reasons given were the lack of information transparency and sharing of information between departments such as sales and marketing communications. These findings support the claim of Backhaus and Voeth (2015a). In summary, it can be said that political behaviour, but also the lack of digitalisation and the resulting tools such as CRM systems in companies have a negative influence on the development of marketing communication. These findings are also supported by Wiersema (2013), who stated that the marketing function has to gain more customer knowledge as well as strengthen its interfaces across the company. Additionally, sales have been mentioned as the main interface to be strengthened. His findings about a mixed approach of centralisation vs. decentralisation as well as the lack of information and customer insights can also be confirmed by the present study.

In addition, this study supports Gummesson and Polese (2009) as well as Neuhaus, Millemann and Nijssen (2022) finding that B2C and B2B approaches are converging or blending. This conclusion is based, among other things, on the fact that several cases use B2C methods and companies as best practice and as a source for generating new ideas and knowledge.

Challenges to take

The results of the study show that digital transformation continues to occupy all companies and is progressing at different rates. This is reflected not only in the increased relevance of digital communication media, but also in the different distribution of budgets among the communication channels. Nevertheless, it should also be emphasised that the downward trend in available budgets noted by BVIK (2020; 2021) was also confirmed by the participants (Participant 5-1, Min.: 26:41; Participant 6-3, Min.: 44:00). In addition, it was shown across all cases that the use and transparency of data is a challenge for all. The challenges highlighted ranged from companies that are currently implementing a CRM system for the first time, followed by companies that have taken the first steps to use data from CRM for communication purposes, up to companies that currently struggle with tracking along the customer journey due to the complexity of communication channels and touchpoints. In addition, marketing communication departments are faced with receiving data internally due to a lack of interfaces, which at the same time reveals the existence of information silos.

Along with the previously described challenges resulting from digitalisation, among others, an increase and broadening of the range of tasks has been identified by the research. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the cases conducted state that the resources available have not increased in the same proportion, which also confirms the statement by Baumgarth (2020). Often related to this is the finding of dealing with a quick reaction to external events by sharing contents cross-channel and especially in social media by dealing with agile methods. Nevertheless, it is also noted that marketing communication departments are working to highlight the added value of communication activities, which is also facilitated by the increase in digital activities.

Finally, this leads to another challenge, which will also be described in more detail in the next paragraph: The broader understanding of the role of marketing communication has also led to responsibilities and tasks interfering even more deeply with the processes of other departments and disciplines, thus increasing dependencies.

Dispersion of marketing communication activities

The results of the study show that the terms marketing and marketing communications are often understood as identical. The exception highlighted here due to shared responsibilities is Case 3. The identical use of the terms also reveals a dilemma, as the

scope of responsibilities sometimes goes beyond the functions of communication and affects other areas of marketing.

Instead of understanding marketing, the dispersion of marketing activities as a phenomenon (see Blachetta and Kleinaltenkamp, 2019) can also be confirmed in this study. The integration of the marketing communications function within other areas is also reflected in the variety of stakeholders that have influence on the decision-making process. In this context, attention should also be drawn to the different interests and perceptions that could ultimately lead to inadequate use of existing resources due to a potential disruption between interfaces. Interfaces that were highlighted several times during the data collection process included central functions in the holding company, a separately responsible corporate communication department, IT, product management, or the interface to sales and the responsibility for online sales platforms.

Level of strategic planning

The challenges as well as the presented fragmentations of marketing communication are also reflected in the strategic decision-making process of marketing communication. The study has shown that, depending on the company, two planning processes are carried out, whereby the main planning process, based on the business objectives, provides for operational (strategic) planning of the communication channel mix and the communication measures. According to the data collected, the models described, such as the customer journey, contribute to the determination of the communication mix (Best Practice Case 3 and Case 6). However, the analysis of the planning process has also shown that the approach is mixed strategic, like the IMC dilemma outlined by Mortimer and Laurie (2017).

The basis for decision-making and the information used also show different qualities, so that the common denominator is the experience of those responsible for communication. Regarding evaluation and planning based on performance indicators, it can be stated that due to the complexity described and the management capabilities, the marketing communication expertise decreases with increasing management level.

The strategic development of the marketing communication area can be seen as a partially parallel running development process in some of the cases, which is either driven by a concrete vision and a mission statement of the marketing communication

head or takes place through an increased integration of marketing communication into the corporate strategy process of the organisation. In this context, the corporate strategy especially has a mid-term significance, through which a fundamental orientation of the area and the relevant assessment of the communication channels takes place. Especially in the second strategic process, the analysis shows a comprehensively targeted and structured further-oriented development of the communication channel mix.

In the execution of strategic marketing communication planning, differences in budget allocation can also be observed, which at the same time also confirm the dispersion of the marketing communication function. As an example, the responsibility and budget planning of digital communication channels in IT is mentioned here (Case 6).

Based on the findings described above, a change in the strategic approach of marketing communication seems to be shaped by the company and team affiliation. Changes in the strategic approach of marketing communications have been more strongly shaped by external appointments of marketing communications managers in recent years than in cases with a long and often internally shaped development.

Derived conceptual model

The dichotomy of the decision-making process of marketing communication described above and derived from the data collection and the findings of the data collection highlighted in Chapter 4.2 can be transferred to the conceptual framework of the study after the previous summary and thus form the conceptual framework shown in Figure 20.

A direct comparison of the conceptual model with the conceptual framework (Figure 12) also highlights the findings of the present study. It should be pointed out that constructs that influence decision initiation were added to the conceptual model. The questions originally asked to assess the organisational framework and context in the in-depth interviews showed that the general market changes fundamentally shape the decision initiation as well as the process itself. Another difference mentioned is the dichotomy of the decision-making process. The interviews showed that the focus of strategic decisions in B2B marketing communication especially relies on the definition of content and its control to support the strategic targets of the business. In contrast, the strategic development of communication tools and its landscape is shaped by other planning

processes and especially by the marketing communication head himself. In terms of the information and knowledge included in decisions, it can be seen that the constructs have been further detailed compared to the conceptual framework. When comparing the framework and the model with regard to the organisational structure and skills examined, it is worth mentioning that the influence of available resources and the influence of the budget process were added in addition to the detailing of the constructs mentioned in the framework.

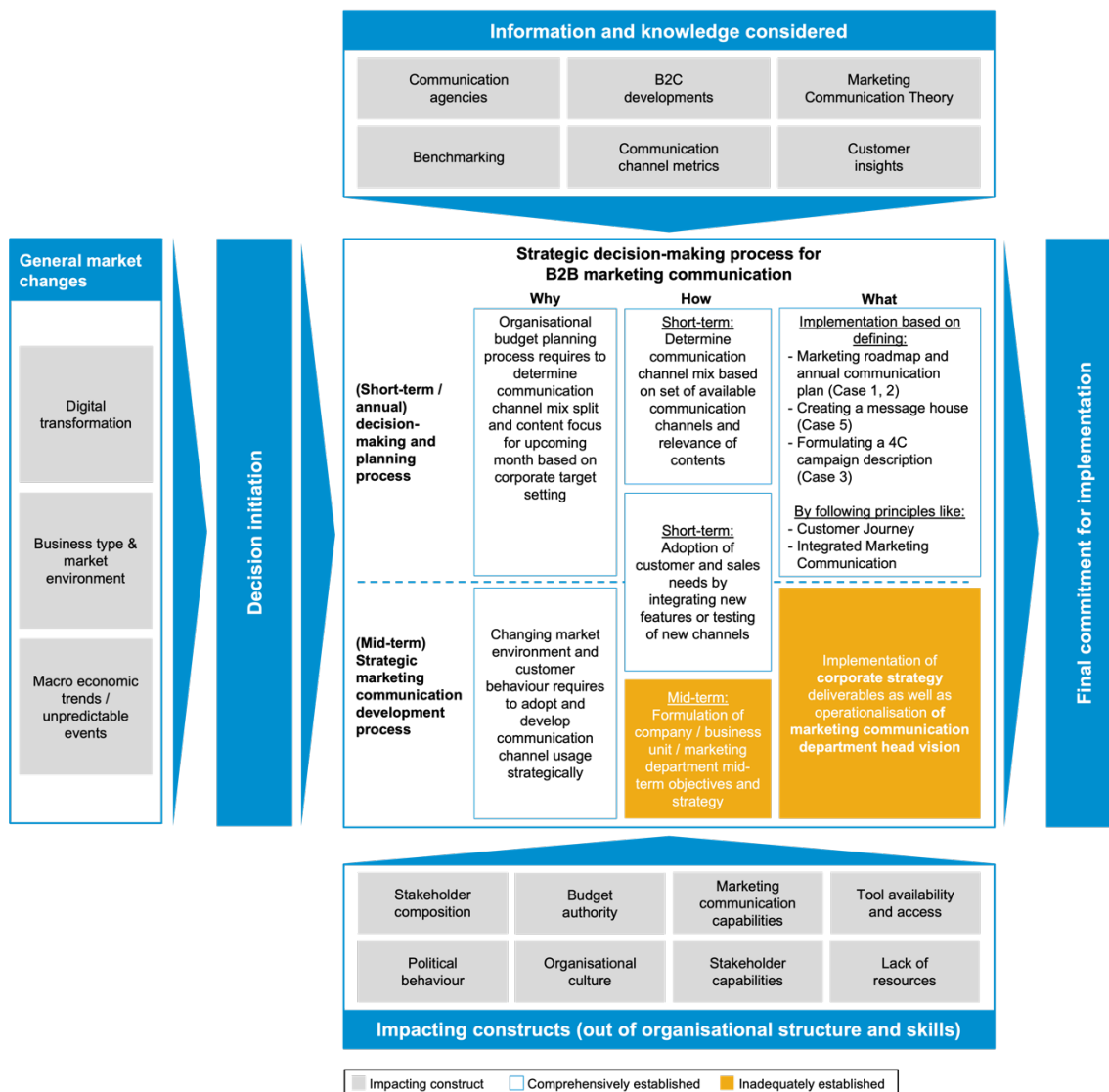


Figure 20 - Conceptual model
 (Source: Author's own, based on interview findings)

In addition to the identified constructs from the organisational perspective and the skills, the information considered, and the knowledge contributed have also been identified. In addition, a general influence of digitalisation, the market environment, and economic

Chapter 4.3 - Discussion

developments as well as unforeseen events on the decision-making process have been identified.

A description of the respective constructs and their effect on the process can be found in the following Table 9 and Table 10.

Construct	Impact / Influence
Communication agencies	Input for new ideas and sparring partner
Benchmarking	With main competitors (most stated input)
Business type & market environment	Impact selection of communication channels and targets
B2C developments	Input for new ideas and best practice as the perception of interviewees is that B2B is following B2C with a time lag (e.g., relevance of influencer)
Marketing Communication Theory	Not well considered due to information overflow and non-industry specific overview
Customer insights	Often only available in silos and therefore not centrally stored in CRM system, etc.
Communication channel metrics	Often, no concrete objectives are determined before executing communication measures Lack of marketing controlling due to complexity to measure dependencies accurately

*Table 10 - Identified constructs - Considered information and knowledge
(Source: Author's own)*

Construct	Impact / Influence
Stakeholder composition	Different sets of stakeholders, also dependent on organisational structure Involvement also dependent on personal background and capabilities
Political behaviour	Effecting the development due to indifferent targets and information silos
Budget authority	Budgets are regionally planned in most of the cases also due to profit and loss responsibility For these reasons it's a regional decision where to invest → impact on global rollouts and developments Flexibility to readjust communication planning must increase due to frequently changing environment (internal and external)
Marketing communication team capabilities	Especially dependent on perception of relevance in company Especially driven by marketing communication head + overall organisational capabilities At the same time risk as the marketing communication head is long time in company and in the role longer than most of his counterparts of the decision-making process
Stakeholder capabilities	Involvement of stakeholder dependent on personal backgrounds and capabilities New input from students, conducted bachelor or master thesis, ... Learning culture of organisation // best practice sharing // education plan of marketing communication team members as well as stakeholder departments
Organisational culture	Cultural change towards a modern work culture is everywhere a topic; Alternation of generations; marketing communication in comparison to rest of organisation mostly perceived a step ahead (already acting more flexible and permission to test things)
Tool availability and access	Testing of tools, implementation as well as developments are most of the time cost intensive and therefore a hurdle for implementation

*Table 11 - Identified constructs - Impact on organisational structure and skills
(Source: Author's own)*

Call to restructure B2B marketing communication:

However, the contrast to the disruption of the function and its proportionally deep integration can also be seen as opportunity from strategic point of view. Since marketing communication is involved in so many corporate processes though the digitalisation of a company, it gains more interest and step by step becomes a management discipline that connects people with a customer-centric approach as connecting element, and who is responsible to ensure the right content distribution rather than doing everything on their own (e.g. IT, website developments, online shop, etc.). It could be argued that the marketing communication function has become too broad determined by the organisational belief and needs to be specified again. The literature (e.g., O'Mally, 2014) has also outlined that marketing management has been too broad in some of its development and should be refocused on understanding customer behaviour.

However, a look at current definitions of marketing communication also shows that the corresponding required process responsibility and thus the integration of the function into other corporate areas is already part of the understanding. However, as the identified challenges have hardly changed over the last decade (referring to the findings of Wierseman, 2013), despite much more attention in theory and practice, this suggests that strategic development needs to be approached from a different perspective as well as to be positioned differently in order to develop the function more strategically.

This adoption answering the associated expansion to include the process function has especially driven the change in the communication landscape, since digitalisation did not only change the communication landscape over the last two decades in particular. It has also affected the marketing communication function in B2B itself. The complexity of strategic decision-making processes was demonstrated in this study and process steps, organisational structures, stakeholders, utilised knowledge, and organisational capabilities were put in relation to each other.

“Yes, and with this comes the need to break down these silos not only in the technical area, but also in the minds [...]. We have to work more closely with sales, but not, in my opinion, through processes, but rather thorough understanding, mutuality and teamwork. And that is definitely a big task, because then striving for power also plays a role. [...] So maybe we as marketing [communication] first have to become more empathetic in order to be able to resolve such conflicts, to be able to mediate in the areas.”

Participant 2-2, Marketing Communication Head, Min.: 42:15

From these findings, it can be concluded that a new role and responsibility for marketing communication, covering the integration of the function across the company in a more strategic way, should be established in practice. The process responsibility, driven by the companies, would also support the need of bundling all marketing communication competences. The function would ensure clear responsibilities and thus be able to drive the organisation forward efficiently. To this end, it would be equipped with the core task of developing the organisation towards customer-oriented thinking through networked knowledge of marketing communication mechanisms. A unit that is driven by the clarification of overlapping effects resulting from the mentioned environmental changes, in specific digitalisation and big data and thus ensures the effectiveness of the organisation.

Following this suggestion, the marketing communication process function, needs to be supported by a mindset change of the role becoming a strategic function in the organisation. It would also support and contribute to call for developing IMC towards a strategic implementation level. However, this potential change also requires an adapted assessment standard for the activities and KPIs, as these cannot be reflected exclusively in a return on marketing investment due to a more process-driven role.

"I believe that these KPI systems, the learned ones, will no longer function in this way. So, if I really only focus the sales department and on the topic of incoming orders, then that's exactly the point. Then [sales] has no interest in entering data and then it will also be difficult to make it palatable, probably via a newsletter info that is still attached somewhere, because the added value is just not that great or the impact that directly affects my I say I am there. So, I think we need other key figures systems and other ways of thinking."

(Participant 2-2 46:32)

4.4 Chapter summary

The data analysis in Chapter 4.2 has shown that valuable evidence to support the literature cited in this thesis was collected through the study. In addition, the discussion in Chapter 4.3 highlighted that the linking of the different disciplines of marketing communication and decision making has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of decision-making processes for strategic marketing communication planning in the German mechanical and plant engineering industry. The conclusions derived have also highlighted the contribution of this study to theory and practice and are summarised in Chapter 6.

In summary, it can thus be said that the research objectives of the study were achieved from a content perspective. The extent to which the selected research design and strategy supported this is discussed in Chapter 5.

5 Reflection on research design and strategy

5.1 Introduction of chapter

After analysing the data and summarising the findings in the previous chapter, Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the chosen research approach and methodology. The chapter thus reflects on the study starting from the formulation of the research idea to the critical reflection on the research conducted. Against this background, Chapter 5.2 evaluates the chosen methodological approach of the study. Building on this, Chapter 5.3 evaluates the chosen research design and data collection by describing the challenges encountered in the research process. Finally, Chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** assesses the fulfilment of the research questions by the chosen methodology.

5.2 Evaluation of methodological approach

The procedure of this investigation has followed the principle approaching from the general to the specific. By doing this, the research plan has evolved over time, due to new findings in literature or changes in perceptions throughout the data collection process. On this basis, the major milestones and research process steps for achieving the research target have been defined. Appendix 1 illustrates the research procedure, to ensure academically required practicability and justifiability to achieve the Doctor of Business Administration certificate. Furthermore, a continuous meeting structure with the supervisors also critically reviewed the progress. Together with the regular feedback loops after each milestones, the academic standard is assured.

A constructivist approach with a qualitative research method was selected for conducting the present study. The findings as well as the methodology evaluation chapter have proven that the selected research approach to achieve the formulated research aim was appropriate. In this context, all formulated research questions and objectives will be answered in the following Chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** The multiple case study research approach did allow the generation of a comprehensive picture on what strategic marketing communication decision-making processes look like in the German B2B sector. The benefits and disadvantages of interviews were critically discussed in Chapter 3.7, before the approach was selected.

A positive conclusion can also be drawn regarding the selected research strategy. The interview parameters described in Chapter 4.3 show that the expected interview duration was confirmed through the data collection of all cases. Besides, it must be mentioned that none of the participants withdrew their participation after the interview. The selected interview approach, using MS Teams as video conferencing tool instead of meeting the interviewee physically also proved successful. One of the reasons lies in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic during the data collection phase, which has still limited organisational capabilities to allow face-to-face meetings. It additionally led to the consequence that all participants were more flexible in scheduling the interview appointments. Every participant was able to schedule the interview without external influences of the surroundings. The video conference tool itself also allowed, as described in Chapter 3.6.2, those involved to connect visually and verbally. Only three people asked that only an audio track be recorded during the interview for private reasons, which will be not explained here to preserve confidentiality and the right to privacy. The limitation to only interact via voice nevertheless did not jeopardise the quality of the interview. Regarding the interview guide, it should be noted that it provided a good structure and a good checklist for the discussion on the topics asked. However, the number of questions associated with it also led to a high degree of complexity in the evaluation. The level of detail of the questions meant that often the answer to one question was an answer to several questions.

To also derive appropriate recommendations for action, the validity and generalisability of findings was discussed, and potential biases were avoided. The evaluation detected a range of constructs which determine the strategical level of decision-making. The resulting conceptual model was derived and justified in Chapter 4.3. An overall summary of the study will be made in the final Chapter 6, pointing out the contribution to literature and practice as well as implications for further research. With the help of an inductive research approach (case studies with in-depth interviews), insights are to be gained into how strategic decisions in marketing communication are made in companies.

5.3 Problems inherent in the design

5.3.1 Coordinating data collection

As described in the research plan (see Appendix 1) and in Chapter 3.9, data collection took place between mid-November 2021 and mid-March 2022. This time was still marked by the Covid-19 pandemic. Companies had to deal with changes in the pandemic

situation and the resulting circumstances in addition to everyday business. In this volatile situation, convincing companies to participate in the data collection on the one hand and finding participants within the organisation on the other hand, proved to be challenging. Many companies to which requests were sent, cancelled their support from the outset due to the tense personnel situation and the dynamic environment. Some companies that had already promised their support had to cancel their participation due to changes in circumstances at short notice. Reasons given for this included pending or imminent restructuring. In consequence, some new cases had to be recruited in the data collection phase and interviews were postponed in accordance with the availabilities of interview partners. The multiple planning of the data collection with continuously changing framework conditions and availability of participants turned out to be more time-consuming than originally expected and led to a delay, compared with the initial research plan. The original schedule of collecting the data between October and December 2021 could thus not be maintained (see Appendix 1). Nevertheless, the targeted quantity of cases and participants was reached.

As described in Chapter 3.5.4.1, different communication channels were chosen to address companies and ask for participation in the study. Despite the broad request sent out to relevant companies from German industry in various industry segments, only a small quantity of companies positively replied to the request and were able to convince the required quantity of participants based on the criteria explained in Chapter 3.5.4.2. A supplementary selection of possible cases was therefore not possible.

The approach of addressing the role of the “marketing communication department head” in particular, and using him or her as a multiplier in the organisation to call for voluntary participation in the study proved to be successful. Except for company 6, four participants could be recruited in each of the companies and thus different stakeholders in the decision-making process could be interviewed. However, the function of “supervisor” was the most critical of the four determined roles. Especially since this function was, in most cases, a part of the management board and could not always be convinced to participate due to tight schedules. Whenever a C-level was involved, the participation of the C-level position was depended on the availability as well as on the size of the organisation. Whereas globally active C-levels could not be reached, more locally located C-levels were able to participate. This was compensated by adding other stakeholders who are also familiar with the decision-making process.

The availability in general also lead to the consequence that the composition of participants always differed slightly. It must be noted that, compared to the ideal composition of interview partners per case, organisational structures within the conducted cases have demonstrated that depending on the company, process chains contain different levels. The described composition of participants in Chapter 3.5.4.5 is not necessarily found in practice due to organisational contexts. The structure of the company differs from company to company and always followed the business requirements.

Nevertheless, the limited participation of companies or supervisors did not lead to any disadvantages in terms of content. On the contrary – all participating companies saw an everyday need in the research questions of the study and hope that the study results will provide approaches to solving their challenges. Also, the quantity of participants with different backgrounds was appropriate to understand and analyse the decision-making process comprehensively.

It should be noted that in all cases examined, except for Case 6, at least 4 interview partners voluntarily participated in the data collection and thus described the picture of the strategic decision-making process from their individual perspective. In this context, it should be noted that the minimum of three required organisational levels could be covered by the interview partners. Case 6 is the exception here as well. In the analysis of Case 6 itself, the missing 4th interviewee is noticeable in terms of content compared to Cases 1-5. However, due to the input of the three interviews conducted, which support the statements of the other cases, it was decided not to exclude Case 6 after the data was collected and the analysis had begun. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the required minimum number of four participants across at least three hierarchical levels was correctly identified as a requirement. The perceived limitations within the case analysis confirm this, as described above.

5.3.2 Conducting the interview

With a few exceptions, the interviews were conducted as intended in the research design. First, it can be stated that the intended interview time was correctly estimated, as described in Chapter 5.3, and thus, sufficient room for a deep dive into the research topic was basically possible with each interview partner. Secondly, it should be noted

that the defined quantity of four different perspectives ideally describe the facts under investigation. The further away the persons are from the decision-making process, the less all questions could be answered concretely (e.g. Case 1, Participant 1-5). With only three participants, it can be noted that a role and perspective on the facts is missing. In the case of Case 6, this was the implementing marketing communications department in a business unit. Third, conducting the interview using Microsoft Teams videoconferencing technology to call with video has also proven to be promising, with three exceptions. The term “promising” refers to the fact that a relaxed atmosphere was created during the interview and that participants were able to respond to the questions openly and without being disturbed. The exceptions were:

- Participant 3-2 asked to leave the camera off for understandable reasons. In this case, however, the implementation via audio did not lead to a break in openness and exchange.
- Participant 5-1 started the interview while driving home by car and then changed to videoconferencing outside of the home. Nevertheless, the participant was attentive and the answers as well as content were comprehensive and helpful in answering the research questions.
- The interview with participant 5-4 was conducted entirely over the telephone and there were several disconnections due to the mobile network. The interview questions were asked and answered in short form. For this reason, the interview was limited to 30 minutes.

In addition, it should be mentioned that due to the Corona pandemic, most of the companies still did not allow face-to-face meetings at the time of data collection. It is also worth mentioning that due to the independence of location, flexible planning of the interviews in line with the individual framework conditions was possible and was also of advantage to the researcher in order to allow him to follow up his manifold commitments.

The opening of the conversation with small talk created a trusting atmosphere before the introduction of the researcher and the renewed description of the research context created a content-related basis for the subsequent recorded interview. In this context, the further procedure and the handling of data were always pointed out again. The large number of participants once again confirmed that they value the way data has been handled by the researcher and no one withdrew his or her approval after the interview.

It should also be mentioned, however, that the interview partners within the respective company had already confirmed their participation to each other in the run-up to the interview. Accordingly, other participants were mentioned more frequently by the respective interviewee.

The formulated interview guide also gave the researcher a good structure to steer the interview. Note that the interview guide was quite detailed and also contained queries if previous answers hadn't been answered comprehensively. But it was also necessary to skip questions due to that fact that the participant already given an answer in combination with the previous question, or the question has been answered during the interview flow. However, skipping questions due to the course of the interview did not usually result in questions being omitted. The research project's practice of taking notes directly in the interview guide and returning to it at a later stage helped to ensure that the intended questions were fully answered by each interview participant. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the individual course of the interview made the evaluation by question more time-consuming by making it more difficult to assign content.

In addition, the degree of the participants' preparation prior to the interview also had an influence on the course, the duration, and the quality of the interview. The level of preparation of the participants did differ. Well-prepared participants answered the questions more focused, and the duration of interviews was in part quicker. See interview with Participant 2-4 – the participant did prepare his answers directly before the interview and tried to answer all 29 questions short and precisely due to time constraints. Most of the participants stated that they prepared themselves by going through the questions. This led to the consequence that participants often referred to a different question posed later by answering the current question in that situation. On the other hand, some of the less prepared participants did not give clearly formulated answers. This was evident, for example, in the repetition of words and the attempt to find suitable answers to the questions by subsequently correcting the beginnings of sentences (Example: Participant 1-5, 20:25 Min). In summary, it can be said that a large proportion of the interview participants took the time and peace of mind to complete the interview. Only in a few exceptions were there time constraints that meant that not all the interview guide's questions could be answered, or that there were not enough opportunities to ask questions due to the time restrictions in order to understand everything (e.g., Participant 2-2; Participant 4-1).

The interview guide also contained some explanations to determine specific terms as well as to ensure that the comprehension was the same. It also turned out that explaining the background and idea behind a question was quite helpful in answering other questions to ensure the flow of the interview as well as to guide the interviewee through the question. It also directed the interviewee to formulate appropriate answers. As most of the interviewees had read the interview guide upfront before confirming their participation, most interviewees already felt familiar with the topic during the introduction of the interview appointment and confirmed upfront of the recording, that they also perceive the study and results as relevant for their daily work.

As a researcher who has gained experience in the field of marketing communication, there were, of course, also opportunities to bring in one's own experiences or collected experiences into the discussion in order to further question the statements made by the participants. Some participants also asked specific questions about the researcher's activities. Bringing in these operational and personal experiences kept the conversation and its course dynamic and encouraged the participants to support their statements with examples. Nevertheless, the use of this stylistic device must also be evaluated critically, as it can have a steering function and internal statements can also be made here, even if only in a generalised way. Finally, it should be noted that the experiences and examples brought in by the researcher have taken up the participants' statement in a different context. Thus, the stylistic device was used by the researcher to check whether the content of the participant's statement was correctly classified and thus, contributed both to a confirmation of the anticipated knowledge, but also to a relaxed conversational atmosphere. It also triggered the participants to add additional their additional insights to the topics discussed (see Appendix 48).

In addition to the introduction of personal experiences as well as queries from participants in this regard, it was often asked at the end of the interview about findings already generated by the study and to what extent the participant's statements corresponded with others from the case. Because the participants exchanged internal information about their participation, it was difficult to answer neutrally here. In the case of such a query, the researcher highlighted 1-2 aspects of the respective conversation and answered in general terms to what extent these topics were taken up, but without making a judgement or revealing the identity of another participant. In addition, it was

pointed out that company-specific feedback could only be given in the follow-up once the analysis had been completed. This procedure led to the participants expressing their interest in such a feedback discussion again and the interview was ended with a positive outlook and a concrete expectation about the outcome of the study (see Appendix 16).

5.3.3 Data analysis and volume of data

With 23 hours and 51 minutes of recorded interviews, the amount of appropriate transcripts created was extensive and complex. The use of the analysis tool NVivo was helpful in this context to structure the data volume in a targeted manner. The defined procedure for the evaluation of the data applied to the structure and content of the data collected. The used interview guide, created out of the literature review findings and current state of findings, has provided a valuable structure to ensure comprehensive insights into how strategic decisions in B2B Marketing Communication and the German industry sector are made. It did make it possible to handle the collection of data as well as to structure the interview without losing the overview of what topics had been discussed during the interview. The additional preparation to map interview guide questions with the research questions and objectives also gave a comprehensive structure for the data analysis itself, which needed to answer the research questions where possible. The wealth of content from the interviews provided sufficient data for this. The number of cases and thus, the number of interview participants, was also well chosen. In terms of validity and representativeness, however, it should be noted that the sample of the study only reveals rudiments of possible patterns. For statistically significant statements, further research is needed in the full scope of the topic. In addition, asking multiple roles per case also contributed to the investigation as it did ensure to gain background knowledge about organisational developments in the last years as well as political behaviour. All interviewees do have a different affiliation to the company and team as well their role.

It should also be mentioned that the validity of the data only reflects a snapshot at the time of the data collection itself. Two of the interviewees have quit their job at one of the participating companies and started in new roles. The data analysis already takes these changes into account in terms of the duration of team composition as well as regarding the consistency of the communication strategy. In addition to the already slightly changed constellation of people within the companies, the researcher was also informed in the follow-up to the completed study that due to a reorganisation of a company,

structural changes also took place within the marketing communication area. These structural changes are oriented towards the strategic orientation of the company.

5.3.4 Changing macro environment

While conducting this research, several developments in theory and in business have shaped the research over the course of time. The most relevant influences are the following:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has made an enduring change in people's behaviour and daily lives. These lasting changes also include changes in communication behaviour. It also changed the communication channel priorities of firms. These lasting changes are mainly driven by the experiences made during the pandemic, which is still present.
- The changing priorities in the channel mix and the resulting increased trend towards online media in conjunction with the growing number of communication channels has also significantly increased the need for more transparency regarding interrelationships and the networking of information and knowledge. The resulting needs not only have an influence on B2B marketing communication. They also reinforce the role, necessity, and attention of all marketing within companies. The pandemic has noticeably accelerated this trend during the research period.

5.4 Chapter summary

To sum up, it can be stated that the research aim, "[t]o explore strategic B2B marketing communication in the German industry sector" has been fulfilled. The evaluation of the methodology (Chapter 5.2) and data collection strategy (Chapter 5.3) has proven that it was possible to achieve the overall research aim through the selected research strategy. It can be said that the chosen methodology enabled all research questions to be answered comprehensively and purposefully. The conducted study created a rich set of insights into strategic B2B marketing communication in German industry. The resulting implications for science and theory are presented in the final chapter and thus conclude the study. Complementary to the evaluation of the methodology, it should also be mentioned that the accomplishment of the DBA study also changed the researchers' own approaches and perspectives over time. This includes the researcher's behaviour itself regarding operational issues (describing the situation as-is appropriately before starting to investigate how to improve; critically questioning the basis of the information/source).

Chapter 5.4 - Chapter summary

In addition, the interviews conducted have also helped to gain additional perspectives and thereby develop new thoughts and options on the topics investigated. Reviewing and shaping the initial research idea and target over time also had a lasting effect on the researcher's perceptions. Due to the longer research period, the professional examination of this topic has gained a personally perceived depth, which has also had a lasting impact on the working methods and approaches.

6 Summary and outlook

6.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to investigate strategic marketing communication decisions in the German industrial sector. Literature research was used to identify possible influencing factors from various disciplines as the object of investigation and a suitable research methodology was selected. Even though Chapter 4.3 has already presented the fulfilment of the research objective, this chapter concludes by highlighting the contribution of the research to theory and practice and discussing the need for further investigation. Thus, the following two chapters conclude the investigation of the study, which in summary, has achieved the research objective by selecting the appropriate research methodology.

6.2 Contribution to theory and practice

The aim of the study is thus not only to derive practical recommendations for action to solve the challenges described by identifying drivers. At the same time, the findings should facilitate the transfer of the growing marketing communication theory into practice by making it easier for researchers to formulate theoretical recommendations for action through an understanding of the procedure in corporate practice. The present study has shown that changing external conditions (digitalisation, market environment, type of company, pandemic / economic situation) have shaped and changed the role as well as the tasks of marketing communication departments in many lasting ways. The impact was examined by the studies in relation to strategic marketing communication planning and underlying processes and thus, contributes to filling the identified gap with additional insights.

The contribution to literature consists of supporting current literature, as already analysed in more detail in Chapter 4.2. A new contribution to the literature is the division of the decision-making process between content and platform development, which needs to be verified by further research. Among other things, the results of the data analysis with regard to the handling and orientation of practitioners to B2C and its adaptation and application to B2B should be emphasised. Furthermore, the importance of digitalisation and the increasing complexity in the communication landscape should be highlighted. The results of this study support the findings of Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Rėklaitis and Pilelienė (2019), Kitchen (2017), Barnes (2018), BVIK (2020a) or

Cortez and Johnston (2017), as well as the identified shift from marketing communication budgets towards digital channels noted by BVIK (2020b). This is accompanied by the fact that the attention of top management has further increased due to digital communication channels and thus supports the statements of Gleichauf (2016) or Zerfaß and Volk (2019) who see the need of further attention on top management level. Last but not least, the results of the study supported the relevance of the communication concepts CJ and IMC, which are also used as a basis here.

Second to highlight is the contribution to the research methodology. It should be noted that the present study represents further evidence of the successful and appropriate use of case study research in the investigation of decision-making processes as well as in the business research context. Evidence for this statement can be found in Chapter 5 in this regard. The findings and conclusions made in Chapter 4 prove that the case study method allows both – testing and building theory (Yin, 1994). In addition, the multiple case study approach did make it possible to compare findings across cases and as such bring forth new perspectives that allow the derivation of a new strategic B2B marketing communication framework. The multiple case research strategy has proven that an observation of the same phenomenon though different cases with similar conditions makes it possible to strive for generalisability (Dooley, 2002).

However, the greatest contribution of this study is its contribution to practice. Whereas the contribution to literature relies in broadening the knowledge of B2B marketing communication and the combination with the discipline of decision-making, the contribution into practice lies first and foremost in bridging the gap between theory and practice. The investigation of how SDM in marketing communication is currently handled in the German machinery and plant engineering sector resulted in concrete recommendations for action for practitioners with the derived framework. In this context, the recommendation of a new function to be created is to be emphasised, which functions for the strategic further development of marketing communication in the company across departments and thus also brings together the identified marketing dispersion to a certain extent. The study also showed the diversity of marketing communication and its dispersion within companies, which supports research topics that have only been examined to some extent up to now.

The derived conceptual model illustrates that in most of the cases examined, strategic decision-making processes for marketing communication are characterised by two parallel processes. These findings and the contribution to the demands for a strategic marketing communication process unit represent the main contribution to theory and practice. The developed framework will allow companies to develop their marketing communication from a currently tactical driven discipline towards a strategic discipline within corporates. The dilemma highlighted and the solution proposed should help both sides to evaluate the contribution of marketing communication to the implementation of strategic corporate goals more accurately. With the help of this finding, a contribution was made to understanding the operational challenges for the further development of marketing communication and approaches for further research needs were identified.

Besides the contribution to literature, the researcher has offered all participants the opportunity to give individual feedback and insights based on the study results. By doing this, the researcher also hopes to contribute to further improvements in the companies that participated in this research as well.

6.3 Implications for further research

As a result, a strategic marketing communication conceptual model for B2B practitioners has been derived out of the findings as the outcome of the investigation. The application of this conceptual model and proof of reliability would be required as the next step. This study has identified multiple constructs out of the marketing as well as decision-making discipline that influence strategic decisions in marketing communication. There is a need for further research regarding these constructs in terms of validation and the investigation of dependencies themselves. As for validation, a quantitative study in a broader B2B context is desirable. Finally, regarding dependencies, a distinction should be made between external and internal context factors.

Selecting the German industry as the scope for the present research also results in additional requirements considering regional specific theory for the foundation. The research scope makes it necessary to consider German culture and Marketing Communication specifics. The market specifics also need to be put into context with global marketing communication trends and behaviours. The data sample selected in the German industry is limited, so that the validity must be proven in the German industry context, but also internationally to build a reliable conceptual model. So far, it can only be assumed that analysing the biggest industrial market in Europe might lead to results that might be applicable for other industries and countries.

The findings in the data collected have additionally shown that the companies studied are basically satisfied with the scope of their marketing communication, even if “there is always more that can be done”. The findings of the literature research have shown that there is a great need to develop marketing communication in a more strategic manner. These contrary opinions show that the need for action, which may also have increased as a result of digitalisation, is not recognised in practice. In this respect, there is a need for further research in B2B marketing communication in relation to the digital transformation and its impact. Future research should not only examine the extent to which potentials from digitalisation are recognised for marketing communication in companies. It should also examine the effects of digitalisation on cooperation and interfaces with other departments in B2B companies.

The digitalisation of marketing communication should also be further examined in the context of culture. The companies examined in this case study, which are predominantly

characterised by a long corporate history, have themselves stated that they are not only characterised by tradition and masculinity. Many have also stated that they are currently undergoing a change in their corporate culture. However, based on the perception of the interviewees' statements, there is often still no change in relation to the alternation of generations of the customer groups with regard to the selection and further development of the communication landscape of companies.

In this context, arguments were often put forward that current customer groups would still behave differently here, and that addressing a new target group often referred to attracting future talent. It is assumed that this is contradicted by the fact that the average age of buyers in B2B will further decrease. Not at least because of the generational change of the baby boomers over the next few years, which is still often underestimated in this context and the effect of which still has not been comprehensively investigated.

In summary, it can be said that this study has contributed to the disclosure of challenges in entrepreneurial decision-making processes. It has helped to show what role marketing communication theory plays in practice and has thus, also shown possible approaches where practice and theory can come closer together. The recommendations for further research also show that there is a need for further research in the field of B2B marketing. The interest of the participating companies in this study has also shown that there is a great need in this field. With this study, a further contribution was made to show the significance of marketing communication not only in theory, but also in practice.

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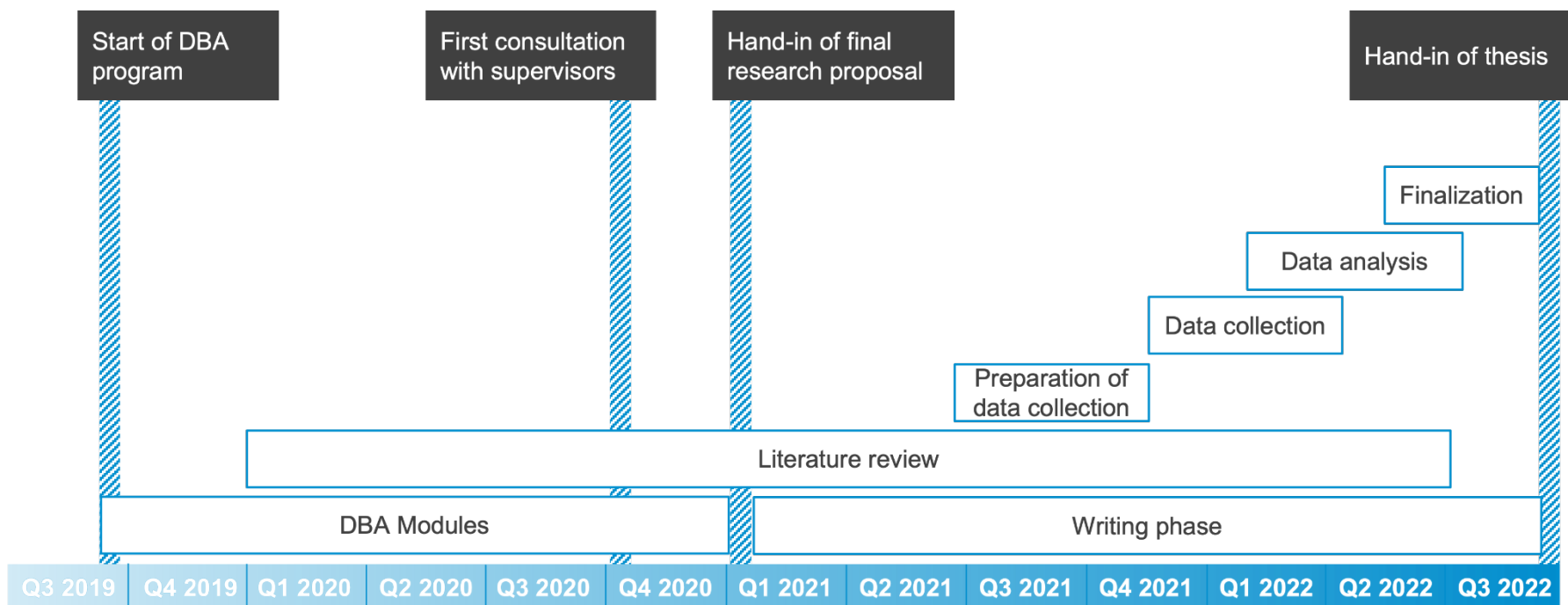
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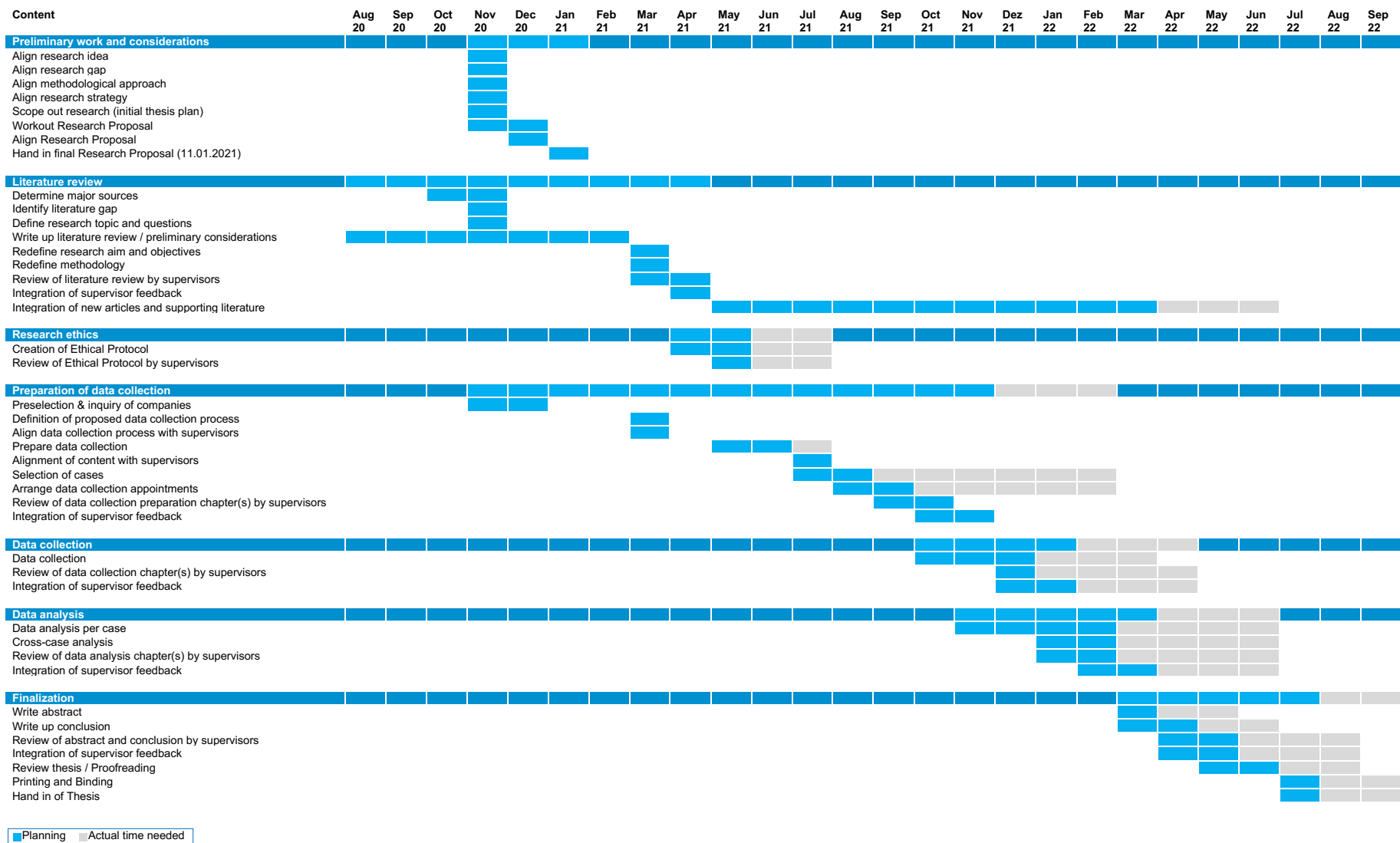
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Appendix 1 – Research plan and major milestones of the research process

Appendix 1 – Research plan and major milestones of the research process



Appendix 1 – Research plan and major milestones of the research process



Appendix 2 – Timeline of scheduled interviews

Appendix 2 – Timeline of scheduled interviews

Date	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6	Duration [min]
18.11.21	Participant 1-1						65:03:00
22.11.21	Participant 1-2						78:35:00
25.11.21	Participant 1-3						54:55:00
26.11.21	Participant 1-4						53:10:00
03.12.21		Participant 2-1					73:16:00
15.12.21		Participant 2-2					68:42:00
20.12.21	Participant 1-5						58:23:00
12.01.22		Participant 2-3					62:09:00
14.01.22		Participant 2-4					23:21:00
21.01.22			Participant 3-1				83:40:00
21.01.22				Participant 4-1			32:28:00
25.01.22			Participant 3-2				64:30:00
25.01.22				Participant 4-2			64:31:00
28.01.22			Participant 3-3				60:50:00
31.01.22				Participant 4-3			54:41:00
03.02.22					Participant 5-1		61:32:00
08.02.22					Participant 5-2		72:54:00
16.02.22						Participant 6-1	63:05:00
17.02.22					Participant 5-2		51:22:00
18.02.22					Participant 5-4		28:05:00
21.02.22				Participant 4-4			64:42:00
25.02.22						Participant 6-2	63:52:00
01.03.22						Participant 6-3	74:48:00
17.03.22			Participant 3-4				52:24:00
Total:	5	4	4	4	4	3	1430:58:00

Quantity of interviews:

Total number of interviews: 24

Interview evaluation (excluding pre-test results):

Total interview duration [h]: 23:51
 Median value of interview duration [min.]: 59:37
 Standard deviation [min.]: 14:46
 Variance [min.]: 9:05

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.



Interview Guide

1. Please briefly introduce yourself with your professional background and describe your tasks in the company.
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Please describe your (academic) knowledge and skills in the field of marketing communication.
4. For classification purposes, can you please also describe where you are located organisationally and how your structure is built around the department of marketing communication?
5. Please describe the organisational culture in your company.
(Organisational culture is understood as: How do you perceive power distance and error culture? Do you work more collectivistically or individualistically? Do you act more short- or long-term oriented?)
6. Which importance does marketing communication have in your company?
(Marketing communication includes all measures taken to market a service or product.)
7. Please use an example to describe the importance of marketing communication in your company as just described.
8. What skills and competences do you see as necessary in marketing communication in the future and why?
9. Which communication channels do you currently use in your company and with what goal?
10. Which (three) touch points do you consider the most important for your type of business and why?
11. Do you see a change here in the relevance of certain communication channels due to the Covid-19 pandemic?



12. How do you evaluate the extent of your marketing communications mix?

(The communication mix refers to the mix of methods and instruments chosen for market communication within the framework of an advertising strategy or campaign).

13. Are there things that you miss?

14. Could you please describe how you as a company determine your marketing communication channel mix and your communication measures?

15. Are there internal stakeholders who influence this and if so, who and how?

16. (Are there other people who additionally influence the marketing communication approach?)

17. What information do you take into account when defining and planning the company's communication channels, touch points and measures?

18. Do you formulate communication goals for the individual measures?

19. (What are these goals?)

20. Where do you get the information you use in setting and planning?

21. Where do you obtain new knowledge?

22. (What role does marketing theory play in this?)

23. How would you describe your knowledge of your customers?

24. Could you please describe how you strategically develop your marketing communication with an example or a channel?

(To develop strategically means to further develop the "current state" in the best possible way towards the target image of what marketing communication should achieve in the company).



25. Where is the greatest need to develop and adapt your marketing communication at the moment?
26. How do you personally and your department influence strategic decisions in the field of marketing communication?
27. How would you describe your (personal) influence on it?
28. How does your influence differ centrally and into the regions?
29. Is there anything else you would like to say about the development of companies' strategic marketing communication?

Appendix 4 – Mapping of research questions and interview guide questions

Appendix 4 – Mapping of research questions and interview guide questions

<p>Research Objectives: To identify decision-making process steps in order to define the strategic approaches for B2B marketing communication planning.</p> <p>Research Questions: What are the aspects involved in the B2B marketing communication decision-making process?</p>	<p>To identify which way organizational structures and skills of internal stakeholders determine a firm's strategic marketing communication approach.</p> <p>How do organizational structures and skills of internal stakeholders effect the strategic marketing communication approach of a company?</p>	<p>To identify which information and/or knowledge is taken into consideration by the involved stakeholders to strategically define the firm's strategic marketing communication approach.</p> <p>Which information and/or knowledge is used to define the strategic marketing communication approach?</p>
--	---	---

	Organisational context	Decision-making process	(Organisational) Structures & Skills	Information & Knowledge
1			Please briefly introduce yourself with your professional background and tasks in the company.	
2				How long have you been in this position?
3			Please describe your (academic) knowledge and skills in the field of marketing communication.	
4			For classification purposes, can you please also describe where you are located organisationally and how your structure is built around the department of marketing communication?	
5	Please describe the organisational culture in your company.			
6	Which importance does marketing communication have in your company?			
7	Please use an example to describe the importance of marketing communication in your company as just described.			
8			What skills and competences do you see as necessary in marketing communication in the future and why?	
9		Which communication channels do you currently use in your company and with what goal?		

Appendix 4 – Mapping of research questions and interview guide questions

	Organisational context	Decision-making process	(Organisational) Structures & Skills	Information & Knowledge
10		Which (three) touch points do you consider the most important for your type of business and why?		
11	Do you see a change here in the relevance of certain communication channels due to the Covid-19 pandemic?			
12	How do you evaluate the extent of your marketing communications mix?			
13	Are there things that you miss?			
14		Could you please describe how you as a company determine your marketing communication channel mix and your communication measures?		
15		Are there internal stakeholders who influence this and if so, who and how?		
16		(Are there other people who additionally influence the marketing communication approach?)		
17				What information do you take into account when defining and planning the company's communication channels, touch points and measures?
18		Do you formulate communication goals for the individual measures?		
19		(What are these goals?)		
20			Where do you get the information you use in setting and planning?	
21				Where do you obtain new knowledge?
22				(What role does marketing theory play in this?)
23				How would you describe your knowledge of your customers?
24		Could you please describe how you strategically develop your marketing communication with an example or a channel?		
25		Where is the greatest need to develop and adapt your marketing communication at the moment?		

Appendix 4 – Mapping of research questions and interview guide questions

	Organisational context	Decision-making process	(Organisational) Structures & Skills	Information & Knowledge
26		How do you personally and your department influence strategic decisions in the field of marketing communication?		
27		How would you describe your (personal) influence on it?		
28		How does your influence differ centrally and into the regions?		
29	Is there anything else you would like to say about the development of companies' strategic marketing communication?			

Appendix 5 – Detailed notes about pilot study interviews

Appendix 5 – Detailed notes about pilot study interviews

Impressions after interview with Marketing communication head (date of notes: 11/08/2021):

- Remarks for data collection process:
 - o All shared documents in combination gave the impression to be well informed about the study context as well as about the data collection process itself
 - o The participant information sheet and consent for gave the impression that data protection is taken seriously and that the data are protected
 - o Professional and trustworthy appearance
- Remarks for content / interview questions:
 - o Participant would recommend to reformulate the participation request in the following way:
 - Be more “promotional”
 - Highlight that the participant needs actively contact the research for participation and mention at the same time that the participant do not have to care about everything else
 - Describe clearly that nobody needs to have fear to be asked about the topic – *“it is not required to be an expert in all subjects”*
 - o Adaptions of wording à Use active questioning instead of subjunctive questions
 - o Additional questions have been integrated in the interview guide based on the course of conversation and contents which have been discussed (referred to final interview guide question numbering):
 - Question 18: Question have been added to understand decision-making and consequences of decisions more appropriate
 - Question 28: To specify the power and influence even more, the question has been added to evaluate if the influence differs between the head quarter and regions

Appendix 5 – Detailed notes about pilot study interviews

- The following questions have been adjusted (referred to final Interview Guide question numbering):
 - Question 8: To avoid a false self-perception of the participant, the question from the presence was rephrased to an expectation of future competences.
 - Question 25: Add “where” to improve, to specify the question even more

Impressions after interview with Communication expert (date of notes: 09/08/2021):

- Remarks for data collection process:
 - The participant has the feeling of having been picked up on the content of the study.
 - The reason why his input is needed for the study was also clearly pointed out
 - The participant has had the feeling that data security and privacy is ensured
- Remarks for content / interview questions:
 - Formulate open questions instead of closed
 - Split up questions 9+10 and 26+27 to get more specific answers.
 - Question 9/10: Question 9 to get an overview of channels and targets. Question 10 to figure out the relevance and highest priorities.
 - Question 26/27: 26: Focus on general influence in process with question 26 and use question 27 to clarify decision-making power.

Appendix 6 – Sample letter for direct contacts

*Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.*



DBA Thesis

Justin Tipke

Cover letter for direct contacts

Version addressed via e-mail:

Subject: DBA Thesis – Justin Tipke – Support for data collection

Dear [first & last name],

Today, however, I am writing to you because of a personal concern.

Like you, I share your enthusiasm for German engineering and B2B marketing. Therefore, some time ago I decided to pursue a doctoral study as a part-time (and independent of STILL) DBA program at the University of Worcester.

My research project is related to the operational challenges for the further development of marketing communication in the German mechanical engineering sector.

Currently, I am looking for interesting cases in which to conduct my data collection in the form of in-depth interviews and a partial document analysis in the form of organizational charts to understand related formal organizational structures and decision processes.

If you are interested in an exchange about this idea, or if you have any recommendations for companies, I would be pleased to hear from you.

With kind regards

Justin Tipke



Version for social media post:

Last year I shared the first insights and thoughts on my DBA thesis on LinkedIn. The goal of my doctorate is to gain more detailed insights into the operational challenges for the strategic further development of B2B marketing communications - with the aim, of course, of drawing up practical recommendations for action!

The theoretical foundation of the thesis has been established so far, so that the next most important part of the doctorate is now to follow: the data collection.

That's why I'm looking for companies from the German mechanical engineering sector that want to take their B2B marketing communication to the next level! Part of the data collection will be in-depth interviews as well as a document analysis in the form of a review of organizational charts to understand related formal organizational structures and decision processes.

Become part of my investigation or distribute the article to potentially interested parties!

I am looking forward for being contacted!

Thank you very much!

#research #b2bmarketing #marketing #strategy #communication

Appendix 7 – Sample letter for indirect contacts

*Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.*



DBA Thesis

Justin Tipke

Cover letter for indirect contacts

Subject: DBA Thesis – Justin Tipke – Support for data collection

Dear [first & last name],

after prior consultation, I am contacting you regarding my doctorate. My enthusiasm for German mechanical engineering and B2B marketing, coupled with the motivation to continuously develop myself, have prompted me to pursue my doctorate on a part-time basis (and independently of STILL GmbH).

The doctorate is part of the DBA program at the University of Worcester (England). My research project relates to the operational challenges for the further development of marketing communication in the German mechanical engineering sector.

To investigate the challenges, I am now looking for companies where I can conduct my data collection in the form of in-depth interviews as well as a document analysis in the form of a review of organizational charts to understand related formal organizational structures and decision processes.

For this purpose, I would be very pleased if you would distribute the research project within your network.

If you were to share the research project within your network, you could use the following draft email to do so:



Dear Sir or Madam,

The German mechanical engineering industry is subject to continuous developments. In addition to the globalization of value chains, customer approach or allocation is also becoming increasingly internationalized.

In this context, new and practical approaches to solving the resulting ever-increasing complexity of reaching customers and prospects represent added value for all of us.

In this context, I would like to use this e-mail to draw your attention to the doctoral study project of Mr. Justin Tipke and ask for your support.

Aim of the doctoral study:

The continuously increasing number of communication channels and the changing communication behavior of customers and prospects pose challenges for B2B marketing communication with often simultaneously reducing budgets and resources.

Of course, there are different theoretical and operational approaches to meet these challenges - but do the existing models help in internal decision making for further development and investment in marketing communication to sustainably increase customer loyalty and sales?

The study will provide insights into how strategic marketing communications decisions are made. The findings are to be used to derive practical recommendations for action to solve the challenges described in order to support the targeted further development of your B2B marketing.

I would be very pleased to receive your feedback and support!

With kind regards

Justin Tipke

Appendix 8 – Participation request e-mail draft for main contact

*Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.*



DBA Thesis

Justin Tipke

Support with data collection

Dear [first & last name],

I have received a request from a DBA student at the University of Worcester. The study is to examine the strategic marketing communication development of companies from the German industrial sector and is related to the operational challenges for the further development of marketing communication. Further details on the study are also available in the attached file "Information on the study".

Personally, I see the opportunity to also generate new and relevant insights for our marketing communication activities by supporting data collection.

The advantages for all of us are:

- a joint exchange and food for thought
- a receipt of research results exclusively directly after completion of the work
- a receipt of derived recommendations for action for our company

As someone who is involved in the strategizing, decision-making, development and implementation of marketing communications in our company, I would like to call on you to participate.

Participation is of course voluntary. It is an interview that lasts approximately 1.5 hours. If you are interested in participating, please contact the researcher by email (tipj2_18@uni.worc.ac.uk) for further details about the research project and procedure.

Kind regards

[first & Last name]

Interviewanfrage – Justin Tipke
Version 2: 10. August 2021

Appendix 9 – Info sheet: “Information about the study”

*Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.*



Information about the study

Research background and research gap

A multitude of constantly evolving communication channels and tools present B2B branding communication today with the challenge of communicating efficiently and effectively in an increasingly complex interaction with customers and prospects. The continuously expanding media and communication channel landscape over the last few years has contributed to a shift from one-way communication to two-way interaction between customers, external stakeholder groups and companies (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Cortez and Johnston, 2017).

Available budgets and resources are usually not similarly adapted to the changes. Instead, many marketing communication managers are faced with the challenge of managing the increasing complexity and multitude of communication channels with the same or even decreasing resources - financial and human (BVIK, 2020). The additionally increasing expectations of management for more transparency about the effectiveness of branding communication does not always necessarily simplify the decision about strategic measures for the further development of communication channels.

This dissertation addresses precisely this dilemma and aims to examine the discipline of B2B marketing in the German industrial sector in depth. With the help of an inductive research approach (case studies with in-depth interviews), insights are to be gained into how strategic decisions are made in marketing communication.

The aim of the study is thus not only to derive practical recommendations for action to solve the challenges described by identifying drivers. At the same time, the findings should facilitate the transfer of the growing marketing communication theory into practice by making it easier for researchers to formulate theoretical recommendations for action through an understanding of the procedure in corporate practice.

In this way, the research objectives described meet the demands from different directions for closing the gap between theory and practice. (Swani, Brown and Mudambi, 2020; Pandey, Na-yal and Rathore, 2020; Cortez and Johnston, 2017; Baumgarth, 2021).

Overall research questions

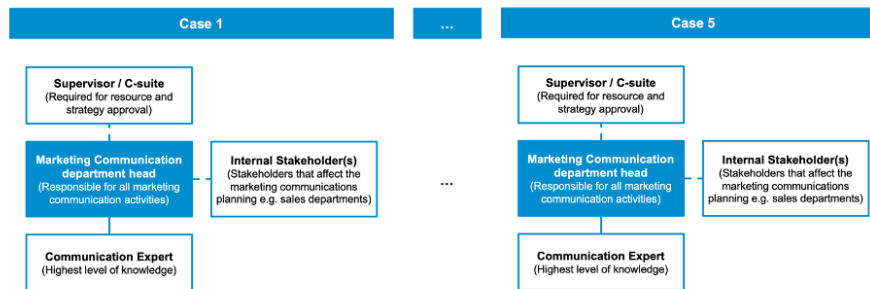
1. How can B2B strategic marketing communication within the industrial sector be optimized?
2. What are the aspects involved in the B2B marketing communication decision-making process?
3. How do organizational structures and personal skills of internal stakeholders effect the strategic marketing communication approach of a company?
4. Which information and/or knowledge is used to define the strategic marketing communication approach?



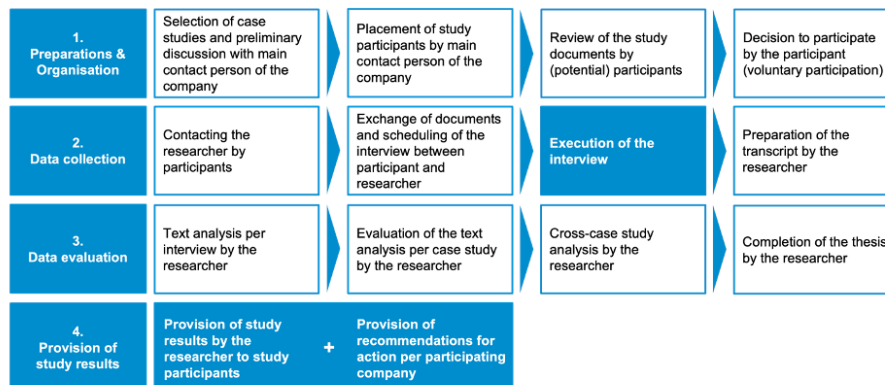
Derived research objectives

1. To generate a comprehensive understanding how a strategic B2B marketing communication planning within the mechanical engineering sector is done.
2. To identify decision-making process steps in order to define the strategic approaches for B2B marketing communication planning.
3. To identify which way organizational structures and personal skills of internal stakeholders determine a firm's strategic marketing communication approach.
4. To identify which information and/or knowledge is taken into consideration by the involved stakeholders to strategically define the firm's strategic marketing communication approach.

Participant composition



Data collection procedure





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Lemon, K. N. and Verhoef, P. C. (2016) ‘Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey’, *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), pp. 69-96. doi: 10/1509/jm.15.0420

Pandey, N., Nayal, P. and Rathore, A.S. (2020). Digital marketing for B2B organizations: structured literature review and future research directions. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*.

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Appendix 11 – Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Please note that the participants have received this document in the German languages.
This appendix is a translation made for the thesis document itself.



Version: 2

Date: 02.08.2021

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND PRIVACY NOTICE

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Strategic B2B marketing communication development in the German industry sector

Invitation

The University of Worcester engages in a wide range of research which seeks to provide greater understanding of the world around us, to contribute to improved human health and well-being and to provide answers to social, economic, and environmental problems.

We would like to invite you to take part in one of our research projects. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done, what it will involve for you, what information we will ask from you, and what we will do with that information.

We will in the course of this project be collecting personal information. The UK continues to be bound by the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016, which is now the "UK GDPR". Under UK GDPR, we are required to provide a justification (what is called a "legal basis") in order to collect such information. The legal basis for this project is "**task carried out in the public interest**". Since the personal information we will be collecting in this project is defined under GDPR as "special category data", that is more sensitive data requiring greater protection, we must identify an additional legal basis. This additional legal basis is "**necessary for scientific research in accordance with safeguards**".

You can find out more about our approach to dealing with your personal information at <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/visitor-privacy-notice.html>.

Please take time to read this document carefully.

What is the purpose of the research?

This study aims to gain insights into the challenges inherent in strategic marketing communications in B2B markets. Furthermore, the research aims to develop a conceptual framework to aid businesses in the management of their marketing communications.

Who is undertaking the research?

Name: Justin Tipke

Role / Position: Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) researcher

Who has oversight of the research?

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Panel for the College of Business, Psychology and Sport in line with the University's Research Ethics Policy. The University of Worcester acts as the "Data Controller" for personal data collected through its research projects and is subject to the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and our Data Protection Officer is Helen Johnstone (infoassurance@worc.ac.uk). For more on our approach to Information Assurance and Security visit: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/index.html>.

Why have I been invited to take part?

The study intends to examine the strategic marketing communication development of companies out of the German industrial sector. The focus here is on business-to-business transactions, i.e. companies than focus on business with other companies. You have received this invitation because you are involved in the strategizing, decision-making, development and implementation of marketing communications in such business environment.

To investigate how strategic marketing communication works in your company, interviews should be conducted with different participants. We are hoping to recruit between 4-5 participants per company / case for this study.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to take part in this study. You can withdraw from your participation at any time. Please take your time to decide and talk to others about it if you wish. Deciding to take part or not will not impact on the studies at the University. If you do decide to execute an interview, you can withdraw post-data collection up to five days after the interview. If you wish to have your interview data withdrawn, please contact us (our contact details are given below) with your participant number and your data will then not be used. You will be given this number in the introductory email when arranging the interview. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you agree to take part, the next steps will look as follows:

1) Decision to participate

It is now up to you to make the decision to voluntarily participate in the study from a personal perspective. You can withdraw from your participation at any time.

2) Clarification of the formalities

You have now received and read the present Participant Information Sheet as well as the consent form. If you decide voluntary to participate, please let the researcher know as described in the following paragraph.

3) Exchange of documents in preparation of the interview

The signed consent form must be emailed to: tipj2_18@uni.worc.ac.uk. *Please note that the exchange of data and information will only take place between you as*

participant and the researcher directly to ensure data privacy and anonymity. Please make use of the researchers contact details below, if any questions arise.

4) Organisation of the interview

As you are volunteering for participation, it is important that you feel comfortable and prepared for interview. Please feel free to ask any question with regard to the interview processing, data confidentiality, data processing or storage at any time. If you are interested in a pre-interview appointment, please indicate that as well.

If you feel to withdrawal your voluntary participation after clarification, you may do so at any time and without giving any reasons. The same applies to your interview data five days after the interview.

The date and time for the preliminary appointment or interview will depend on your availability. In general, the interview is scheduled for 1.5 hours and should ideally be conducted without deadline pressure. You should feel safe and comfortable to answer the questions open and without any external influences during the interview.

5) Conducting the interview

In preparation of the scheduled interview, an interview guide will be shared with you directly after scheduling the appointment. The guide will contain the main questions asked during the interview.

To prepare the interview, you are asked to read the interview guide as well as to consider an answer for yourself in advance to the interview – ideally 1-2 days before the interview. The preparation is especially helpful for the selection of examples you will be asked about during the interview.

The interview will follow the following steps:

1. Welcome
2. Review of information provided in advance (study background, process of in-depth interview and data handling, check completion of confirmation of participation and consent form)
3. Clarification of open questions previous to the interview if needed
4. Interview conducted in accordance with the interview guide provided
5. Closing

6) Interview recording

The appointment will be held as a video conference via Microsoft Teams.

Participants in the meeting are only you as interviewee and the researcher. To enable the analysis of the data, the complete appointment (including all five steps described above) will be recorded as a screen cast (audio and visual recording). The recording will not be shared and will only be used to create an anonymised transcript for the interview analysis. If you do not feel comfortable with an audio and visual recording, please let the researcher know in advance so that only audio will be recorded. The final transcript will be shared with you for approval before using it for the textual analysis.

The anonymised transcripts will be limited to the supervisors and examiners of the DBA thesis. After completion of the thesis, the data will be stored as described before in the document. As the data will be anonymised, neither individuals nor organisations will be recognisable in the dissertation.

What are the benefits for me in taking part?

Participating in this study aims to bridge the understanding of strategic B2B marketing communication between scholars and practitioners. The study results will contribute to developing a strategic marketing communication strategy and planning framework that will benefit communication managers.

As a participant, you can benefit from our joint exchange in the sharing of ideas and practice. The anonymised data collected will be compared with other cases and individual recommendations for action will be shared after completion of the DBA thesis. By this, your company and you as a person can benefit from the research.

Are there any risks for me if I take part?

The research does not include any specific risks. Their anonymity is guaranteed by using the interview and the transcript written from it with index instead of your name. Conclusions about your person and the company are excluded in this way. In addition, the data will be treated in accordance with the confidentiality regulations described before. Furthermore, care is taken throughout the data collection process by ensuring that information is exchanged exclusively between you and the researcher.

What will you do with my information?

Your personal data / information will always be treated confidentially; that is, it will not be shared with anyone. It will also not be shared unless it has been fully anonymised. The exception to this is where you tell us something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm.

During the project, all data / information will be kept securely in line with the University's Policy for the Effective Management of Research Data and its [Information Security Policy](#).

We will process your personal information for a range of purposes associated with the project primary of which are:

- To use your information along with information gathered from other participants in the research project to seek new knowledge and understanding that can be derived from the information we have gathered.
- To summarise this information in written form for the purposes of dissemination (through research reports, a thesis, conference papers, journal articles or other publications). Any information disseminated / published will be at a summary level and will be fully anonymised and there will be no way of identifying your individual personal information within the published results.
- To use the summary and conclusions arising from the research project for teaching and further research purposes. Any information used in this way will be at a summary level and will be fully anonymised. There will be no way of identifying your individual personal information from the summary information used in this way.

If you wish to receive a summary of the research findings or to be given access to any of the publications arising from the research, please contact us.

How long will you keep my data for?

The anonymised interview data will only be used in the context of this research project and destroyed after the thesis have been awarded.

How can I find out what information you hold about me?

You have certain rights in respect of the personal information the University holds about you.

For more information about Individual Rights under GDPR and how you exercise them please visit: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/requests-for-personal-data.html>.

What happens next?

Please keep this information sheet.

We will wait for at least 5 of days before asking for your decision on whether you would like to take part and will be delighted to answer any further questions you have about the research.

Our contact details are:

Justin Tipke
DBA research student
E-Mail: tipj2_18@worc.ac.uk
Phone: +49(0) 170 4957892

If you have any concerns about the project at this point or at any later date you may contact the researcher (contact as above) or you may contact the Supervisor / Principal Investigator / Project Lead:

Dr. Ria Wiid
Senior Lecturer
Department of Marketing and Enterprise
E-Mail: r.wiid@worc.ac.uk
Tel: +44(0) 1905 54 2503

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

If you would like to speak to an independent person who is not a member of the research team, please contact the University of Worcester, using the following details:

Secretary to Research Ethics Panel for College of Business, Psychology and Sport
University of Worcester
Henwick Grove
Worcester WR2 6AJ
ethics@worc.ac.uk

Appendix 12 – Example transcript – “Marketing Communication Responsible”

Participant 3-3 – Interview

Date of record: 28/01/2022

Researcher	00:02	Das erste, worum es ja immer so ein bisschen bei mir geht, ist die Frage der Vorstellung und vielleicht könntest du dich jetzt auch noch mal trotz des Vorgesprächs kurz vorstellen. Dort bitte den beruflichen Hintergrund und was deine Aufgaben aktuell im Unternehmen [Company 3] sind, erklären.	The first thing that is always a bit important for me is the question of introduction and maybe you could introduce yourself again despite the preliminary talks. Please explain your professional background and what your current tasks are in the company [Company 3].
Participant 3-3	00:20	Okay, also Name ist [Participant 3-3]. Ich bin in der Kommunikationsabteilung der [Name of Business Unit]. Die [Name of Business Unit] ist eine Business Unit innerhalb der DI, also der [Name Business Unit]. Ich bin da Macro Manager und leite zugleich noch ein Subteam innerhalb der Kommunikation. In meinem Verantwortungsbereich fällt Branchen Kommunikation genauso wie Produktkommunikation. Bei mir sind praktisch so Themen verortet wie [Product segment], [Product segment], dann [Product segment] innerhalb der Branchen einfach. Das ist eine ganz große Bandbreite, von [Industry] über [Industry] bis [Industry] haben wir alles mit dabei.	Okay, so name is [Participant 3-3]. I am in the communication department of the [Name of Business Unit]. The [Name of Business Unit] is a business unit within DI, which is the [Name of Business Unit]. I am the Macro Manager there and also lead a sub-team within Communications. My area of responsibility includes sector communication as well as product communication. I am responsible for topics such as [product segment], [product segment], then [product segment] within the sectors. That's a very wide range, from [industry] to [industry] to [industry], we have everything.
Researcher	01:21	Dann wird es ja auf jeden Fall nicht langweilig, bei der Vielzahl an Produkten. Wie lange bist du jetzt genau schon in dieser Position als Teamleiter?	Then it definitely won't be boring, given the large number of products. How long have you been in this position as team leader?
Participant 3-3	01:31	Seit Februar 2019 sind es ungefähr drei Jahre.	It's been about three years since February 2019.
Researcher	01:39	Neben den beruflichen Aufgaben, die du gerade beschrieben hast, vielleicht noch mal zurückgefragt: Gibt es auch in puncto akademische Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten, bei dir einen Kommunikationshintergrund oder wie bist du auf diese Funktionen jetzt gekommen?	In addition to the professional tasks that you have just described, perhaps I could ask you again: Do you also have a communications background in terms of academic knowledge and skills, or how did you come to take on these functions now?
Participant 3-3	01:54	Teils. Also von der Ausbildung her habe ich mein Abi gemacht, habe dann zwei Semester soziale Arbeit studiert, habe dann schnell gemerkt, dass ist nichts für mich. Ich habe dann eine Sprachschule absolviert, da auch einen Abschluss gemacht in Spanisch und Englisch. Dann habe ich mich entschieden BWL zu studieren und hatte da die Schwerpunkte Marketing und Personalwesen und habe schon immer während dem Studium als Werkstudent bei [Company 3] gearbeitet, um mein Studium zu finanzieren. Dadurch hatte ich den Fuß in der Tür und bin da dann auch mit reingewischt.	Partly. So from my education, I did my A-levels, then studied social work for two semesters, but quickly realised that it wasn't for me. Then I went to a language school and got a degree in Spanish and English. Then I decided to study business and specialised in marketing and human resources, and I always worked as a student trainee at [Company 3] during my studies to finance my studies. Consequently, I got a foot in the door, and I slipped into it.
Researcher	02:42	Schön. Ich sage mal so, ich hab noch zwei weitere Fragen, die so ein bisschen für die generelle Einordnung sind. Die Kollegen	Fine. I'll put it this way, I have two more questions that are a bit for the general classification. Of course, your

von dir haben natürlich auch die gleichen Fragen beantwortet. Das heißt, auch wenn ich diese Frage jetzt stelle, ist es, sage ich mal eher von der Motivation her, dass du noch mal vielleicht deine Sichtweise darauf beschreibst und deswegen halt nicht wundern, falls du jetzt sagst: "Mensch, warum stellt er die Frage dann noch mal, wenn er schon zwei Interviews hatte?". Du hast gerade nämlich schon kurz die organisatorische Einordnung generell beschrieben, wo du im Konzern verortet bist. Was mich jetzt noch mal konkreter interessieren würde, wären zum einen die Schnittstellen, die du zum Beispiel auch mit deinem Team zu den anderen Kolleginnen hast, mit denen ich das Interview geführt hatte und vielleicht auch noch ein wenig mehr beschreibst, wie du dein Team strukturiert hast, ob es da Spezifikation gibt oder ob ihr als Kollektiv breit aufgestellt sind.

Participant 3-3 03:40

Na ja, also Schnittpunkte zu den Kolleginnen, mit denen du gesprochen hast, dass du mit [Participant 3-2] gesprochen, mit [Participant 3-1]. [Participant 3-1] ist meine Chefin ja, deswegen gibt es da gewisse Schnittmenge. [Participant 3-2] ist ja im Team von [Participant 3-1] und betreut das Thema Innovationskommunikation. Das hat sie jetzt erst übernommen, ist also relativ neu. Mit [Participant 3-2] habe ich relativ wenig Schnittpunkte. Sie hat davor das Thema Tier gemacht, da hat man mehr Schnittpunkte, weil wenn man natürlich die Tier-Story, hier halt [Product segment], passt bei uns alles perfekt zusammen in der [Product segment] und zwar vertikal als auch horizontal. Das ist natürlich etwas, was wir so als unsere Lead Story bei der [Business Unit] sehen und das müssen wir natürlich dann eben in der Branchen Kommunikation und einer Produkt-Kommunikation. (-) Das sind die Schnittstellen, die es hier gibt. Mein Team habe ich wirklich nach Themenverantwortung strukturiert. Also bei mir betreut eben die eine Kollegin zum Beispiel die Branche [Industry] und [Industry]. Die nächste Kollegin betreut das Thema [Product segment]. Also wir sind da nach Topics aufgestellt, also nach Branchen und Produkten. Was wir aber zugleich im Team auch haben (--): Wir haben alle so ein Steckenpferd, sage ich mal. Bei mir ist es zum Beispiel das Thema Analytics und Demand Generation und das ist etwas, wofür ich mich interessiere und wo ich dann entsprechend im Team dafür sorgt, dass da bei uns im gesamten Team, also über alle drei Subteams hinaus, ein Austausch ist. Wir haben dazu regelmäßige Austauschrunden, wo wir

colleagues have also answered the same questions. That means that even if I ask this question now, it is, I would say, more of a motivation for you to perhaps describe your perspective on it again, so don't be surprised if you now say: "Man, why is he asking the question again if he has already had two interviews? You've just briefly described the general organisational classification, where you are located in the group. What I would now be interested in more specifically would be, on the one hand, the interfaces that you have, for example, with your team to the other colleagues with whom I conducted the interview and perhaps also describe a little more how you have structured your team, whether there are specifications or whether you are broadly positioned as a collective.

Well, the points of intersection with the colleagues you spoke with, that you spoke with [Participant 3-2], with [Participant 3-1]. [Participant 3-1] is my boss, so there is a certain overlap. [Participant 3-2] is in [Participant 3-1]'s team and is in charge of innovation communication. She has only just taken over, so she is relatively new. I have relatively few points of intersection with [Participant 3-2]. Before that, she was in charge of the Tier segment, so there are more points of intersection, because if you look at the Tier story, in this case the [product segment], everything fits together perfectly in the [product segment], both vertically and horizontally. That is of course something that we see as our lead story in the [business unit] and that we must of course then include in sector communication and product communication. (-) These are the interfaces that exist here. I have really structured my team according to subject responsibility. For example, one of my colleagues is responsible for the [industry] and [industry] sectors. The next colleague is responsible for the topic [Product segment]. So we are structured according to topics, i.e. according to sectors and products. But what else we have in the team at the same time we also have [--] in the team: We all have a hobbyhorse, I would say. For me, for example, it's the topic of analytics and demand generation, and that's something I'm interested in and where I then make sure in the team that there's an exchange in our entire team, i.e. across all three sub-teams. We have regular exchange rounds where

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Researcher	05:42	Best Practices zeigen, wo man einfach auch mal Fragen stellen kann und so weiter. Also wir sind eigentlich den Themen fest zugeordnet und haben aber so auch interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit. Zum Stichwort Analytics: Da hatte ich aus den anderen Gesprächen verstanden, dass es ja auch hinsichtlich der Auswahl an Tools und wie man sich weiterentwickelt in dem Gesamtkonzern auch noch mal einen Kommunikationsbereich gibt, der durchaus auch sozusagen dazu da ist, Dinge mit auszutesten weiterzuentwickeln. Ist das dann auch eine starke Schnittstelle, wenn du hier so einen Fokus auf KPIs und Ähnliches hast?	we show best practices, where you can simply ask questions and so on. So, we are actually firmly assigned to the topics, but we also have interdisciplinary cooperation. On the subject of analytics: I had understood from the other discussions that there is also a communications department in the entire group with regard to the selection of tools and how to develop further, which is also there to test things out. Is that also a strong interface when you have such a focus on KPIs and the like?
Participant 3-3	06:13	Ja, also da gibt es natürlich Schnittstellen im Unternehmen. Wie auch schon gesagt, sind wir die Kommunikationsabteilung der einen Business Unit. Wir haben ja noch [quantity] Schwestern Business Units, die auch alle ihre eigene Kommunikationsteams haben. Da haben wir natürlich auch noch auf Division Ebene ein Kommunikationsteam und dann auch noch mal auf Unternehmensebene sozusagen ein Kommunikationsteam. Überall sind natürlich wieder Leute, die sich mit dem Thema Analytics beschäftigen. Ja, ich habe da Austausch mit manchen intensiver, mit manchen weniger intensiv.	Yes, of course there are interfaces within the company. As I already said, we are the communication department of one business unit. We still have [quantity] sister business units, which also all have their own communication teams. Of course, we also have a communication team at the division level and then another communication team at the company level, so to speak. Of course, there are people everywhere who deal with the topic of analytics. Yes, I have exchanges with some of them more intensively, with others less intensively.
Researcher	06:54	Letzte Frage zu dem Intro, wenn man so will. Die Frage ist: Wie nimmst du die Organisationskultur bei euch wahr? Organisationskultur verstehe ich quasi solche Fragestellungen wie Fehlerkultur, Machtdistanz oder ist ein sehr starkes Silo Denken ausgeprägt? Seid ihr vielleicht da dran, das vielleicht aufzubrechen? Wie lebst du das vielleicht auch in deinem Team?	Last question about the intro, if you like. The question is: How do you perceive the organisational culture? By organisational culture I mean questions like error culture, power distance or is there a very strong silo thinking? Are you perhaps working on breaking this down? How do you live this in your team?
Participant 3-3	07:27	Also ich würde sagen, da würde ich noch einen Unterschied machen, und zwar zwischen uns jetzt rein in der Kommunikationsabteilung der [Business Unit]. Es ist gigantisch. Also da gibt es so was wie Silo Denken, verhärtete Machtstrukturen und sonst was gibt es da nicht. Also das ist wirklich was, wo ich sagen kann, wo ich Merkmal wie mein Umfeld, wenn man ein Umfeld entsprechend gestaltet und man sich selbst weiterentwickelt und wie auch andere sich dadurch weiterentwickeln, das erlebe ich so das erste Mal und das ist super. Ansonsten gibt es bei uns auch das Thema Kulturwandel, das ist bei uns ein Thema.	So, I would say that I would still make a difference between us now purely in the communication department of the [business unit]. It's gigantic. So, there is no such thing as silo thinking, hardened power structures or anything else. So that's really something where I can say that I have a characteristic like my environment, when you create an environment accordingly and you develop yourself and how others develop through it, that's what I'm experiencing for the first time and that's great. Apart from that, there is also the issue of cultural change, which is a topic for us.
Researcher	08:14	Mhm.	Mhm.
Participant 3-3	08:20	(-) Ich denke das ist ein Thema, was unheimlich viele Aspekte hat. Wenn man versucht, irgendwie organisatorisch einen Kulturwandel zu initiieren, dann ist das	(-) I think this is a topic that has many aspects. If you try to somehow initiate a cultural change in the organisation, I

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		glaube ich ziemlich schwierig, weil es einfach wirklich ans Mindset von jedem Einzelnen geht.	think it is quite difficult because it really affects the mindset of each individual.
Researcher	08:46	Ja.	Yes.
Participant 3-3	08:47	Da sehe ich bei uns definitiv den Wunsch unserer Leitung nach einem Kulturwandel, nach flachen Hierarchien, nach Diversity Stärken und so weiter. Gleichzeitig sind eben auch noch in einigen strategischen Positionen Leute, die halt einfach in der alten Welt verhaftet sind. Da stößt dann irgendwo so dieser Wunsch dann irgendwo doch wieder an Grenzen. So ist meine subjektive Wahrnehmung.	I definitely see our management's desire for a cultural change, for flat hierarchies, for diversity strengths and so on. At the same time, there are still people in some strategic positions who are simply stuck in the old world. So somewhere along the line, this desire comes up against its limits. That is my subjective perception.
Researcher	09:27	Also durch die Reihe weg hat mir jede deiner Kolleginnen auch was ähnliches geschildert und ich finde es persönlich sehr eindrucksvoll, wie stark ihr gerade an dem Thema dran seid. Egal mit wem ich jetzt bisher, auch in den Vorgesprächen in anderen Cases unterwegs war, war das Thema gar nicht so in der Form ausgeprägt. Von daher finde ich das sehr spannend, gerade wenn es halt auch durch Führungskräfte initiiert ist und ihr das bei euch so lebt, dann scheint das ja auch hoffentlich dazu zu führen, dass ihr jeden Tag mit Spaß zur Arbeit geht und da halt diese Lernkultur in Anführungszeichen auch mit weiterentwickelt. Wenn du sagst -	Everyone of your colleagues has told me something similar and I personally find it very impressive how strongly you are working on this topic. No matter who I have been with so far, even in the preliminary talks in other cases, the topic was not so pronounced in this form. That's why I find it very exciting, especially if it is also initiated by managers and you live it in this way, then it seems to hopefully lead to you enjoying going to work every day and developing this learning culture in inverted commas. When you say -
Participant 3-3	10:10	Ja, ist es wirklich. In unserem Umfeld, also jetzt nur für die [Communication Department] gesprochen. Also es ist wirklich ein tolles Umfeld, in dem wir uns da bewegen.	Yes, it really is. In our environment, just speaking for the [Communication Department]. So, it's really a great environment in which we move.
Researcher	10:21	Was für einen Stellenwert hat denn Kommunikation bei euch in der Business Unit?	How important is communication for you in the business unit?
Participant 3-3	10:27	Kommunikation ist tatsächlich eine Funktion, die als sehr wichtig erachtet wird, was ganz schön ist. Ich weiß nicht, was die Kolleginnen gesagt haben: Wir waren früher anders organisiert. Ich habe schon gesagt, es gibt praktisch die Business Units und darüber gibt es die, die Division und wir waren früher praktisch dieser Division Communication zugeordnet, die sich halt um die Business Unit Kommunikation kümmern.	Communication is actually a function that is considered very important, which is quite nice. I don't know what the female colleagues said: We used to be organised differently. I have already said that there are practically the business units and above that there is the division and we used to be practically assigned to this Communication Division, which takes care of the Communication Business Unit.
Researcher	10:54	Ja.	Yes.
Participant 3-3	10:55	Wir waren rein disziplinarisch, nicht in der BU. Wir waren praktisch Dienstleister. Das hat sich vor paar Jahren geändert und man hat die Kommunikationsabteilung tatsächlich in der BU verortet. Man hat praktisch die Division scheinbar um ein paar Leute da gekürzt und eben der BU zugeschlagen. Das ist für uns sehr positiv. So empfinde ich das zumindest, weil einfach der Schulterschluss dann mit der mit der BU Leitung und mit dem Geschäft sehr viel enger ist als das früher war. Das merke ich, dass es sehr geschätzt wird,	We were purely disciplinary, not BU. We were practically service providers. That changed a few years ago and the communications department was actually placed in the BU. The department seems to have been reduced by a few people and put under the BU. That is very positive for us. At least, that's how I feel, because there is much closer cooperation with the BU management and with the business than there used to be. I notice that what we do is very much appreciated and

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Researcher	11:53	<p>was wir leisten und dass wir ein wichtiger Teil in der Organisation sind.</p> <p>Ja, verstehe. Wie äußert sich das dann vielleicht im alltäglichen Arbeiten? Also ist es so, dass ihr entsprechend eng verknüpft mit der Leitung seid?</p>	<p>that we are an important part of the organisation.</p> <p>Yes, I see. How does that manifest itself in the daily work? So, is it the case that you are closely linked to the leadership?</p>
Participant 3-3	12:07	<p>Zum Beispiel in [Participant 3-1] Team, gibt es eben jemand, der sich um den Social Media Account natürlich auch von unserem CEO kümmert, als Beispiel. Das heißt, da sind wir wirklich direkt an der Leitungsebene dran. Auch interne Kommunikation, dass man entsprechend auch das, was von der Leitung eben wie jetzt wieder Beispiel Kulturwandel, ja irgendwie in eine Organisation eingetragen werden und kommuniziert werden muss. Da sind wir natürlich ganz stark mit involviert.</p>	<p>For example, in the [Participant 3-1] team, there is someone who looks after the social media account of our CEO, as an example. This means that we are really directly involved with the management level. Internal communication, too, so that what the management wants to achieve, such as cultural change, must somehow be entered into an organisation and communicated. Of course, we are very much involved in this.</p>
Researcher	12:42	<p>Spannend. Wenn ihr jetzt diesen Transformations- und Mind Change-Prozess gerade durchlebt, dann macht es ja auch eine gewisse Ausrichtung für die Zukunft. Das bringt mich so ein bisschen zu der Frage: Wo siehst du denn zukünftig Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen, die ein Kommunikationsbereich aufbauen muss?</p>	<p>Exciting. If you are currently going through this transformation- and mind-change-process, then it also makes a certain orientation for the future. That brings me a bit to the question: Where do you see future skills and competences that a communication sector needs to build up?</p>
Participant 3-3	13:09	<p>(--) Wo fange ich an? Ich glaube damit, dass vor 10 Jahren wie ich angefangen habe, da haben wir einen Kommunikationsplan entwickelt. Der hat zu einem sehr großen Teil aus dem Printanzeigen Plan bestanden, die das dann praktisch übers Jahr dann geplant hast und nach und nach geschaltet. Deine KPI war da der Tausender Kontakt Preis. Jetzt ist es so: Wir nutzen andere Kanäle, sind natürlich digital unterwegs und da hat man sofort die Möglichkeit anhand von Daten zu sehen, wie erfolgreich eine Maßnahme war oder nicht. Das es so der Hintergrund. Jetzt ist es aber auch so, dass wir natürlich mit einer Vielzahl von Daten konfrontiert sind. Wir bekommen Daten über unsere Website Dashboards rein, die sind anonymisiert, das heißt, die sind nicht einzeln auf den Nutzer heruntergebrochen. Wir bekommen Daten aber auch praktisch rein, wo wir tatsächlich sehen, dass die wirklich auf den Nutzer hinuntergebrochen sind, wie zum Beispiel, ob sich jemand ein Webinar angeschaut hat oder nicht, weil er muss er sich dafür registrieren. Dann haben wir Daten aufgrund der verschiedenen Tools, die wir nutzen. Für Social Media nutzen wir zum Beispiel ein Tool, das heißt Sprinkler. Darin planen und führen wir gerade Kampagnen aus. Da kommen auch wieder Daten rein. Das heißt, wo wir früher eigentlich gar nichts hatten, außer dem Tausender Kontaktpreis, haben wir eine Vielzahl von Daten und müssen aber da irgendwie es schaffen, die zu interpretieren und dann</p>	<p>(--) Where do I start? I think that 10 years ago, when I started, we developed a communication plan. It consisted to a large extent of the print ad plan, which you then planned practically over the course of the year and placed bit by bit. Your KPI was the thousand contact price. Now it's like this: we use other channels, are of course digital, and you can immediately see on the basis of data how successful a measure was or was not. That is the background. But now it is also the case that we are naturally confronted with a multitude of data. We receive data via our website dashboards, which are anonymised, that is, they are not broken down individually to the user. But we also get data where we actually see that it is really broken down to the user, such as whether someone has watched a webinar or not, because they have to register for it. Then we have data because of the different tools that we use. For social media, for example, we use a tool called Sprinkler. We are currently planning and running campaigns in it. That's where the data comes in again. That means that where we used to have nothing at all, apart from the price per thousand contacts, we have a lot of data and have to somehow manage to interpret it and then think about what I can derive from this data for my communication plan. That's why I think it's so important to make use of this data jungle and to</p>

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		<p>entsprechend wieder uns zu überlegen, was leite ich aus dieser Datenlage jetzt für mein Kommunikations-Plan ab. Deswegen sehe ich es da als ganz wichtig an, dass man in diesem Daten-Dschungel trotzdem nutzt und all die richtigen Ableitungen zieht. Das ist für mich so ein ganz starkes Zukunftsthema, weil ich glaube, wenn du die Daten richtig nutzt, dann wirst du in deiner Kommunikation immer zielgerichteter werden. Das heißt, die Zielgruppen werden immer spezifischer und immer kleiner und du könntest theoretisch immer zielgerichteter deine Zielgruppen praktisch kommunikativ beeinflussen.</p>	<p>draw all the right conclusions. For me, this is a very strong topic for the future, because I believe that if you use the data correctly, you will become more and more targeted in your communication. That means that the target groups will become more and more specific and smaller and smaller, and you could theoretically influence your target groups in a more and more targeted way.</p>
Researcher	15:47	<p>Ja, da bin ich total d'accord. Hat mich in den letzten Jahren durchaus auch mit bewegt und da hattest du zwei Dinge angesprochen, auf die ich gerne noch mal eine Rückfrage stellen wollen würde. Du hattest eben angesprochen, dass mit den Jahren zum einen ja die Anzahl an Kommunikationskanälen bei euch größer geworden ist. Die Kollegen hatten das schon geschildert, dass ihr nahezu die gesamte Spielwiese an Kommunikationskanälen ja fast mit bedient, natürlich abhängig von der Kampagne, Zielgruppe und so weiter und so fort. Aber das führt ja auch ein wenig dazu, dass ihr zum einen die Herausforderung habt, einen integrierteren Kommunikationsansatz zu fahren, damit entlang der Customer Journey, entlang der Touchpoints vielleicht auch eine konsistente Kommunikation ist. In dem Zusammenhang hätte ich die Frage wie geht ihr dann an so eine Datenanalyse heran? Im Endeffekt geht es ja dann darum, dass ich im besten Fall einen Kunden über mehrere Touchpoints auch erreiche, bis ich dann irgendwann vielleicht zu einem Sales, zu irgendeiner Art und Weise an Conversion komme. Das kann sehr unterschiedlich sein. Das bringt auch eine gewisse Komplexität wieder damit rein. Das heißt, es sind ja nicht nur die Fähigkeit des Analytischen, sondern es ist ja auch das Plattform übergreifende Verständnis zu den Mechanismen. Deswegen würde mich das wirklich spannend interessieren, wie ihr da dann herangeht.</p>	<p>Yes, I totally agree. It has also moved me in recent years, and you mentioned two things that I would like to ask about again. You just mentioned that the number of communication channels has increased over the years. The colleagues have already described that you almost serve the entire playground of communication channels, of course depending on the campaign, target group and so on and so forth. But this also leads to the fact that on the one hand you have the challenge of driving a more integrated communication approach, so that along the customer journey, along the touchpoints, there is perhaps also consistent communication. In this context, I would like to ask how you approach such a data analysis? The bottom line is that, in the best case scenario, I reach a customer via several touchpoints until, at some point, I perhaps reach a sale or some kind of conversion. That can be very different. That also brings a certain complexity back into it. In other words, it's not just the ability to analyse, but also the cross-platform understanding of the mechanisms. That's why I would be really interested to hear how you approach this.</p>
Participant 3-3	17:25	<p>Da habe ich noch tausend Fragezeichen im Kopf. Muss ich ganz ehrlich sagen. Womit wir jetzt gestartet haben waren in den letzten Jahren sogenannte Demand Generation Kampagnen. Das heißt, wir haben wirklich uns ein Thema überlegt, wo wir wissen, dass es die Zielgruppe da draußen bewegt. Als Beispiel: Ich betreue auch das Thema Maschinensicherheit. Maschinensicherheit ist unheimlich</p>	<p>I still have a thousand question marks in my head. I have to be honest with you. What we started with in the last few years were so-called demand generation campaigns. That means we have really thought about a topic where we know that it moves the target group out there. As an example: I also look after the topic of machine safety. Machine safety is incredibly complex</p>

komplex und wichtig, weil eine Maschine, die du baust, muss sicher sein. Das heißt, wenn jemand das später bedient, darf der sich wieder die Hand abhacken oder absägen oder sonst was, sondern da muss einfach sichergestellt sein, dass da dann nix passiert. Das heißt, du musst einen gewissen Prozess durchlaufen. Du musst dir überlegen, welche Risiken gibt es denn überhaupt bei deiner Maschine, die du da erstellen möchtest. Wie könntest du die Risiken mindern? Wie dokumentierst du das, dass du das Risiko gemindert hast. Bist du dann entsprechend auf dem passenden Level, so dass du am Schluss dann das CE-Kennzeichen bekommst? Und dieser Prozess, der ist zwar in Richtlinien so beschrieben, dass dort steht, dass man einen strukturierten Prozess durchführen muss. Das ist ein weites Feld. Das heißt, was wir gemacht haben in der Kampagne: Wir haben sozusagen einen Leitfaden entwickelt, wie du eben in einem strukturierten Prozess zur sicheren Maschine kommst. Du hast Steps eins, zwei, drei, vier. Und wir haben für diese verschiedenen Steps jeweils Infomaterial zusammengestellt. In Form von Videos, in Form von Material, was man sich runterladen hat können. Wir haben praktisch das dann praktisch zu einer Demand Generation Kampagne zusammengeführt. Das Ziel war Kontakte zu generieren und dann eben diese Informationen, wie viel er sich von der Kampagne angeschaut hat, wie viele Assets die sich runtergeladen haben dann eben an den Vertrieb zu übergeben. Wenn man z.B. sagt, jemand hat sich drei Videos angeschaut, dann hat er gesteigerten Bedarf nach einer [Product]-Lösung. Deswegen pushen wir das an den Vertrieb. Ja.

Researcher 19:52
Participant 3-3 19:54

Das ist etwas, womit wir eben gerade experimentieren. Das hat seine Grenzen, definitiv. Wenn du nur bestimmte Dinge tracken kannst und du siehst meinetwegen, wenn du jetzt in so einer mehrwöchigen Kampagne, wo praktisch jede Woche eben dann derjenige, der sich für die Kampagne registriert hat, eingeladen wird, welche Steps er gemacht hat. Hier ist dein Step 1. Schau dir das Video an und lade das Material runter. Das heißt, was wir sehen konnten ist, ob er die E-Mail aufgemacht hat. Was wir schon wieder nicht Personen spezifisch sehen konnten war, wie lange er sich zum Beispiel das Video angeschaut hat. Was wir auch nicht Person spezifisch anschauen können ist, ob er sich das Dokument runtergeladen hat. Das heißt, man hat technisch da einfach nur Grenzen. Wir hätten gern den identifizierten

and important, because a machine that you build has to be safe. That means that if someone operates it later, they can chop off their hand again or saw it off or something else, but it simply has to be ensured that nothing happens. That means you have to go through a certain process. You have to think about what risks occur with the machine you want to create. How can you reduce the risks? How do you document that you have reduced the risk? Are you then at the appropriate level so that at the end you get the CE mark? And this process is described in the guidelines in such a way that it says you have to carry out a structured process. That is a broad field. In other words, what we did in the campaign was to develop a guideline, so to speak, on how to arrive at a safe machine in a structured process. You have steps one, two, three, four. And we have compiled information material for each of these different steps. In the form of videos, in the form of material that you can download. We then practically combined this into a demand generation campaign. The goal was to generate contacts and then to pass on this information, how much of the campaign they viewed, how many assets they downloaded, to the sales department. If you say, for example, that someone has watched three videos, then they have an increased need for a [product] solution. That's why we push this to the sales department.

Yes.

That's something we're experimenting with right now. It has its limits, definitely. If you can only track certain things and you can see, for example, in a campaign that lasts several weeks, where practically every week the person who has registered for the campaign is invited to see which steps he or she has taken. Here is your Step 1. Watch the video and download the material. That is, what we could see is if he has opened the email. Again, what we couldn't see person specifically was how long he watched the video, for example. What we also cannot see specifically for a person is whether he downloaded the document. That is, technically you just have limits there. We would like to have the identified prospect or contact, but, also because of the General Data Protection

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		Prospect oder Kontakt, aber, auch aufgrund der Datenschutzgrundverordnung, wird er immer ein Teil unsichtbar sein. Der wird immer wieder für uns ins Unsichtbare abtauchen. Man muss irgendwie versuchen, den trotzdem durch entsprechende Tools, die man nutzen kann, den möglichst für uns transparent trotzdem zu machen, um dann wieder Rückschlüsse lassen zu können.	Regulation, he will always be partly invisible. They will always disappear into the invisible for us. We have to somehow try to make them as transparent as possible for us by using the appropriate tools, so that we can draw conclusions again.
Researcher	21:40	Ja, also das hat mich auch jetzt über den normalen Fragebogen hinaus interessiert, weil ich genau eine ähnliche Herausforderung hatte. Wie gesagt, ich habe ja zum Jahreswechsel auch meine Funktion und Rolle noch etwas verändert gehabt. Zwei Sachen vielleicht da aus dem, was ich mal so herausgefunden habe: sagt dir das Tool On24 etwas?	Yes, that interested me beyond the normal questionnaire, because I had a similar challenge. As I said, I also changed my function and role somewhat at the turn of the year. Maybe two things from what I found out: does the On24 tool mean anything to you?
Participant 3-3	22:05	Ja, aber wir arbeiten mit 23. Das Webinar Tool ist On24, oder?	Yes, but we work with 23. The webinar tool is On24, right?
Researcher	22:12	Genau. On24 hatten wir uns mal angeschaut innerhalb des Konzerns, weil das so eine Art Online-Plattform/Ökosystem für den Kunden schafft. Also du baust dir quasi ein Kundenportal auf und jeder Touchpoint innerhalb dieses Portals wird aufgeschlüsselt auf den Kunden. Das heißt, wenn du zum Beispiel dem Kunden x Zugang einrichtest, weil er sagt "Mensch, das hat mich jetzt gerade interessiert, ich will mir hier mal das Video anschauen.", dann muss er sich vorher einloggen und du siehst halt konkret jeden einzelnen Zeitpunkt, wo er sich eingeloggt. Du siehst, welches Dokument er sich runterlädt. Du siehst, welches on demand Webinar, Video oder was auch immer er sich wann angeschaut hat. Es gibt tatsächlich auch bei On24 dann eine Schnittstelle in Richtung Salesforce, so dass du halt quasi an sich sämtliche Interaktionen, vielleicht auch die Fragen, die er während des Webinar gestellt hast, direkt da alles mit verknüpft hast. Fand ich war sehr powerful, aber es war im Rahmen unserer Möglichkeiten finanziell nicht drin. Das andere, was ich gerne zumindest noch mal so erzählen wollen würde, ist dieses Tracken entlang der Customer Journey oder das des Purchase Funnels. Das war eine Fragestellung, die mich ursprünglich mal initiiert hatte, um über diese Thesis, das Promotionsvorhaben, nachzudenken. Bei uns war primär diese Forderung: "Was bringt das eigentlich, wenn wir salopp gesprochen noch mal 100 Euro mehr in Social Media investieren?". Da sind wir halt immer in Erklärungsnot gegangen. Dann haben wir halt gesagt, dass für uns ganz schematahaft: Du hast deine fünf bis acht verschiedenen Steps in der Customer Journey im Purchase Funnel, wie auch	Exactly. We looked at On24 within the group because it creates a kind of online platform/ecosystem for the customer. So, you build a customer portal and every touchpoint within this portal is broken down to the customer. That means, for example, if you set up x access for the customer because he says, "Hey, I'm interested in this right now, I want to take a look at the video here," then he has to log in beforehand and you see every single time he logs in. You see which document he downloads. You see which on-demand webinar, video or whatever he has watched and when. On24 also has an interface to Salesforce so that you can link all interactions, perhaps even the questions he asked during the webinar, directly with everything. I thought it was very powerful, but it wasn't financially feasible within the scope of our possibilities. The other thing I would like to tell you about, at least again, is this tracking along the customer journey or the purchase funnel. That was a question that originally prompted me to think about this thesis, the dissertation project. Our primary demand was: "What's the point of investing another 100 euros in social media, to put it bluntly? We were always in need of explanations. Then we just said that for us, quite schematically: you have your five to eight different steps in the customer journey in the purchase funnel, whatever you want to call it. Actually, you could make a cross-section like this and say: For everything where the channels pay attention to awareness, because you want to initiate a dialogue somehow, you can

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immer man es nennen möchte. Eigentlich könnte man ja so einen Querschnitt machen und sagen: Für alles, wo die Kanäle auf Awareness drauf einzahlen, weil du irgendwie einen Dialog initiieren möchtest, da kann es ja zum einen sauber über alle Kanäle hinweg für eine Zielgruppe messen, wie groß ist die Konversion zur nächsten Phase. Das setzt natürlich voraus, dass du dann auch für Social Media und Awareness in dem Fall dein KPI hast, was du mit rein nimmst, zieht sich aber halt auch über alle anderen Kanäle hindurch. Bei einer Anzeige, die du irgendwo redaktionell schaltest, wäre dann natürlich wieder die Frage, ob es die Kontaktanzahl oder Auflagenstärke ist, die du erreichst oder nimmst du zum Beispiel als Standard-KPI einen QR Code mit rein, der auf weiteres Material verlinkt und das ist dann halt ein verlässliches Signal. Also das ist natürlich immer so ein bisschen wie die Frage, was nimmt man damit rein. Aber so haben wir das mal versucht, Step für Step aufzubauen und dann zumindest mal aus dem Querschnitt versucht herauszufinden, wie groß ist denn die Conversion und wo bricht sie ab und welcher der Kanäle hilft dann zum Beispiel in der Awareness oder Loyalty Phase oder wo auch immer von der höchsten Konversion sozusagen was voranzubringen. Ist dann vielleicht der Euro in einen Webinar, in eine Messe sinnvoller investiert als z.B. in ein TikTok oder Snapchat Beitrag oder was auch immer.

Participant 3-3 25:31

Was dabei wahrscheinlich in dem Fall noch einfacher war: Du warst beim Mittelständler, glaub ich, richtig?

Researcher 25:38

Genau. Also wir bedienen halt gesamt EMEA. Es geht ja auch um [Industry]. Das heißt, wir sind ja in nahezu jeder Branche in irgendeiner Art und Weise immer beteiligt, weil meistens geht es darum, Waren von A nach B innerbetrieblich zu bringen. Das macht die Anzahl der Stakeholder der Industrien auch sehr divers. Nichtsdestotrotz haben wir uns halt mal so auf drei/vier Haupt-Persona committed, wo wir gesagt haben, die passen halt regionsübergreifend und grundsätzlich auch in jede Industrie mit rein. Das ist quasi das, wonach wir versuchen, die Kommunikation auszurichten.

Participant 3-3 26:25

Bei [Company 3], also der Großkonzern, der steht uns natürlich auch manchmal im Weg, weil allein bei uns die Vertriebsstrukturen zu durchsteigen, ist super komplex. Wie du sagst, nutzt ihr On24. Wir haben zum Beispiel als Webinar Plattform On23 das mit unserem Marketing Automatisierungstool [Name] verknüpft.

measure cleanly across all channels for a target group, how big is the conversion to the next phase. Of course, this presupposes that you also have your KPI for social media and awareness in this case, but it also applies to all other channels. In the case of an advertisement that you place somewhere editorially, the question would of course be whether it is the number of contacts or circulation that you achieve, or do you include a QR code as a standard KPI that links to further material and that is then a reliable signal. So of course, it's always a bit like the question of what to include. But that's how we tried to build it up step by step and then at least tried to find out from the cross-section how big the conversion is and where it breaks off and which of the channels then helps, for example, in the awareness or loyalty phase or wherever to bring something forward from the highest conversion, so to speak. Is the euro invested in a webinar or a trade fair more sensible than, for example, in a TikTok or Snapchat post or whatever?

What was probably even easier in this case: You were at the medium-sized company, I think, right?

Exactly. We serve the whole of EMEA. It's also about [industry]. That means we are always involved in one way or another in almost every industry, because most of the time it's about getting goods from A to B within the company. That makes the number of stakeholders in the industries very diverse. Nevertheless, we have committed ourselves to three/four main personas, which we have said fit across regions and basically also into every industry. That is more or less what we try to base our communication on.

At [Company 3], the Corporate Group, of course, sometimes stands in our way, because it's super complex to get through the distribution structures at our company alone. As you say, you use On24. For example, we have On23 as a webinar platform that is linked to our marketing automation tool [name].

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		Genauso wir sind für das, was du gerade bei On24 beschrieben hast, gerade im Pilot. Das heißt [Name], dass wir testen, wo auch wieder die Daten in den [Marketing Automation Tool] fließen. Trotzdem hast du irgendwo eben bei uns jetzt in [Marketing Automation Tool] dann eine Datenflut und muss dann noch überlegen, wann der passende Zeitpunkt, tatsächlich einen Kontakt zu übergeben, ist.	Likewise, we're in the pilot right now for what you just described with On24. That means [name], which we are testing, where the data also flows into the [marketing automation tool]. Nevertheless, you have a flood of data somewhere in our [Marketing Automation Tool] and then you still have to think about when the right time is to actually transfer a contact.
Researcher	27:14	Ja.	Yes.
Participant 3-3	27:16	Unheimlich schwierig, aber spannend. Ich finde es voll cool, weil ich denke mir immer die Möglichkeiten, die man halt jetzt da hat, sich da bisschen auszutoben, die sind so voll vielfältiger als noch vor 10 oder 15 Jahren.	It's incredibly difficult, but exciting. I think it's really cool because I always think that the possibilities you have now to let off steam are so much more diverse than they were 10 or 15 years ago.
Researcher	27:30	Ja, genau. Ich bin auf jeden Fall vom Konstrukt her daran gescheitert, dass ich gesagt habe, das Thema ist zu komplex und so ein Kennzahlensystem zu entwickeln. Nun komme ich auf den eigentlichen Kern zurück, nämlich das Entscheidungsmanagement dahinter und der Entscheidungsprozess. Wie entscheidet man sich vielleicht für welche Kanäle und wie möchte man welche weiterentwickeln? Und um dann nicht hinten raus aus der Zeit zu kommen, vielleicht zur nächsten Frage mal wieder zurück. Was sind dann aus deiner Sicht die drei wichtigsten Kontaktpunkte bzw. Kommunikationskanäle.	Yes, exactly. In any case, I failed in terms of the construct because I said that the topic is too complex and to develop such a system of key figures. Now I come back to the actual core, namely the decision management behind it and the decision-making process. How do you decide which channels to use and how do you want to develop them? And in order not to run out of time at the end, maybe I'll come back to the next question. From your point of view, what are the three most important contact points or communication channels?
Participant 3-3	28:05	Kommunikationskanäle, die wichtigsten für uns jetzt?	Communication channels, the most important for us now?
Researcher	28:09	Genau.	Exactly.
Participant 3-3	28:09	Da würde ich sagen auf alle Fälle unser Web, also unsere Webseiten und dann Social Media als Zweite. Zusätzlich würde ich tatsächlich Google als sehr wichtig erachten.	I would definitely say our web, thus our websites, and then social media as the second. In addition, I would actually consider Google to be very important.
Researcher	28:26	Bei Social Media irgendein bestimmter Social Media Channel, oder?	For social media, any particular social media channel, right?
Participant 3-3	28:31	Ja, wenn im Thema Awareness ist es LinkedIn.	Yes, if in the topic of awareness it is LinkedIn.
Researcher	28:40	Okay. Gab es da einen Shift im Zuge der Corona-Pandemie?	Okay. Was there a shift in the time of the Corona pandemic?
Participant 3-3	28:47	Jetzt bezüglich der drei Kanäle, die ich jetzt genannt habe? Nein, die haben wir auch vorher schon sehr intensiv bespielt.	Now, with regard to the three channels that I have just mentioned? No, we have already played them very intensively before.
Researcher	28:54	Wir hatten ja quasi im Vorgespräch jetzt zu dem Interview auch die Hannover Messe angesprochen, wo ihr ja auch verhältnismäßig groß vertreten seid.	In the preliminary talk to the interview, we also mentioned the Hannover Fair, where you are also represented in a relatively large way.
Participant 3-3	29:04	Genau. Also tatsächlich die anderen drei Kanäle, die ich genannt habe, finde ich wichtiger. Die Hannover Messe ist für mich ein Event im Jahr. Das andere ist praktisch das andauernde irgendwo [ins relevant set praktisch*] auch zu kommen.	Exactly. So, actually the other three channels I mentioned I find more important. The Hannover Fair is one event a year for me. The other is practically the ongoing process of getting somewhere in the relevant set.
Researcher	29:23	Nein, deswegen hatte ich das noch mal so konkret hinterfragt, weil das ja auch im B2B	No, that's why I asked this again so specifically, because there are also

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		<p>durchaus Meinungen gibt, die nach wie vor den höchsten Stellenwert an Live-Events quasi sehen. Da fand ich da dann dein Feedback zu der Priorisierung sehr wertvoll. Wenn man jetzt mal wegkommen von den Kanälen und dem Unternehmen allgemein, gibt es. Bei dir im Team Dinge, die vielleicht fehlen in puncto Kommunikationsmix oder sagst du ihr bedingt eigentlich alles für eure Zielgruppen?</p>	<p>opinions in B2B that still see the highest value in live events, so to speak. So, I found your feedback on the prioritisation very valuable. If we now move away from the channels and the company in general, there are things in your team that are perhaps more important than live events. Are there things in your team that are perhaps missing in terms of the communication mix, or do you say that everything is actually conditional for your target groups?</p>
Participant 3-3	30:07	<p>(--) Ich überlege gerade. (-) Ich würde nicht viel nennen. Was mir ab und zu auffällt ist, dass im B2C-Bereich das Thema Influencer ja wahnsinnig wichtig ist. Und wir haben im B2B-Bereich hier bei uns, praktisch unsere Mitarbeiter als Influencer. Das heißt, die sind entsprechend geschult, die wissen, was sie auf Social Media verbreiten dürfen, was wir nicht verbreiten dürfen. Da gibt es auch wirklich Schulungen, die wir regelmäßig durchführen. Trotzdem hat man nicht die Strahlkraft, wie im B2C Bereich. Ich weiß allerdings nicht, ob der B2B-Bereich einfach nicht hergibt oder ob es einfach nur keiner gut genug Macht hat. Das zum Thema Influencer.</p>	<p>(--) I'm thinking about it. (-) I wouldn't name much. What I notice from time to time is that in the B2C sector, the topic of influencers is incredibly important. And in the B2B area, we practically have our employees here as influencers. That means they are trained accordingly, they know what they are allowed to spread on social media and what we are not allowed to spread. There are also real training courses that we conduct regularly. Nevertheless, we don't have the same appeal as in the B2C sector. However, I don't know whether the B2B sector simply doesn't have it or whether no one is good enough at it. That's about the topic of influencers.</p>
Researcher	30:59	<p>Ja. -</p>	<p>Yes. -</p>
Participant 3-3	31:00	<p>Das ist vielleicht was. Ja, wo ich momentan drüber nachdenken würde. Sonst bedienen wir Kanal technisch ganze Klaviatur.</p>	<p>That might be something. Yes, I would think about that at the moment. Otherwise, we use the whole technical keyboard of the channel.</p>
Researcher	31:15	<p>Zu dem Thema Wissens Influencer hätte ich auch eine persönliche Meinung. Die Klassiker in dem Zusammenhang sind ja so ein Herbert Diess von VW, ein Tim Cook von Apple oder Elon Musk, die ja durchaus ihre Strahlkraft auch haben, wo ja im Verhältnis dieser CEO jeweils deutlich mehr Follower hat als das Unternehmen selbst, wenn man jetzt mal das Profil als Kanal im Schatten stellen würde. Wenn man jetzt mal von den großen CEOs weggeht, gibt es auch aus meinem Verständnis mittlerweile schon zumindest eine Handvoll an B2B Influencern, die sich gerade was aufbauen. Aber die haben die Strahlkraft und die Geschwindigkeit hängt da auch deutlich hinter B2C. Das ist auch meine Wahrnehmung.</p>	<p>I also have a personal opinion on the topic of knowledge influencers. The classics in this context are Herbert Diess from VW, Tim Cook from Apple or Elon Musk, who certainly have their charisma, where the CEO has significantly more followers than the company itself, if one were to put the profile as a channel in the shade. If we move away from the big CEOs, I understand that there are now at least a handful of B2B influencers who are building something up. But they have the charisma and the speed is clearly behind B2C. That is also my perception.</p>
Participant 3-3	32:11	<p>Was du sagst. Das eine ist ja, sage ich mal, jemanden, der der Firma auch angehört, als Charakterkopf zu etablieren wie Tim Cook oder eben Elon Musk. Das andere ist aber praktisch, wenn ein Unternehmen eine externe Person dafür gewinnt, überzeugend eben die Werbung zu machen. Da sehe ich eben B2B relativ wenig gerade oder vielleicht ist es mir auch einfach nicht aufgefallen.</p>	<p>What you say. One thing is to establish someone who also belongs to the company as a character head, like Tim Cook or Elon Musk. But the other is practical, when a company wins over an external person to do the advertising in a convincing way. I see relatively little B2B here, or maybe I just haven't noticed it.</p>

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Researcher	32:43	Ne, das stimmt. Danke für die Ergänzung, da bin ich dabei. Das ist wirklich sehr rar. Jetzt vielleicht mal umgeschwenkt von Kanalvielfalt, Kommunikationsansätzen. Konkreter zu eurer Planung: Du hattest erst angesprochen, wie habt ihr die redaktionelle Planung vor zehn Jahren gemacht. Was bewegt dich jetzt gerade? Wenn man jetzt mal konkret in die Kommunikationsplanung bei euch reingeht für einzelne Maßnahmen: Gibt es da konkrete Planungsprozesse, vielleicht auf wöchentlicher Basis, monatlicher Basis oder wie auch immer? Wie sieht das bei euch aus?	No, that's right. Thanks for the addition, I'm with you on that. It's really very rare. Now maybe I'll switch from channel diversity to communication approaches. More specifically about your planning: You mentioned how you did your editorial planning ten years ago. What moves you now? If we look specifically at your communication planning for individual measures: Are there concrete planning processes, maybe on a weekly basis, monthly basis or whatever? What does that look like for you?
Participant 3-3	33:26	Also wir planen prinzipiell auf Jahres Basis und adaptieren dann aber. Wenn ich jetzt wieder das Beispiel [Product] nehme, da setze ich mich immer so im Frühling bzw. Frühsommer hin und spreche mit dem Fachbereich durch, was steht denn nächstes Jahr an. Welche Themen sind denn erst einmal wichtig? Dann haben wir für [Product] aber auch eine Customer Journey, das heißt für mich schon, dass ich weiß, welche Themen ich spielen muss. Dann habe ich auch eine Customer Journey, wo ich dann auch weiß was denn geeignet Touchpoints sind oder vielleicht auch was sind Touchpoint, die ich vielleicht jetzt noch optimieren könnte. Und (--), Entschuldigung.	In principle, we plan on an annual basis and then adapt. If I take the example of [product] again, I always sit down in spring or early summer and talk with the department about what's coming up next year. Which topics are important for now? Then we also have a customer journey for [product], which means for me that I know which topics I have to play. Then I also have a customer journey where I know which touchpoints are suitable or perhaps which touchpoints I could perhaps optimise now. And (--), excuse me.
Researcher	34:21	Alles gut.	(-) I then practically bring everything together in a plan for the year, so for example with [product] I have three to four webinars during the year where I have defined the topics. But what I find, and this is my experience, is that no plan is ever followed through in the way it was planned at the beginning of the business year, is it?
Participant 3-3	34:36	(-) Das bringe ich dann alles praktisch zusammen in einem Plan fürs Jahr, also zum Beispiel beim [Product] stehen bei mir während des Jahres drei bis vier Webinare, wo ich für die Themen definiert habe. Was ich aber feststellen, das ist meine Erfahrung, ist: kein Plan wird jemals so durchgezogen, wie man ihn sich Anfang des Geschäftsjahres zurechtgelegt hat, oder?	Yes.
Researcher	34:59	Ja.	That means you have a certain flexibility in it, which you then simply use. For example, here again: I plan an SEA campaign every year. But it may well be that I pause ad groups during the year and add other ad groups, depending on what is relevant and important at the time.
Participant 3-3	35:00	Das heißt, man hat da aber eine gewisse Flexibilität drin, die man dann einfach auch nutzt. Zum Beispiel, auch da wieder: ich plane jedes Jahr eine SEA-Kampagne. Aber es kann gut sein, dass ich dann während des Jahres Anzeigegruppen pausiere, andere Anzeigegruppen mit dazu nehme und zwar jeweils dem geschuldet, was halt gerade relevant und wichtig ist.	Do you plan a budget based on this initial story, or how do you derive resources and financial means from it?
Researcher	35:35	Planst du dann basierend auch quasi auf dieser initialen Geschichte ein Budget oder wie leiten sich daraus Ressourcen und finanzielle Mittel ab?	Exactly right. And it's usually the case that if you want to do everything you want to do, then of course it's far too expensive. That means it's a question of thinking about how to get away with the budget that's available to you. How
Participant 3-3	35:45	Genau richtig. Und meistens ist es so, wenn man dann alles machen wollen würde, was man machen möchte, dann ist man natürlich viel zu teuer. Das heißt, da geht es darum, dann zu überlegen, wie kommt man dann eben mit dem Budget,	

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		<p>was einem dann zur Verfügung steht, gut weg. Wie kriegt man da die maximale Wirkung und was sind Priorität Liste? Damit gehen wir auch regelmäßig um. Selbst wenn in meinem Budgetplan die ganze Wishlist drin ist, ist die entsprechend priorisiert. Wenn unterhalb des Jahres dann doch mal vielleicht mehr Geld zur Verfügung stehen würde, wo ich dann aber wieder sagen kann, dass ich ja noch was hätte, was ich eigentlich gern dieses Jahr machen könnte. Deswegen also hier Hand heben. Ich könnte das Geld verbrauchen.</p>	<p>do you get the maximum effect and what are the priority lists? We also deal with this on a regular basis. Even if my budget plan includes the entire Wishlist, it is prioritised accordingly. If there is more money available below the end of the year, I can say again that I still have something I would like to do this year. So raise your hand here. I could use the money.</p>
Researcher	36:37	<p>Ja, und wer entscheidet dann schlussendlich über den Rahmen oder den Umfang von dem Budget?</p>	<p>Yes, and who then ultimately decides on the framework or the scope of the budget?</p>
Participant 3-3	36:44	<p>Da muss man nur dazu wissen, dass bei uns in der Kommunikation wir sehr eng mit unserer Marketingabteilung zusammenarbeiten. Das Marketing sind eher so technisch geprägte Personen. Das sind meistens Maschinenbauer oder Elektroingenieure, während man bei uns in der Kommunikation man meistens Geisteswissenschaftler, BWLer, Kommunikationspersonen oder irgendwas mit Medien Design hat. Also so in der Richtung. Und wir haben als Kommunikation kein eigenes Budget zur Verfügung, sondern unser Budget gehört sozusagen dem Marketing bzw. dem Sales dahinter, dem Vertrieb. Und das heißt, wir bekommen da ein Gesamtbudget für Marketing und Kommunikation und dann müssen wir uns eben jeweils mit dem Marketing-Manager zusammensetzen und schauen, welche Summe er eben hat. Das muss eben definitiv passieren. Dann schaut mal, was für was verwendet wird. Aber das ist praktisch top down.</p>	<p>You just have to know that in our communication department we work very closely with our marketing department. The marketing department is made up of more technically minded people. They are mostly mechanical or electrical engineers, whereas in our communication department we mostly have humanities graduates, business graduates, communication people or something to do with media design. Something like that. And we don't have our own budget for communication, but our budget belongs to marketing or sales, so to speak. And that means we get a total budget for marketing and communication and then we have to sit down with the marketing manager and see what amount he has. That definitely has to happen. Then see what is used for what. But that's practically top down.</p>
Researcher	38:00	<p>Entschuldige, wenn ich das so konkret hinterfrage. Das heißt aber auch, dass du immer eine Art und Weise in der Argumentationspflicht gegenüber dem Marketing Manager bist und der wiederum gegenüber dem Vertrieb, weshalb ihr das Budget braucht, weil ihr das immer ins Verhältnis setzt zu den Vorgaben des Vertriebs? Oder wie läuft dann da quasi die Abstimmung?</p>	<p>Excuse me for questioning this so specifically. But that also means that you always have to argue in some way with the marketing manager and he in turn with the sales department why you need the budget, because you always put it in relation to the sales department's specifications? Or how does the coordination work?</p>
Participant 3-3	38:26	<p>Also da empfinde ich es schon eher so, dass da Vertrauen herrscht, dass wir also Marketing und Kommunikation des Budgets auch bestmöglich einsetzen. Also da kenne ich jetzt nichts, dass die tatsächlich irgendwie das konkret gegenrechnen auf irgendwelche KPIs bei sich.</p>	<p>So, I rather feel that there is trust that we are using marketing and communication of the budget in the best possible way. So, I don't know of anything that they are actually calculating concretely against any KPIs.</p>
Researcher	38:45	<p>Okay, vielen Dank für die die näheren Ausführungen da. Die nächste Frage, die ich von mir auf der Liste hier habe. Darauf sind wir schon partiell eingegangen. Aber vielleicht können wir es trotzdem noch einmal zusammenfassen: Nämlich welche</p>	<p>Okay, thank you very much for the elaboration there. The next question that I have on my list here. We've already gone into that partially. But maybe we can summarise it again: What information do you actually take</p>

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		<p>Informationen berücksichtigt ihr dann eigentlich bei der Maßnahmenplanung? Jetzt hattest du da schon ganz viel über Data Analytics etc. gesprochen. Vielleicht gibt es ja noch außer Informationen, die du aus den Kanälen sammelst, Dinge, Parameter, die du in die Planung mit einbeziehen.</p>	<p>into account when planning measures? You have already talked a lot about data analytics etc.. Maybe, apart from the information you collect from the channels, there are other things, parameters, that you include in the planning.</p>
Participant 3-3	39:22	<p>Ja, also wer für uns natürlich wichtig sind, sind bei uns die Marketing-Manager, die ja auch eng mit dem Vertrieb und im Produktmanagement vernetzt sind. Das heißt, da ist es wichtig, was gibt es für Neuerungen im nächsten Jahr. Was muss man da vielleicht mit einplanen? Was muss deswegen eben berücksichtigt werden, was vielleicht vorher nicht berücksichtigt werden musste? Wird zum Beispiel ein Produkt angekündigt? Sowas muss ja kommunikativ begleitet werden. Deshalb das ist noch mal ganz wichtig für uns. Was auch noch wichtig ist, was auf unsere Planung auch Einfluss hat, sind natürlich Themen, die auf Corporate Ebene eine gewisse Relevanz und Wichtigkeit haben, wie zum Beispiel gerade Sustainability, also Nachhaltigkeit. Das heißt, das sind prinzipiell Aspekte, die wir mitnehmen müssen und wo wir dann praktisch schauen müssen, wie wir das dann wiederum in unsere Branchen bzw. Produktkommunikationen diesen Aspekt mit aufnehmen können, damit Nachhaltigkeit eben nicht nur eine Top-Management Level Sache bleibt, sondern das tatsächlich anhand von bestimmten Use Cases auch wirklich sichtbar macht.</p>	<p>Yes, those who are important for us are of course the marketing managers, who are also closely networked with sales and product management. That means it is important to know what innovations there will be next year. What do you have to plan for? What has to be taken into account that perhaps didn't have to be taken into account before? For example, will a product be announced? Such things have to be accompanied by communication. That's why this is very important for us. What is also important, what also has an influence on our planning, are of course topics that have a certain relevance and importance at the corporate level, such as sustainability. This means that in principle these are aspects that we have to take on board and where we then have to look practically at how we can include this aspect in our sectors or product communications, so that sustainability does not just remain a top management level thing, but actually makes it visible on the basis of certain use cases.</p>
Researcher	40:44	<p>Ja. (-) Sichtbar machen heißt in dem Fall, dass das dann auch für jede einzelne Maßnahme an sich schon eine Zielformulierung vorab gibt? Was, was ihr euch quasi vornehmt?</p>	<p>Yes. (-) In this case, making things visible means that there is a target formulation in advance for each individual measure? What do you intend to do, so to speak?</p>
Participant 3-3	40:56	<p>Es ist praktisch uns bewusst, was sind die richtigen Themen bei uns. Also wir haben bei der [Business Unit] auch einen Nordstern. Das heißt, wir wissen, wo sich die [Business Unit Name], also die Business Unit zum Beispiel hin entwickeln möchte. Das ist natürlich abgeleitet aus den übergeordneten Strategien. Das ist etwas, was wir dann eben berücksichtigen. Also ein Thema ist es eben Nachhaltigkeit. Nehmen wir mal an unsere neue [Product]-Reihe besteht bei [Product component] jetzt zu 50 Prozent aus recycelten PET-Flaschen. Dann wäre es halt bei mir in der Aufgabe, sowas halt dann auch entsprechend mit in die Kommunikation aufzunehmen und es dann auch rauszustellen. Das sind ist es inhaltlich.</p>	<p>We are practically aware of what the right topics are for us. We also have a North Star at the [Business Unit]. That means we know where the [Business Unit Name], the Business Unit for example, wants to develop. Of course, this is derived from the overarching strategies. That is something that we then take into account. So, one topic is sustainability. Let's assume that our new [product] range now consists of 50 per cent recycled PET bottles. Then it would be my task to include this in the communication and to emphasise it. That's it in terms of content.</p>
Researcher	41:46	<p>Okay, verstanden. Dann vielleicht trotzdem noch mal die Frage zum Thema Zielsetzung: Gibt es dann bei den Maßnahmen, die jetzt weniger durch den</p>	<p>Okay, I understand. Then perhaps the question on the topic of objectives: Are there concrete objectives for the measures that are less driven by the</p>

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		<p>Inhalt selbst getrieben sind, sondern auf Kommunikationskampagnenebene konkrete Zielsetzungen, die ihr euch selber macht oder die von Seiten strategisches Marketing oder Vertrieb zu euch rüber gespielt werden.</p>	<p>content itself, but rather at the communication campaign level, that you set for yourselves or that are passed on to you by strategic marketing or sales?</p>
Participant 3-3	42:17	<p>Es ist weniger so, dass ich jetzt zum Beispiel für ein Webinar mir sage, dass ich jetzt 300 Registrierungen haben will. (--) Ich schicke die Einladung praktisch zu einem bestimmten Teilnehmerkreis zentral an Bestandskunden raus. Ich schalte dazu noch Promotion für Prospects, die bei uns jetzt nicht mit dabei sind. Dann habe ich hinterher die Zahlen. Natürlich setze ich die dann ins Verhältnis und schau, eine Registrierung hat mich also über Social Network so und so viel Euro gekostet und ich habe so und so viel zu Reaktionen bekommen. Wenn ich jetzt das Ganze einfach nur auf meiner Website angeteasert habe, das Webinar, dann hat es mich ja im Endeffekt nichts gekostet, habe aber schon so und so viele Registrierungen bekommen. Also das ist was, das monitor ich und schau dann entsprechend was hat gut funktioniert und dann eben, wenn ich das nächste Webinar mach, nutze ich eben manche Maßnahmen weniger intensiv bzw. anders. Also auf der Ebene läuft es eher.</p>	<p>It's not so much that I say, for example, that I want 300 registrations for a webinar. (--) I practically send out the invitation to a certain group of participants centrally to existing customers. In addition, I run promotions for prospects who are not currently with us. Then I have the figures afterwards. Of course, I then put them into perspective and look at how much a registration has cost me via the social network and how many responses I have received. If I simply teased the whole thing on my website, the webinar, then in the end it didn't cost me anything, but I got so and so many registrations. So that's something I monitor and then look at what worked well and then, when I do the next webinar, I use some measures less intensively or differently. So, it's more on that level.</p>
Researcher	43:36	<p>Ja, es ist ja auch in Ordnung. Mir geht es ja immer nur als externe Person darum auch das Bild so zu schärfen. Da hat mir das auf jeden Fall als Feedback geholfen. Jetzt haben wir ganz viel darüber gesprochen, wie ihr konkret ran geht. Welche Informationen habt ihr intern vorliegen? Wie tauscht euch darüber aus? Wie optimierst du dich dann vielleicht ja auch von Webinar zu Webinar, wie jetzt gerade geschildert? Gibt es noch externe Informationsquellen, die du mit einbezieht? Marketing-Theorie, die ja vielleicht auch an der einen oder anderen Stelle durchaus eine hilfreiche Indikation geben kann, wie bestimmte Kanäle funktionieren. Wie kann man noch weiter optimieren? Ist sowas auch ein Thema.</p>	<p>Yes, it's all right. For me, as an external person, it's always about sharpening the image. That definitely helped me as feedback. Now we've talked a lot about how you approach it concretely. What information do you have internally? How do you exchange it? How do you perhaps optimise yourself from webinar to webinar, as just described? Are there any external sources of information that you include? Marketing theory, which can perhaps also give a helpful indication at one point or another of how certain channels work. How can you optimise even further? Is something like that also a topic.</p>
Participant 3-3	44:24	<p>Ich überlege gerade. Sowas gibt bei uns praktisch schon. Also wir haben ja auf [Business Unit]-Ebene zum Beispiel nochmal jemanden, der spezifisch für Google Search Advertising zuständig ist. Wenn es da neue Aspekte gibt, dann bekommen wir da die Infos dann von dieser Stelle. Ob ich mich jetzt selber damit beschäftige? (--) Ich beschäftige mich ehrlich gesagt, damit nicht extern, nein. Externe Informationen nehme ich da nicht mit rein.</p>	<p>I'm thinking about it. We practically already have something like that. For example, we have someone at [business unit] level who is specifically responsible for Google Search Advertising. If there are new aspects, we get the information from this position. Do I deal with it myself now? (-) To be honest, I don't deal with it externally, no. I don't take external information into account.</p>
Researcher	45:06	<p>Ist ja nicht schlimm. Ich frage das nur tatsächlich so, weil ich durchaus auch schon Leute im Interview hatte, die gesagt</p>	<p>There's nothing wrong with that. I'm only asking this because I've already had people in the interview who said,</p>

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		haben "Ja, ich habe hier meine ein, zwei Magazine, die schaue ich mir mal gerne auf monatlicher Basis an, um vielleicht noch mal eine Idee oder zwei abzugreifen.". Dann gibt es wiederum andere, die sagen: "Wir sind hier ein ganz kleiner Bereich, kleiner klassischer Mittelständler. Bei uns kommt der frische Wind dadurch rein, dass wir mal regelmäßig mit Praktikanten oder dualen Studenten arbeiten, die dann Ideen aufwerfen." und sich so dann quasi die Kommunikation weiterentwickelt. Deswegen dachte ich vielleicht gibt's bei dir auch Externe so in Führungszeichen.	"Yes, I have one or two magazines here that I like to look at on a monthly basis to maybe pick up an idea or two. Then there are others who say: "We are a very small sector here, a small classic medium-sized company. We get a breath of fresh air by regularly working with interns or dual students, who then come up with ideas," and that's how communication develops, so to speak. That's why I thought maybe you also have external people in inverted commas.
Participant 3-3	45:44	Ich glaubt tatsächlich dadurch, dass wir so divers sind, wir haben ja auch im Team durchaus junge Leute, die grad so Anfang, Mitte 20 sind und sowieso eine sehr große Community haben. Es ist wahrscheinlich deswegen was, was mir auch gar nicht fehlt, weil wir da wirklich wahnsinnig viel Austausch und Anregungen haben. Kann ich mir jetzt vorstellen. Ich hätte tatsächlich auch nicht den Bedarf.	I really believe that because we are so diverse, we also have young people in the team who are in their early or mid-20s and have a very large community anyway. It's probably something that I don't miss at all, because we really have a lot of exchange and suggestions. I can imagine that now. I wouldn't really have the need either.
Researcher	46:12	Ja.	Yes.
Participant 3-3	46:15	Was mich tatsächlich momentan, aber das hat ja nichts mit mir derzeitigen Planung zu tun, wäre was Agilität in Kommunikation bedeutet. Darüber haben wir gesprochen. Wie kann man das umsetzen? Und was muss man vielleicht auch organisatorisch anpassen, um eine agile Kommunikationsabteilung aufzusetzen? Was gehört dazu? Welche Voraussetzung müssen wir erfüllen? Das ist was, wo ich dann extern schaue, weil ich da eben noch kein Beispiel im Unternen habe.	What actually interests me at the moment, but that has nothing to do with my current planning, is what agility in communication means. We have talked about that. How can you implement that? And what do you perhaps have to adapt organisationally in order to set up an agile communication department? What does it take? What requirements do we have to fulfil? That's something I look at externally, because I don't have an example in the company yet.
Researcher	46:45	Ja. Ich versuche dir da auf jeden Fall auch noch mal ein gezieltes Feedback in der Hinsicht dann bei der Zusammenfassung mitzugeben. Es wird ja auch durchaus durch verschiedenste externe Parameter wieder beeinflusst. Ich hatte mich mit deiner Kollegin, [Participant 3-2] zum Beispiel die Diskussion rund um Zusammenarbeit bei Schnittstellen mit Agenturen. Wie viel kann man rausgeben? Wo es aber auch die Grenze, weil es halt ein komplexes Produkt im B2B ist. Ich muss diese Komplexität erstmal selbst erfassen und das dann halt einfach an jemanden anders zu geben oder auch dazu sagen: "Hey, auch wenn du noch überhaupt keine Ahnung von dem Produkt Segment hast, schaut das man und entwickeln der Kampagne" ist halt immer nur begrenzt möglich. Von daher eine super spannende Fragestellung und ich hoffe, dass ich dir da noch mal konkreter, dann was im Nachgang ausführlich zu sagen kann. Letzte Frage, wo wir bei dieser ganzen Herangehensweise sind. Gibt es etwas, wo du sagst, das wäre ein	Yes, I'll definitely try to give you some specific feedback in this regard in the summary. It is also influenced by a wide range of external parameters. For example, I had a discussion with your colleague [Participant 3-2] about cooperation in interfaces with agencies. How much can you give out? But there is also a limit, because it is a complex product in B2B. I first have to grasp this complexity myself and then simply hand it over to someone else or say: "Hey, even if you have no idea at all about the product segment, look at this and develop the campaign" is always only possible to a limited extent. That's why it's a super exciting question and I hope that I'll be able to tell you something more concrete and detailed afterwards. Last question, while we're on this whole approach. Is there anything where you say that this would be a concrete example of how I develop our communication channels further, both in terms of function and the added value that I want to create with them?

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Participant 3-3 48:12	<p>konkretes Beispiel, wie ich bei uns Kommunikationskanäle auch weiterentwickle, sowohl von Funktion als auch von dem Mehrwert den ich damit erzeugen möchtest.</p> <p>Zum Beispiel, was uns oft benutzt worden ist oder was die Kollegen praktisch wollten, war Social Media, besonders LinkedIn, zu verwenden, als drive through. Ich hatte da aufgrund von meinem eigenen Nutzerverhalten auf LinkedIn immer Bedenken. Ich habe mir gedacht, das passt irgendwie nicht so richtig zusammen. Wenn ich auf LinkedIn bin, dann schaue ich mir meinen Feed an, dass ich dann wirklich mal irgendwo weg spring, passiert sehr selten. Also wenn ich auf LinkedIn bin, bin ich nicht auf der Suche wie bei Google. Bei Google will ich ja weg von Google verlinkt werden. Dann will ich in der Regel erst einmal nicht weg von LinkedIn, sondern will mich einfach auf der Plattform bisschen umschauen und konsumiere die Inhalte da auch am liebsten auf der Plattform und nicht irgendwo anders. Aufgrund dessen habe ich praktisch dann bei mir dann auch wirklich gezielt mit aufgenommen, wenn ich auf LinkedIn was spiele, will ich zum einen eben Awareness messen, was mein Ziel ist auf LinkedIn. Ich will aber zum anderen gleichzeitig noch schauen, nur aus Interesse, was mich denn tatsächlich ein Link Klick auf LinkedIn kostet. Durch die Bank weg bin ich bei einem LinkedIn Klick einfach bei teilweise 80 Euro pro Klick. Das ist für mich etwas, wo ich persönlich die Erfahrung habe, hab dann überlegt, habe es dann mit aufgenommen. Also ich bin da auch grad so ein bisschen unterwegs in der Organisation und man sagt halt immer das ist nett wenn LinkedIn Klicks willst, ist das nicht der richtige Weg. Awareness ist ist super, aber Link Klicks funktioniert in der Regel nicht. Für ein Link-Klick, dann geht zu Google. Bei Google kriegst Link-Klicks ohne Ende. Also das ist ein Beispiel.</p>	<p>For example, what we often used or what colleagues practically wanted was to use social media, especially LinkedIn, as a drive through. I always had reservations about that because of my own user behaviour on LinkedIn. I thought to myself, somehow this doesn't really fit together. When I'm on LinkedIn, I look at my feed, so it's very rare that I actually jump off somewhere. So, when I'm on LinkedIn, I'm not searching like I am on Google. On Google, I want to be linked away from Google. Then, as a rule, I don't want to get away from LinkedIn, but simply want to look around on the platform a bit and prefer to consume the content on the platform and not somewhere else. Because of this, I have then also included in my practice that when I play something on LinkedIn, I want to measure awareness on the one hand, which is my goal on LinkedIn. But at the same time, I want to see, just out of interest, what a link click on LinkedIn actually costs me. Across the board, I'm at 80 euros per click for a LinkedIn click. For me, that's something where I personally have the experience, then I thought about it, then I included it. So, I'm also on the road a bit in the organisation and people always say that it is nice if LinkedIn wants clicks, but that's not the right way. Awareness is great, but link clicks usually don't work. For a link click, then go to Google. On Google you get link clicks without end. So that's an example.</p>
Researcher 50:17	<p>Ja spannend. Und 80 Euro pro Link Klick ist eine Hausnummer. Das stimmt. Gut, dann habe ich zumindest alle Fragen in der Hinsicht zum Prozess und so weiter gestellt, was mich jetzt ein bisschen zu den letzten zwei, drei Fragen bringen würde. Wenn man jetzt mal so einen Strich drunter zieht: Wie sehr schaffst du es mit deinem Fachbereich auch strategische Entscheidungen hinsichtlich Kommunikationskanal, Weiterentwicklung oder vielleicht auch insgesamt bei Kommunikationssteuerung Eingriff zu nehmen? Wie würdest du das bewerten?</p>	<p>Yes exciting. And 80 euros per link click is a house number. That's right. Well, at least I've asked all the questions about the process and so on, which brings me to the last two or three questions. If you draw a line under it like that now: To what extent do you and your department manage to take strategic decisions regarding communication channels, further development or perhaps overall communication management? How would you rate that?</p>
Participant 3-3 51:00	<p>Sehr hoch. Ich muss vielleicht einschränken. Wenn was niedrighschwellig ist, das heißt, es muss nicht irgendwie jetzt</p>	<p>Very high. Perhaps I have to limit myself. If something is low-threshold, that is, it doesn't have to be integrated</p>

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		<p>ein neues Tool in die bestehende [Company 3] Landschaft mit integriert werden oder so, sondern es Dinge sind, die die leicht und einfach auszuprobieren sind, sind wir jederzeit am ermutigen und wollen dann auch definitiv drüber zu berichten. Bei uns ist wirklich auch eine super Fehlerkultur. Es ist es wird auch gar nicht als Fehler gesehen, sondern es wird einfach als Versuch gesehen. Wenn es wenn erfolgreich war, dann freuen wir uns alle, wenn haben wir was entdeckt und wenn es jetzt gescheitert ist, dann wird da genauso drüber gesprochen, damit andere halt nicht auch die gleichen Fehler machen. Also das wir halt nicht zweimal scheitern. Wie gesagt, das hat seine Grenzen. Wenn es darum geht, man müsste für ein neues Tool wirklich jetzt umfangreich geschult werden, es müsste eben in unsere Sales-Landschaft mit einbinden und so weiter. Dann ist es natürlich schon etwas, wo der Einfluss kleiner ist.</p>	<p>somehow into the existing [Company 3] landscape or something, but it's things that are easy and simple to try out, we are always encouraging and definitely want to report on it. We also have a really great culture of making mistakes. It's not even seen as a mistake, it's simply seen as an attempt. If it's successful, we're all happy, if we've discovered something, and if it's failed, we talk about it in the same way so that others don't make the same mistakes. So that we don't fail twice. As I said, that has its limits. When it comes to a new tool, we really have to be trained extensively, we have to integrate it into our sales landscape and so on. Then, of course, it's something where the influence is smaller.</p>
Researcher	52:22	<p>Ja. Ihr seid ja global aufgestellt. Gibt es hinsichtlich der Aussteuerung der Kommunikation, die du mit deinem Team voranbringst, auch noch Unterschiede in puncto Einfluss, weil eine Auslandsgesellschaft, eine andere Entität, da selbst in der Handlungsbefugnis steht?</p>	<p>Yes, you are globally positioned. Are there also differences in terms of influence with regard to the communication that you and your team promote, because a foreign subsidiary, another entity, that has the power to act?</p>
Participant 3-3	52:45	<p>Also in der Regel eben ist es meine Erfahrung, dass die Kollegen im Ausland immer sehr glücklich sind. Wir haben zwar eben ausländische Gesellschaften, da sitzen dann vielleicht drei Kommunikateuren für gesamt [Company]. Das heißt, die müssen nicht nur [Business Unit] abdecken, sondern gleichzeitig noch andere Unternehmensbereiche. Wo ich sowas zum Beispiel immer mit regionalen Kollegen mache ist SEA. Ich frag was sind unsere Hauptfokus Länder. Mit dieser Basis gehe ich erst mal an meine Region Kollegen und sag: "Pass auf, wir würden gern eine Kampagne fahren. Ich würde es am liebsten natürlich auf lokale Seiten machen, weil einfach da auch die Erfolgsraten viel besser sind. Das heißt mit lokalen Keywords, lokalen Anzeigen, Texten und lokalen Seiten.". Meine Erfahrung ist, dass die Kolleginnen unheimlich dankbar sind, wenn man sie mitnimmt, weil die einfach gar nicht alles selber managen können.</p>	<p>As a rule, my experience is that colleagues abroad are always very happy. We have foreign companies, but there are maybe three communicators for the whole [company]. That means they don't just have to cover [business unit], but other areas of the company at the same time. For example, I always do this with regional colleagues in SEA. I ask what are our main focus countries. With this basis, I first go to my regional colleagues and say: "Listen, we would like to run a campaign. I would prefer to do it on local sites, of course, because the success rates are much better there. That means with local keywords, local ads, texts and local pages". My experience is that the colleagues are incredibly grateful when you take them along, because they simply can't manage everything themselves.</p>
Researcher	53:46	<p>Das heißt, sie kommen aber, so wie du es beschreibst, auch dann wirklich kaum dazu, selbst jetzt halt mal noch eine andere SEA Kampagne aufzusetzen, weil die Anzahl -</p>	<p>That means, however, as you describe it, they really hardly ever get around to setting up another SEA campaign themselves, because the number of -</p>
Participant 3-3	53:55	<p>Ich war noch nie in einer Region. Ja, aber ich vermute es beinahe.</p>	<p>I've never been to a region. Yes, but I almost suspect you have.</p>
Researcher	53:59	<p>Ja, damit habe ich tatsächlich alle meine Fragen gestellt, die ich so hatte. Es hat mir</p>	<p>Yes, I actually asked all the questions I had. It definitely gave me another</p>

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		auf jeden Fall noch mal wieder eine weitere Perspektive gebracht und das Verständnis der Forschungsfragen darüber, wie ihr heran geht, erweitert. Also wie es der Entscheidungsprozess zu welche Skills Fähigkeiten sind vielleicht auch in eurer Organisation als Dinge haben wir finde ich persönlich sehr rund besprochen und vielen Dank an der Stelle. Ich weiß nicht, ob dir noch irgendwas spontan einfällt?	perspective and broadened my understanding of the research questions about how you approach it. So how does the decision-making process go to what information does it involve and what skills are perhaps also in your organisation as things we have discussed I think personally very roundly and thank you very much at that point. I don't know if you can think of anything else off the top of your head?
Participant 3-3	54:34	Mich würde nur interessieren, was ich jetzt erzählt habe und was [Participant 3-2] und [Participant 3-1] erzählt haben. Haben wir uns überschritten in dem, was wir gesagt haben? Haben wir viele Überschneidungspunkte, oder hat jeder so ein bisschen was anderes? Einfach nur aus Interesse.	I would only be interested in what I have told now and what [Participant 3-2] and [Participant 3-1] have told. Did we overlap in what we said? Do we have a lot of overlap, or does everyone have a bit of a different thing? Just out of interest.
Researcher	54:52	Ja, also ich würde sagen, zum Großteil findet sich das schon wieder. Jeder hatte halt so seine Schwerpunkte. Was ich zum Beispiel aus diesem Gespräch heute also als große Ergänzung mitnehme, sind halt deine ganzen Details rund um Analytics. Die konkreten Herangehensweisen, die Schnittstelle zum Marketing und Vertrieb. Über die haben wir bisher weniger gesprochen. Dafür habe ich halt aber solche anderen Insights erhalten zu wie entwickelt ihr euch in der Organisation Transformation deutlich umfassender von deinen Kollegen. Angefangen bei den regelmäßigen Austauschrunden, wo man sich in Führungszeichen auch unverbindlich reinsetzen kann, bis hin zu dass ihr einen Speaker von der Höhle der Löwen nämlich vor kurzem oder so da hattet, um sich halt auch da zum Beispiel mit externen Sichtweisen mal wieder zu challengen und auseinanderzusetzen. Solche Dinge hattest du halt nicht genannt, weil dein Fokus halt ein anderer war. Der hat mich genau darin bestätigt eigentlich, dass diese Herangehensweise, unterschiedliche Perspektiven zu interviewen und dann halt zu einem Gesamtbild zusammensetzen, sehr gut machted. Das ist auch genau das, wo ich sagen würde, der Großteil, der Kern ist eigentlich immer ähnlicher. Ich hatte ein anderes Unternehmen, da war im letzten halben, dreiviertel Jahr das Thema Webinare sehr groß, weil die gesagt haben, dass Corona uns hier sagen sehr stark in der Hinsicht getroffen hat, was die Interaktion mit dem Kunden angeht. Die haben überlegt, wie die das machen können. Jeder war von dieser Herangehensweise einfach so begeistert, weil sowohl der Stakeholder Vertrieb was rausnehmen konnte, als auch strategisches Marketing als auch	Yes, well, I would say that for the most part that is already reflected. Everyone just had their own areas of focus. What I'm taking away from today's conversation, for example, as a great addition, are all your details about analytics. The concrete approaches, the interface to marketing and sales. We haven't talked about that as much so far. Instead, I have received such other insights from your colleagues on how you develop in the transformation of the organisation in a much more comprehensive way. Starting with the regular exchange rounds, where you can sit down without obligation, to the point that you recently had a speaker from the "Höhle der Löwen" (The lions' den) to challenge and deal with external perspectives. You didn't mention such things because your focus was different. It actually confirmed to me that this approach of interviewing different perspectives and then putting them together to form an overall picture works very well. That's also exactly where I would say that the majority, the core, is actually always more similar. I had another company where the topic of webinars was very big in the last six months or three quarters of a year, because they said that Corona had hit us very hard in terms of interaction with the customer. They were thinking about how they could do that. Everyone was just so enthusiastic about this approach, because both the sales stakeholder could take something out of it, as well as strategic marketing and communication, because they then created more transparency in terms of marketing automation, because they had more points that they could measure concretely. Just as there was

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		<p>Kommunikation, weil die dann halt wieder mehr Transparenz in punkto Marketing Automation erzeugt haben, weil sie halt mehr Punkte hatten, die sie konkret messen können. Wie es da das Webinar als gemeinsamen Nenner gab, gab es hier halt diesen gemeinsamen Nenner, dass ihr sehr am Puls der Zeit seid. Jeder von euch hatte das Thema Corporate Influencer zum Beispiel genannt als einer der Dinge wo es vielleicht noch Handlungsbedarf gibt. Genau. Also von daher hat das Bild wirklich gut zusammengepasst und ich glaube, dann sind diese Nuancen zwischen den einzelnen Fällen, die ich untersuche, das, was wahrscheinlich ein Mehrwert für euch alle ist, wenn ich es entsprechend zusammenfasse, aggregiere und eine konkrete Handlungsempfehlungen für euch nochmal zusammenbringe.</p>	<p>the webinar as a common denominator, there was this common denominator here that you are very much in tune with the times. Each of you mentioned the topic of corporate influencers, for example, as one of the things where there is perhaps still a need for action. Exactly. So, from that point of view, the picture fit together really well and I think that these nuances between the individual cases that I am examining are what will probably be an added value for all of you if I summarise it accordingly, aggregate it and bring together a concrete recommendation for action for you once again.</p>
Participant 3-3	57:22	Wie ist eigentlich dein weiterer Weg nach der Doktorarbeit dann?	What is your further path after the doctorate?
Researcher	57:27	Also ich mache das ja Arbeitgeber unabhängig in meiner Freizeit. Das heißt im ersten Schritt geht es da natürlich beruflich genauso weiter wie auch jetzt. Ich bin offen für alles das, was kommt, bin aber jetzt auch im ersten Schritt so, dass ich sage, dass sich bei mir hat Ende letzten Jahres die Möglichkeit angeboten hat, mich intern noch mal von der Perspektive etwas zu verändern. Da habe ich jetzt einen neuen, spannenden Fachbereich, den ich betreuen darf, den ich gerade weiter aufbauen darf, weil die Funktion und Rolle so auch noch nicht da war. Das heißt also, im nächsten halben Jahr bis Jahr, gibt es da auch viele Dinge, die ich selbst noch erfahren darf. Dann mal schauen, wo die Reise hingeht. Ich bin nach wie vor sehr froh, dass ich diesen Schritt gemacht habe, weil es mich zum einen persönlich auch noch an vielen Stellen einfach selbst mal wieder gechallenged hat und noch einmal wieder mehr gezeigt hat, dass die Verknüpfung von Theorie und Praxis einfach auch unheimlich spannend und relevant ist, um im Diskurs zu bleiben. Ich glaube, es ist immer verkehrt, am Status quo stehen zu bleiben. Jede Unterhaltung hier, jedes Interview hat halt noch mal wieder zum Nachdenken angeregt. Vielleicht kann ich auch so was ja in irgendeiner Form durch das Netzwerk, was man sich jetzt mit aufgebaut hat, aufrechterhalten.	I do this independently of my employer in my free time. That means that in the first step, of course, I will continue professionally just as I am doing now. I'm open to everything that comes along, but the first step is to say that at the end of last year I had the opportunity to change my perspective internally. I now have a new, exciting department that I can look after and that I can continue to build up, because the function and role was not yet there. That means that in the next six months to a year, there will be many things that I can experience myself. I'm still very glad that I took this step because, on the one hand, it has simply given me a personal boost in many places and has shown once again that the linking of theory and practice is also incredibly exciting and relevant in order to stay in the discourse. I think it's always wrong to stand still at the status quo. Every conversation here, every interview just made me think again. Maybe I can maintain something like that in some form through the network that I have now built up.
Participant 3-3	58:59	Ja, wir sind auch bei [Company 3] immer auf der Suche nach guten Leuten und als solchen klassifizier ich dich jetzt einfach mal.	Yes, we are always on the lookout for good people at [Company 3] too, and I'll just classify you as such now.
Researcher	59:10	Vielen Dank! Ja, also ich halt die Ohren und Augen offen. Mal schauen, was sich da dann vielleicht ergibt.	Thank you very much! Yes, I'll keep my ears and eyes open. Let's see what might come up.

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Participant 3-3	59:20	Na schön. Wenn du dann praktisch durch bist, dann könntest du auch mal die Ergebnisse bei uns dann vorstellen, oder?	All right. When you're practically through, you could present the results to us, couldn't you?
Researcher	59:30	Genau. Ich habe jetzt noch nächste Woche und übernächste Woche sieben Interviews auf meiner Liste. Dann habe ich quasi sechs Unternehmen im Kasten. Es gibt eine Person, die erst in zweieinhalb Wochen kann aufgrund von Projekten. Aber dann geht es quasi darum, mich an die Auswertung zu machen. Parallel bin ich schon dabei, die Transkripte zu erstellen, so dass ich hoffe, dass ich zu Juni, spätestens Juli quasi die Thesis geschrieben habe. Danach würde ich mich dann an die Handlungsempfehlung setzen und auf euch zukommen. Ich vermute mal August, September, je nachdem, wie es dann vielleicht einfach so parallel schaffe. Und ich bin offen für sämtliche Ansätze Ideen, wie ihr euch das dann auch wünschen würdet. Im ersten Schritt würde ich das natürlich mal zu Papier bringen. Wenn ihr sagt: "Mensch, lass uns doch mal eine Telco aufsetzen, das diskutieren oder in irgendeinem anderen Rahmen.", bin ich da offen für das, wie es euch dann vielleicht auch einen Nutzen bringt.	Exactly. I still have seven interviews on my list for next week and the week after. Then I'll have six companies in the can, so to speak. There is one person who can't do it for two and a half weeks because of projects. But then it's more or less a matter of getting down to the evaluation. At the same time, I'm already preparing the transcripts, so I hope to have written the thesis by June, or July at the latest. After that, I would start working on the recommendations for action and get back to you. I'm guessing August, September, depending on how I manage to do it in parallel. And I am open to any ideas on how you would like to see it done. Of course, the first step would be to put it down on paper. If you say: "Hey, let's set up a [telephone conference], discuss it or in some other framework," I'm open to how it might be of use to you.
Participant 3-3	01:00:39	Super, das passt. Wunderbar.	Great, that fits. Wonderful.
Researcher	01:00:43	Perfekt. Dann ganz herzlichen Dank noch mal für die Zeit.	Perfect. Then thank you very much again for your time.
Participant 3-3	01:00:47	Sehr gerne. Hat Spaß gemacht.	I'd love to. It was fun.

Appendix 13 – Example transcript – “Communication Expert”

Participant 6-2 - Interview

Date of record: 25/02/2022

Researcher	00:00	Es würde mich freuen, wenn Sie sich kurz vor dem beruflichen Hintergrund und den Aufgaben im Unternehmen mal vorstellen könnten.	I would be pleased if you could briefly introduce yourself with focus on the professional background and the tasks in the company.
Participant 6-2	00:11	Okay, also den Namen kennen Sie ja. [Participant 6-2]. Ich bin seit mittlerweile acht Jahren bei [Company 6] und verantwortet jetzt seit bald fünf Jahren das digitale Marketing. Hat gestartet eigentlich als wir hießen mal Web Office, unsere Abteilung. Von daher musste ich schmunzeln, als Sie das gesagt haben. Die Aufgaben sind mehr geworden. Es war bei uns auch so. Wir haben ein Web-Relaunch gemacht. Der war schon relativ mächtig. Da war ein ganz altes System, auf dem mehrere Webseiten liefen, das eben dringend auf technisch wegmusste, wo aber auch Content seitig alles, also wir haben da eigentlich so gut wie nichts migriert, sondern alles neu gemacht. Und daraus erst mal die Notwendigkeit auch abgeleitet und ins Unternehmen gebracht. Ja, wir brauchen auch Manpower, die sich fortlaufend um diese Kanäle kümmert. Wir hatten 2-3 vielleicht Online-Redakteure über die gesamte [Company 6] Company und jetzt haben wir so um die 100!	Okay, so you know the name. [Participant 6-2]. I've been with [Company 6] for eight years now and have been responsible for digital marketing for almost five years now. It actually started when we were called Web Office, our department. So, I had to smile when you said that. The tasks have become more. It was the same with us. We did a web relaunch. It was already relatively powerful. There was a very old system on which several websites were running that urgently needed to be technically removed, but where everything on the content side was also migrated, so we actually migrated almost nothing, but made everything new. And from this we first derived the necessity and brought it into the company. Yes, we also need manpower to take care of these channels on an ongoing basis. We had maybe 2-3 online editors across the entire [Company 6] Company and now we have about 100!
Researcher	01:20	Mh.	Mh.
Participant 6-2	01:20	Das sind nicht alles Marketingler, sondern da sind auch, ich zähle die User mit, die zum Beispiel auch den Corporate Social Responsibility Report einmal im Jahr updaten oder Stellenanzeigen posten. - Genau. -	They are not all marketers, but there are, I also count the users who, for example, also update the Corporate Social Responsibility Report once a year or post job advertisements. - Exactly. -
Researcher	01:33	Das war auch die Herausforderung zu sagen, Wir brauchen ein System, wo wir fortlaufend auch Pflege ermöglichen können, an ganz vielen verschiedenen Stellen in der Firma und haben dann eben in den letzten Jahren zusätzliche Sachen mit reingepackt. Haben uns das Thema Marketing-Automatisierung, E-Mail-Marketing gekümmert. Haben ein Digital Asset Management eingeführt, haben zu allen Tools hat immer geguckt, dass wir da so übergreifend, ja, eine Verbindung herstellen. Wir haben zwei Core-Systeme: Wir haben unser Salesforce CRM im Einsatz und wir haben einen Cisco CMS und haben die beiden so miteinander, ganz gut verwoben und alles andere dockt irgendwo an, auch an den Punkten. Also entweder gibt es Content seitig was, was aus dem CMS kommt oder es gehen Daten	That was also the challenge to say, "We need a system where we can also enable continuous maintenance in many different places in the company and have then added additional things in recent years. We have taken care of the topic of marketing automation and email marketing. We have introduced a digital asset management system, and we have always made sure that we have an overarching connection to all the tools. We have two core systems: We have our Salesforce CRM in use and we have a Cisco CMS and we have interwoven the two quite well and everything else docks somewhere on, also at the points. So, either there is content that comes from the CMS or data goes into the CRM at the end. Or sometimes both. Quite an ecosystem

Appendix 13 – Example transcript – “Communication Expert”

		dann am Ende ins CRM rein. Oder manchmal beides. Da ist ein ziemliches Ecosystem entstanden und wir machen im Grunde die als Product Owner die IT Steuerung. Und (-) sind was auf der Content-Seite angeht, wir haben auch eigenen Content. Wir sind in der AG. Das heißt, wir machen so übergreifende Image-Themen und so. Das ist der Content auch bei uns und ansonsten machen wir eben viel Support, Schulungen, Enablement.	has emerged and we basically do the IT control as product owners. And (-) on the content side, we also have our own content. We are in the AG. That means we do overarching image topics and so on. That's our content, too, and otherwise we do a lot of support, training and enablement.
Researcher	02:56	Mh.	Mh.
Participant 6-2	02:56	Könnte man sagen. Genau. Ich komme eigentlich selber aus einem Nicht-Industriemfeld. Ich war vorher 5 Jahre beim europäischen [Association] und habe da als Media Officer / Online Redakteur gearbeitet. Das heißt aber auch von Website eigentlich immer der der Fokus, also beim europäischen Verband natürlich direkte Ansprache immer schwierig, wenn sich alles über den ganzen Kontinent verteilt und habe da auch schon viel Erfahrung damit gemacht, wie man eben gut mit Daten umgeht, auch strukturiert und automatisiert. Da laufen jedes Jahr mehrere tausend Spiele über die Plattform, die halt auch mit Online-Statistiken und so ausgespielt werden. Das ganze Handling zu machen. Wie kommen die Statistiken da rein. Bilder, Texte zu den jeweiligen Spielen. Wie strukturiert man das auch mit einem kleinen Team, das es handelbar ist? Da habe ich ganz gute Einblicke mitgebracht vorher. Genau also das ist da wo wir gerade sind. Ja (--), können wir denke ich weitergehen.	You could say that. Exactly. I actually come from a non-industry background myself. I was previously with the European [Association] for 5 years and worked there as Media Officer / Online Editor. But that also means that the website is always the focus, so of course it's always difficult to address the European association directly when everything is spread across the whole continent, and I've already had a lot of experience with how to handle data well, also in a structured and automated way. Every year, several thousand matches are played on the platform, with online statistics and so on. To do the whole handling. How do the statistics get in? Pictures, texts on the respective games. How do you structure that with a small team so that it is manageable? I've had some good insights into that before. Exactly, so that's where we are right now. Yes (--), I think we can go further.
Researcher	04:11	Ähm, ich hätte noch eine Frage bezogen auf Ihren akademischen Hintergrund. Sie haben jetzt mehrmals gesagt, so ein bisschen der Hintergrund scheint redakteurslastig zu sein. Hört sich zumindest so an. Haben Sie auch in der Hinsicht etwas studiert, oder?	Um, I have another question regarding your academic background. You've said several times now that your background seems to be a bit editor-based. At least it sounds like it. Did you also study something in that respect, didn't you?
Participant 6-2	04:27	Nein, ich bin BWLER, wenn man es ganz schlampig hinschmeißen will. Ich habe Sportökonomie studiert. -	No, I'm a business economist, if you want to be really sloppy about it. I studied sports economics. -
Researcher	04:33	Okay. -	Okay. -
Participant 6-2	04:33	Also ich habe ein Diplom-Ökonom, also ein Diplom in Ökonomie. Das ist mein akademischer Hintergrund.	So, I have a degree in economics, so I have a diploma in economics. That is my academic background.
Researcher	04:43	Und dann, was ich als nächstes jeden immer gerne Frage ist, oder bitte, ob sie sich auch einmal einordnen könnten und vielleicht auch ein bisschen mit einer Beschreibung drumherum. Wie sieht Ihr Team aus? Ja genau und Ähnliches.	And then, what I always like to ask or please everyone next is, if they could also classify themselves once and maybe also with a bit of a description around it. What does your team look like? Yes, exactly and similar.
Participant 6-2	05:01	Wir sitzen wie gesagt in der [Company 6] Aktiengesellschaft, in der Dachgesellschaft über den, über unseren [quantity] Business Segmenten. Und machen das, was wir tun, eben auch übergreifend, das heißt, wir arbeiten auch alle mit den oder bei fast allem, was wir tun,	As I said, we work in the [Company 6] limited company, in the parent company above the, above our [quantity] business segments. And we also do what we do across the board, which means that we also work with all the business segments, or with almost

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		<p>mit allen Business Segmenten. Manchmal sind ein paar Lücken, aber ich berichte in der Funktion an den an den Chief Marketing Officer, der wiederum berichtet in der Aktiengesellschaft direkt an den CEO. -</p>	<p>everything we do. Sometimes there are a few gaps, but I report in the function to the to the Chief Marketing Officer, who in turn reports in the public company directly to the CEO. -</p>
Researcher	05:30	<p>Ja. -</p>	<p>Yes. -</p>
Participant 6-2	05:31	<p>Also man könnte sagen N minus zwei. Mein Team sind drei Vollzeit plus Werksstudent, plus Praktikant in der Regel und das ist auch - wir haben es eben aufgebaut 2017, glaube ich, mit einem Mitarbeiter und dann 18, 2 und 3 dazu und seitdem (-) haben wir Head Count eher verteidigt, das aufgebaut. Haben bei [Company 6] auch schon vor der Pandemie zwei Sparrunden gehabt, weil die Firma unproportional zum Business gewachsen ist. Da waren wir ein bisschen Leidtragend. Haben die aber weitestgehend unbeschadet überstanden. Heißt die Teamgröße ist da gleich geblieben. Genau, haben halt natürlich und deshalb ich finde mich da wieder, bei dem, was sie beschrieben haben, haben in der Zeit vier oder fünf neue Prozesse eingeführt, die wir jetzt mit derselben Manpower händeln müssen. Es geht ja nicht nur uns so. Wir haben dann hintendran ganz viele User hängen. Ich habe schon gesagt, so ungefähr die hundert CMS-Redakteure oder Benutzer - sind nicht alles Redakteure, aber Benutzer. Wir haben ungefähr 50 Marketer, die unsere E-Mail-Marketing Lösung verwenden. Dann (--) einen sehr großen Anteil an Marketing-Usern, die eben auch das CRM mit dem Marketing teilen, den wir betreuen, verwenden und dazu dann noch mal die gleiche Zahl ungefähr ein paar mehr sind, die Digital Asset Management machen zum Beispiel.</p>	<p>So, you could say N minus two. My team is three full-time plus a student trainee, plus an intern as a rule, and that's all - we just built it up in 2017, I think, with one employee and then 18, 2 and 3 on top of that and since then (-) we've rather defended Head Count, built that up. We had two rounds of savings at [Company 6] even before the pandemic because the company grew disproportionately to the business. We had to suffer a bit. But we survived them largely unscathed. That means the team size remained the same. Exactly, of course, and that's why I find myself in what you've described, we've introduced four or five new processes in that time, which we now have to handle with the same manpower. It's not just us. We have a lot of users hanging on the back burner. As I said, there are about a hundred CMS editors or users - not all of them are editors, but users. We have about 50 marketers who use our email marketing solution. Then (--) a very large proportion of marketing users who also share the CRM with the marketing that we look after, and then the same number of about a few more who do digital asset management, for example.</p>
Researcher	07:11	<p>Ja, das ist wirklich spannend, wie sich das, wie soll ich sagen, insgesamt entwickelt, weil auf der einen Seite hörte ich zumindest auch aus allen anderen Interviews, die mit den anderen Unternehmen hatte, immer wieder raus. Ja, nur als Stichwort, Marketing Automation wird immer wichtiger, Social Media wird immer wichtiger, wir müssen irgendwie auf den Plattformen vertreten sein. So und das ist ja auch alles Bestandteil einer klassischen, integrierten Marketing-Kommunikationsstrategie, wenn man das mal so will. Gleiche Botschaften, im besten Fall über verschiedenste Kanäle an eine Zielgruppe und wie das zu händeln ist. (-) Ja, da haben dann häufig die Leute gesagt, es ist jetzt nicht so meine Expertise, es sei denn, ich habe mit Counterparts von ihnen gesprochen, die halt genau da drin waren und die sich der Komplexität entsprechend</p>	<p>Yes, it's really exciting how this is developing, how should I put it, overall, because on the one hand I heard again and again from all the other interviews I had with the other companies. Yes, just as a keyword, marketing automation is becoming more and more important, social media is becoming more and more important, we have to be represented on the platforms somehow. So, and that's all part of a classic, integrated marketing communication strategy, if you want. The same messages, in the best case via the most diverse channels to a target group and how that is to be handled. (-) Yes, people often said that it's not really my expertise, unless I've spoken to counterparts of theirs who were involved in exactly that and who were aware of the complexity. I would like to ask two or three more detailed</p>

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		<p>bewusst waren. Da würde ich später gerne noch zwei, drei Detailfragen zu stellen. Letzte einleitende Frage, die ich hätte, um auch so ein bisschen Gefühl von [Company 6] zu bekommen, wäre, ob Sie mal die Organisationskultur beschreiben und umreißen können? Was meine ich mit Organisationskultur? Ich verstehe da solche Themen wie Machtdistanz, Fehlerkultur, herrscht ein ausgeprägtes Silo-Denken vor? Oder ist man eher als Kollektiv unterwegs und bringt Dinge gemeinschaftlich voran? Wie kann man sich so etwas bei Ihnen vorstellen?</p>	<p>questions later. The last introductory question I would have, in order to get a bit of a feeling for [Company 6], is whether you could describe and outline the organisational culture? What do I mean by organisational culture? I understand such topics as power distance, error culture, is there a pronounced silo thinking? Or do you work more as a collective and move things forward together? How can one imagine something like that in your organisation?</p>
Participant 6-2	08:40	<p>Also, so wie ich das erlebt habe, jetzt in acht Jahren haben wir, was das Thema Fehlerkultur und Machtdistanz angeht, sind wir da deutlich moderner geworden. Also (-), ich denke, dass ist eigentlich das ist gerade so der, der CMO bei uns. Der sorgt da eigentlich für ein sehr, sehr gutes Klima das leistungsförderlich ist, wo eben keine Angst herrschen muss, dass man irgendwie Fehler macht, sondern wo sich auch völlig als Teil des Business gewertet wird, wenn Fehler passieren. Da würde ich, da schätze ich uns eigentlich ganz gut ein. Für die gesamte Firma ist es schon an manchen Ecken noch nicht so etabliert. -</p>	<p>So, as I have experienced it, now in eight years, we have become much more modern in terms of error culture and power distance. So (-), I think that is actually the CMO with us. He actually ensures a very, very good climate that is conducive to performance, where there is no fear that one will somehow make mistakes, but where mistakes are completely considered part of the business. I would say that I think we are actually quite good in that topic. For the company as a whole, it is not yet so established in some corners. -</p>
Researcher	09:26	<p>Okay. -</p>	<p>Okay. -</p>
Participant 6-2	09:26	<p>Haben wir schon noch so dieses klassische Maschinenbau, technisch, es muss alles zu 100 Prozent stimmen, darunter braucht man gar nicht kommen. 120, wenn schon besser. (--) Ja, also ich denke, dass ist das. Was waren die anderen Fragen?</p>	<p>We still have this classic mechanical engineering, technical, everything has to be 100 per cent right, you don't need to go below that. 120, if that's better. (--) Yes, I think that's it. What were the other questions?</p>
Researcher	09:47	<p>Das andere war so ein bisschen dieses Silo-Denken. Also stoßen sie vielleicht auch bei Projekten, Weiterentwicklung, all die Dinge, die sie eingangs aufgelistet hatten, dann vielleicht auch mal an Hürden, die es vielleicht sachlogisch vielleicht nicht geben sollte?</p>	<p>The other thing was a bit of this silo thinking. So perhaps they also come up against hurdles in projects, further development, all the things you listed at the beginning, which perhaps should not exist from a logical point of view?</p>
Participant 6-2	10:04	<p>Gibt es schon. Mal auch sehr stark ausgeprägt die ganze Zeit lang. In diesen Business Segmenten hat man versucht und ist dann dabei wahrscheinlich übers Ziel hinausgeschossen. Hat man versucht komplett aufzulösen und auch wirklich mehr oder weniger Klassiker. Was man bei ganz vielen ja auch so “One [Company 6]“, wir sind alle in einer Firma. Und dann hat man das bewusst ein Stück zurückgedreht wieder. Hat die Silos eigentlich wieder zugelassen. Einfach um mehr, (-), ja, um da mehr Geschwindigkeit reinzubringen. Also Abstimmungsaufwand zu reduzieren, würde ich sagen. Und das merkt man schon. Also das gibt es an manchen Stellen. Da gibt es dann auch natürlich Themen bei so übergreifenden Teams wie dem meinen oder der Organisationsstruktur, wo ich mich wiederfinde in der</p>	<p>It already exists. At times, it was also very pronounced for a long time. In these business segments, they tried and probably overshot the goal. They have tried to completely dissolve and also really more or less classics. Which is also the case with many “One [Company 6]“, we are all in one company. And then they deliberately turned it back a bit. They actually allowed the silos to reappear. Simply in order to (-), yes, to bring more speed into it. To reduce the coordination effort, I would say. And that's already noticeable. So, there is that in some places. Of course, there are also issues with overarching teams like mine or the organisational structure, where I find myself in the public limited company. Who does what? Who is allowed to do</p>

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		Aktiengesellschaft. Wer macht was? Wer darf was? Wer entscheidet was? Es sind schon so klassische Silo-Punkte. Ist jetzt nicht super schlimm, aber es ist schon ist es ein Stück weit in der Organisation gewollt, würde ich mal behaupten. Oder zumindest mal eine Konsequenz aus der aus der aktuellen Organisationsstruktur.	what? Who decides what? These are classic silo points. It's not super bad now, but I would say it's already to some extent intentional in the organisation. Or at least a consequence of the current organisational structure.
Researcher	11:18	Ja, spannend. Gerade in so übergeordneten Funktionen sollten die ja in der Regel immer einen Mehrwert für alle Bereiche schaffen, dass dann trotzdem vielleicht noch an der einen oder anderen Stelle entsprechend der [quantity] Business Units sein Veto eingelegt wird oder eine andere Meinung vorherrscht. -	Yes, exciting. Especially in such superordinate functions, they should usually always create added value for all areas, so that perhaps at one point or another, according to the [quantity] business units, a veto is inserted or a different opinion prevails. -
Participant 6-2	11:35	Ja, also ich meine das ist schon, genau so verstehen wir uns auch. Wir gehen auch immer mit dem Ansatz, eben genau diese Effizienzen zu schaffen, die mal eben aus einem aus der Wiederverwendung hat. Bedeutet natürlich auch, dass man oft die 80-20-Lösung hat, die nicht immer jeden dann zufriedenstellt.	Yes, I mean, that's exactly how we see ourselves. We always take the approach of creating precisely these efficiencies that come from reuse. Of course, this also means that you often have the 80-20 solution, which doesn't always satisfy everyone.
Researcher	11:54	Ja, verstehe. Jetzt hatten Sie in der vorherigen Frage so ein bisschen gesagt, Mensch, bei uns geht es eher darum, Stellen zu verteidigen, in Führungszeichen, als groß jetzt Ressource oder Budget aufzubauen. Spiegelt sich das auch in dem Stellenwert von Marketing-Kommunikation innerhalb der [Company 6] AG wider? Das man sagt, hat jetzt vielleicht nicht die höchste Priorität oder wie ist das zu sehen? Wie gesagt, Marketing-Kommunikation, alles was irgendwie zur Vermarktung von Produkten und Dienstleistungen beiträgt.	Yes, I see. Now, in the previous question, you said a little bit that for us it's more about defending jobs, in inverted commas, than building up resources or budgets. Is that also reflected in the importance of marketing communication within [Company 6] AG? That you say, maybe it's not the highest priority now, or how should that be seen? As I said, marketing communication, everything that somehow contributes to the marketing of products and services.
Participant 6-2	12:28	Sicher. Ich denke, wir haben einen relativ natürlichen Prozess gesehen. Wenn Firmen wenig profitabel sind oder sogar ins Minus rutschen, dadurch kommt man automatisch in so einen Modus rein, wo man halt nach schnell zugängliche Töpfen sucht. Da bietet sich natürlich, also da sind wir auf der Budget-Seite, da gliedert sich externes Marketingbudget erst mal an. -	Sure. I think we have seen a relatively classic process. When companies are not very profitable or even slide into the red, you automatically get into a mode where you look for quickly accessible pots. So of course, here we are on the budget side, where the external marketing budget comes in first. -
Researcher	12:54	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	12:55	Das ist aber nicht so, dass wir jetzt zurück auf Null zurückgefahren würden, sondern wir haben einen Beitrag geleistet. Ich denke der war auch nicht, die Forderungen da waren ins Marketing war noch nicht überzogen und wir konnten das auch so ausgestalten, dass es nicht in den Bereich geht, wo man sagt da geht es jetzt, da schädigt man die Marke, oder, oder. Oder auch die Lead-Pipeline nachhaltig. Also wir haben runtergefahren. Aber wir haben das maßvoll tun können und halt jetzt selber auch noch Entscheidungen treffen können, innerhalb dessen. Also der Stellenwert des eigentlich schon ganz gut. Beim Personellen war es natürlich so, da war	However, it is not the case that we are now being cut back to zero, but we have made a contribution. I don't think that was the case either, the marketing demands were not yet excessive and we were also able to design it in such a way that it doesn't go into the area where people say it's going to damage the brand, or, or. Or even the lead pipeline in the long term. So, we have cut back. But we've been able to do that moderately, and we've also been able to make our own decisions within that. So, the significance of that is actually quite good. In terms of personnel, of course, marketing was also affected. It

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		<p>Marketing auch betroffen. Da war es eigentlich eher so, dass da mein Chef eine Gewichtung vorgenommen hat und gesagt hat, speziell der Bereich digitales Marketing ist wichtig, der ist auch zukunftsorientiert, der bleibt wichtig und wird eher zu als abnehmen. Das heißt, das heißt da wird nichts gespart. Da haben wir uns komplett, sind wir komplett unbeschadet daraus hervorgegangen. Da sind Personal-Geschichten, wir haben schon signifikant am Standort Personal abgebaut. Ist ja kein Geheimnis. Kann man nachlesen. Wir sind von über [quantity] auf [quantity]. Mitarbeiter runter, das heißt über 10 Prozent, so 13-14 Prozentbereich. (--) Ja, das hat kaum eine Abteilung irgendwo verschont.</p>	<p>was actually more the case that my boss made a weighting and said that digital marketing in particular is important, that it is also future-oriented, that it remains important and that it will increase rather than decrease. That means that nothing will be saved. We have come out of this completely unscathed. There are personnel stories, we have already significantly reduced staff at the location. That's no secret. You can read about it. We went from [quantity] to [quantity]. That means more than 10 per cent, about 13-14 per cent. (--) Yes, hardly any department anywhere has been spared.</p>
Researcher	14:31	<p>Ja. Nee, das stimmt. Jetzt haben Sie gerade ein tolles Stichwort genannt. Online-Marketing oder digitales Marketing ist was für die Zukunft. Wo sehen Sie persönlich dann Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen, die so eine Organisation wie [Company 6] zukünftig aufbauen müsste, um auch gut aufgestellt zu sein? Es gibt ja unterschiedlichste Treiber. Wir hatten eingangs über Social Media kurz gesprochen bzw. fiel das Stichwort. Wie nehmen Sie das so wahr?</p>	<p>Yes. Nah, that's right. Now you've just mentioned a great keyword. Online marketing or digital marketing is something for the future. Where do you personally see skills and competences that an organisation like [Company 6] would have to build up in the future in order to be well positioned? There are many different drivers. We talked briefly about social media at the beginning, or rather the keyword came up. How do you perceive it?</p>
Participant 6-2	15:04	<p>Ja, also das sehe ich auf jeden Fall so, dass wir da, dass es da auch eine Transformation an die oder eine Veränderung der Anforderungen an die Mitarbeiter gibt. Die Mitarbeitenden. Natürlich auch von den Vorgesetzten angefangen runter. Die grundsätzliche Technikaffinität braucht es sicher mehr als vorher. Keine Berührungsängste bzw. schon auch in manchen Sachen einfach Expertise in digitalen Tools. Das sehen wir relativ viel bei uns. Dass das lange Zeit jetzt nicht da war. Das Marketing, und ich glaube, da sind wir nicht untypisch für ein B2B-Unternehmen, ist die Rollen im Marketing, da eigentlich eher organisatorische Rollen waren. Also das man sagt, irgendwie das sind zwar Kommunikationsprofis, die aber in der Regel mit Agenturen eben die tatsächlichen Inhalte erarbeiten. Das heißt, man hat wenig Leute, die in der Spitze eine Expertise haben. Die zum Beispiel einen Texter sind, die ein Designer sind, die einen Onlineprofi für Suchmaschinen-Marketing sind, sondern Leute, die halt in erster Linie koordinierende Agenturen steuern und sich da eben und da gewisse Expertise erarbeitet haben. Und da haben wir schon gesehen, dass das so schwierig ist. Gerade, wenn man in den eigenen, wozu wir uns entschlossen haben, halt einen eigenen starken Stack aufbaut, dann kann man es schwer alles oder es wird</p>	<p>Yes, I definitely see it that way, that there is also a transformation of or a change in the demands on the employees. The employees. Starting with the superiors, of course. A basic affinity for technology is certainly needed more than before. No fear of contact or simply expertise in digital tools in some areas. We see a lot of that in our company. That this was not there for a long time. Marketing, and I think we are not atypical for a B2B company, is the role in marketing, which was actually more of an organisational role. In other words, they say that somehow these are communication professionals, but they usually work with agencies to develop the actual content. That means you have few people who have expertise at the top. For example, who are copywriters, who are designers, who are online professionals for search engine marketing, but rather people who primarily manage coordinating agencies and have developed certain expertise. And we have already seen that this is so difficult. Especially when you build up your own strong stack, which we have decided to do, then it is difficult to do everything or it quickly becomes very expensive to do everything completely with agencies. And this change of agencies is then</p>

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		dann sehr schnell sehr teuer, das dann alles komplett mit Agenturen zu tun, zu machen. Und dieser Wechsel von Agenturen ist dann auch, wird dann auch extrem schwierig, weil er eben in genau diesem Tool ist, das man selber betreibt, halt die Expertise nicht so leicht zu finden ist. Und da haben wir schon gesehen, dass wir da auch vieles qualifizieren müssen. Also intern.	also extremely difficult, because the expertise is not so easy to find in exactly this tool that you operate yourself. And we have already seen that we have to qualify a lot of things. So internally.
Researcher	17:17	Qualifizieren heißt in dem Fall so was wie Schulungen und Ähnliches? Also -	Qualification in this case means something like training courses and the like? So -
Participant 6-2	17:22	Training on the Job natürlich. Wir machen so für den Tool-Stack, den wir bei uns im Team haben, machen wir eben auch komplett Schulungskonzept, die Schulungen selbst auch, Schulungsdokumentation. Das ist alles bei uns. Gibt es auch andere Ansätze bei anderen Firmen, die sich dann irgendwie hat die die Agentur speziell dafür dann auch reinkommen lassen, oder wo das Training die IT macht oder so. Also bei uns ist das eine Business-Rolle, die bei mir im Team ist. Es geht sogar rein bis in die Sales-Organisation, wenn wir über CRM sprechen.	Training on the job, of course. For the tool stack that we have in our team, we also make a complete training concept, the training itself, and training documentation. That's all we do. Are there other approaches at other companies that have somehow let the agency come in specifically for this, or where the training is done by IT or so? With us, it's a business role that's with me in the team. It even goes into the sales organisation when we talk about CRM.
Researcher	17:56	Das ist spannend. Ich hatte andere Unternehmen in der Rolle hier, wo zum Beispiel klassisch digitales Marketing, weil es halt IT ist immer noch in der klassischen IT oder dem Fachbereich quasi aufgehängt ist. Sowohl was Ressourcen angeht und dann quasi auch Weiterentwicklung von Plattform und Ähnliches. Und auf der anderen Seite ähnlich wie von Ihnen geschildert Unternehmen, wo halt genau diese Dinge gewissermaßen im Marketing bzw. im Kommunikationsbereich liegen. Und ja, da stand jetzt zumindest sehr unterschiedlichste Philosophien bzw. Schnittstellen. Gerade wenn es um das Thema CRM geht, meistens dann entsprechend eher Sales im Mittelpunkt stand. Wie ist das bei Ihnen? Sie haben auch eben gerade das Stichwort Marketing fallen lassen. Ist Marketing, also der Kommunikationsbereich, extern, gleichzusetzen, wenn Sie über Marketing sprechen oder gibt es einen Unterschied?	That's exciting. I've had other companies in this role here where, for example, classic digital marketing, because it's IT, is still more or less suspended in classic IT or the specialist department. Both in terms of resources and then also the further development of platforms and the like. And on the other hand, similar to what you described, companies where exactly these things are in the marketing or communication area. And yes, there were at least very different philosophies and interfaces. Especially when it comes to CRM, the focus is usually more on sales. How is that with you? You also just mentioned the keyword marketing. Is marketing, i.e. the communication area, external, the same when you talk about marketing or is there a difference?
Participant 6-2	19:09	Ja, also Sie kennen ja [Participant 6-1]. Wir haben, die Kommunikation ist eigenständig, berichtet direkt an den CEO. Aber grundsätzlich kann man das gerade international, kann man es eigentlich gleichsetzen. Also diese Corporate Communication gibt es eigentlich nur in [City], während Marketing in vielen Business Segmenten halt lokal auch in den Ländern vorhanden ist.	Yes, so you know [Participant 6-1]. We have, the communication is independent, reports directly to the CEO. But basically you can equate it internationally. So, this corporate communication actually only exists in [City], while marketing in many business segments also exists locally in the countries.
Researcher	19:34	Und dann ist Marketing aber in dem Fall primär auf dieses Thema Promotion von	And then marketing in that case is primarily due to this topic of promotion

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		den 4P zurückzuführen und weniger Placement oder ähnliche Themen? -	from the 4P and less placement or similar topics? -
Participant 6-2	19:43	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	19:45	...und damit ist quasi dann, auch wenn ich es richtig verstehe, so was wie CRM durchaus mit in ihrer Verantwortung, weil es eher um Kommunikationsaussteuerung geht, weniger um Vertriebsexpertise?	...and so, even if I understand it correctly, something like CRM is definitely part of their responsibility, because it's more about communication control, less about sales expertise?
Participant 6-2	19:58	Wenn man das CRM so als ganz großen Kuchen nimmt, dann kümmern wir uns um Marketing, um einen relativ normalen Bereich. Wir haben das Thema, also wir haben anhand der verschiedenen, (--), Positionen im Sales-Funnel kann man sagen, haben das aufgeteilt. Und wir sind sehr weit oben. Wir haben das Kampagnen-Objekt. Ist genau das, was sie gesagt haben mit Kommunikationssteuerung und wir haben es Lead-Objekt als dessen Resultat am Ende. Die sind bei uns. -	If you take CRM as a very big pie, then we take care of marketing, a relatively normal area. We have divided the topic, so we have divided it up on the basis of the different, (--), positions in the sales funnel, you can say. And we are very high up. We have the campaign object. Is exactly what they said with communication control and we have it lead object as its result at the end. They are with us. -
Researcher	20:29	Mhm. -	Mhm. -
Participant 6-2	20:29	Da sind wir natürlich eng verzahnt mit dem Sales. Um das ganze, wie es dann weitergeht, Opportunity Management, Asset Management haben wir mit drin im CRM, das ganze Accounts und Contact Management, das ist alles im Sales. Aber da ist das Marketing ja auch wieder User. Das heißt, wenn wir eine Marketingkampagne fahren, tun wir das ja auf CRM-Daten. -	Of course, we are closely interlinked with Sales. Opportunity management, asset management are all part of CRM, the whole accounts and contact management, that's all in Sales. But marketing is also a user there. That means that when we run a marketing campaign, we do it on CRM data. -
Researcher	20:54	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	20:55	Das heißt, da haben wir uns mit Sales so zusammengerauft, dass wir dann den Teil, der eben überwiegend vom Marketing genutzt wird, auch direkt beeinflussen können. Und ich würde noch einen Satz verlieren auf diese Trennung mit IT und Marketing. Das habe ich vorhin vergessen, so wie wir aufgestellt sind. Wir haben ein Schwester-Team in der IT. Center of Excellence Digital Marketing und wir arbeiten einem komplett agilen Prozess zusammen. Das heißt, die Kollegen haben ein Backlog und ich und ein weiterer Kollege sind Product Owner und steuern im Grunde den Teil der Ressourcen dieses Teams, der committed wird auf das Backlog, steuern wir komplett inhaltlich aus.	This means that we have come together with Sales in such a way that we can directly influence the part that is mainly used by Marketing. And I would like to say something about the separation of IT and marketing. I forgot that earlier, the way we are set up. We have a sister team in IT. Centre of Excellence Digital Marketing and we work together in a completely agile process. That means the colleagues have a backlog and I and another colleague are product owners and basically control the part of the resources of this team that is committed to the backlog.
Researcher	21:35	Inhaltlich heißt das Budget liegt dann quasi in genau diesem IT Team?	In terms of content, does that mean that the budget lies in precisely this IT team?
Participant 6-2	21:40	Das Budget liegt drüben, wird allerdings komplett auf uns umgelegt. Das heißt, da gibt es auch aus Budgetsicht eigentlich eine Transparenz zu sagen, okay, das sind IT-Kosten, aber die werden komplett vom Marketing verursacht.	The budget is over there, but it is passed on to us completely. This means that from a budgetary point of view, there is actually transparency to say, okay, these are IT costs, but they are completely caused by marketing.
Researcher	21:53	Ja, verstehe. Das bringt uns zu einer anderen Frage sonst noch. Und zwar wenn sie jetzt – Mir geht es ja auch ein bisschen um die Fragestellung wer ist dann	Yes, I see. That brings us to another question. And that is, if you now – I am also a bit concerned with the question of who is then involved in such a

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		involviert in so einen Entscheidungsprozess? Um Dinge weiterzuentwickeln? -	decision-making process? To develop things further? -
Participant 6-2	22:10	Mh. -	Mh. -
Researcher	22:10	Sie haben jetzt gesagt, Sie sind vor fünf Jahren gestartet. Website-Relaunch, ähnliche Themen. Mittlerweile sind eher Marketing-Automation, Newsletter-Ausstattung, all das, was da mit dranhängt. Jetzt gibt es wahrscheinlich immer noch weitere Baustellen entlang der Customer Journey das Ganze mit Informationen anzureichern, oder, oder. Solche Entwicklungsprojekte, werden die dann quasi, wenn sie Product Owner sind, mit auf die Liste aufgeschrieben, mit wem auch immer an Stakeholdern abgestimmt und -	You have now said that you started five years ago. Website relaunch, similar topics. In the meantime, it's more marketing automation, newsletter equipment, all the things that go along with it. Now there are probably still more construction sites along the customer journey to enrich the whole thing with information, or, or. Such development projects, if you are product owner, are then written down on the list, coordinated with whoever the stakeholders are, and - they're all done.
Participant 6-2	22:41	Genau da gibt es zwei Möglichkeiten. Das eines Projekt: Wenn es eine gewisse Größe überschreitet ist alles Continuous Improvement. Und das ist dann wirklich der komplett agile Prozess, wenn wir im Continuous Improvement sind. Das heißt als Product Owner mein Job ist da eben die Abstimmung zu den Stakeholdern, die Priorisierung von dem Backlog und dann wird es abgearbeitet. Wenn wir jetzt zum Beispiel von einem Einführungsprojekt sprechen, von neuer Software, dann verlassen wir diesen rein agilen Prozess, machen ein bisschen Projektmanagement, wasserfallig außenrum. Wenn man die eben hat, hat man irgendwie Anbieter-Auswahl und Verhandlungen mit Einkauf- und Legal-Prüfungen und Enterprise Architektur, was noch alles kommt. Also das ist dann eher so ein wasserfalligeres Projekt. -	There are two possibilities right there. That of a project: If it exceeds a certain size, everything is Continuous Improvement. And that is really the complete agile process when we are in Continuous Improvement. As a product owner, my job is to coordinate with the stakeholders, prioritise the backlog and then work through it. If we're talking about an implementation project, for example, of new software, then we leave this purely agile process and do a bit of project management, waterfall-style, on the outside. When you have that, you have a kind of vendor selection and negotiations with purchasing and legal checks and enterprise architecture, and everything else that comes along. So that's more of a waterfall project. -
Researcher	23:27	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	23:27	Das geht dann in den Betrieb über, je nachdem, ob es dann halt Development braucht oder nicht, käme es dann auch irgendwann ab irgendeinem Punkt dann auch ganz normal ins Entwicklungs-Backlog. Und dann gibt es eben noch die andere Möglichkeit, das haben wir ja schon länger nicht gemacht, aber bei größeren Projekten holen wir uns halt auch teilweise externe Unterstützung dazu.	Afterwards this goes into operation, and depending on whether it needs development or not, at some point it would also be included in the development backlog as normal. And then there is the other possibility, which we haven't done for a while, but for larger projects we sometimes get external support.
Researcher	23:52	Mh. Was sind denn so die Stakeholder, die bei solchen Dingen Einfluss nehmen bzw. kommen die Themen rein von Ihnen jetzt aus adressiert? Oder sind das vielleicht auch Vertriebsbedarfe, die da in eine Art und Weise kanalisiert bei Ihnen landen und die sie dann aufnehmen?	Mh. What are the stakeholders who have an influence on such things, or are the topics addressed purely by you now? Or are they perhaps sales requirements that are channeled to you in some way and which you then take up?
Participant 6-2	24:08	Ist glaube ich auch relativ klassisch. Wir haben natürlich die Marketingabteilungen der Business Segmente, die ja unsere Abnehmer sind, letztlich.	I think it's also relatively classic. Of course, we have the marketing departments of the business segments, which are our customers.
Researcher	24:15	Ja.	Yes.
Participant 6-2	24:18	Die spielen eine sehr große Rolle. Wir haben allerdings auch schon Projekte mit	They play a very big role. However, we have also done projects with HR, for

HR gemacht, zum Beispiel. Mit Relaunch von Job-Postings automatisiert aus dem HR-System. Wir haben natürlich Vertriebs-Themen. Im Moment arbeiten wir gerade an so einem Guided Selling wisard. Wir haben einen relativ großen Stake mit dem Vertrieb aus einer unserer Business Segmente. Wir haben natürlich Corporate Communication, [Participant 6-1] Team und ich und mein Team unterhalten uns gerade über den Umzug vom Blog. Den betreiben auf unserer zentrale Plattform. Ja, aber das sind schon so die üblichen Verdächtigen, sag ich mal. Ist auch denkbar, wenn man kleineres Projekt gemacht, aber die gehören auch zu den Stakeholdern. Wir haben so ein Innovation Team, ein interdisziplinäres, die unsere neue [Product segment] und das Ökosystem darum herum entwickeln. Und die sind eigentlich auch noch mal in gesonderter Stakeholder, weil die sind zwar, die haben Anknüpfungspunkte in R&D, die haben im Vertrieb Leute, aber das ist eben ein in sich geschlossenes Team und die sind bei uns ein separater Stakeholder.

Researcher 25:37

Verstanden. Ja, kann ich bestätigen. All die, die klassischen Bereiche sind immer mit involviert. So ein bisschen das, was ich halt gerne versuchen möchte zu verstehen. Und vielleicht könnten sie das auch noch mal etwas näher ausführen, wenn es nach der ergänze. Das ist ja so ein bisschen wie kommt es quasi zu diesem Entscheidungsprozess? Also setzt man sich einmal im Jahr zusammen, passiert so etwas auch dynamisch oder agil? Sie hatten eben schon so ein bisschen differenziert. Wie läuft so was vielleicht auch auf eine Agenda oder Roadmap?

Participant 6-2 26:12

Genau. Wir machen eine Roadmap am Jahresbeginn. Die wird abgestimmt mit den Business Segmenten, wo wir eben auch deren große Themen aufnehmen. Wenn wir absehen können, dass das Projekt Größe erreicht, dann hat das auch schon mal ein Jahr lang Vorlauf oder so. Und der Rest, alles was jetzt eher on going ist, das ist wirklich ein komplett agiler Prozess, wo ich eigentlich meine Stakeholder Termine habe. Die nehmen, wir haben den Scrum-Prozess. Wir haben alle drei Wochen Review Meeting. Werden die neuen Entwicklungen vorgestellt und es gibt halt so eine halbe Woche vor diesem Video gibt es quasi den Einsteuerungs-Termin für den kommenden Sprint. Da stelle ich kurz vor was, was ich in meiner Priorisierung vorgesehen habe und die Kollegen können Einfluss nehmen. Und dieses Austarieren dadurch, dass das ein agiler Prozess, ist

example. With the relaunch of automated job postings from the HR system. Of course we have sales topics. At the moment we are working on a Guided Selling wisard. We have a relatively large stake with sales from one of our business segments. We have of course corporate communication, [Participant 6-1] team and me and my team are talking about moving the blog. Running that on our central platform. Yes, but these are the usual suspects, I would say. It's also conceivable if you're doing a smaller project, but they're also among the stakeholders. We have an innovation team, an interdisciplinary one, that develops our new [product segment] and the ecosystem around it. And they are actually also a separate stakeholder, because although they have points of contact in R&D, they have people in sales, but this is a self-contained team and they are a separate stakeholder for us.

Understood. Yes, I can confirm that. All the classical areas are always involved. That's a bit of what I would like to try to understand. And maybe you could elaborate on that a bit more, if it's after the supplement. How does this decision-making process come about? So, you sit down once a year, does something like that happen dynamically or agilely? You had already differentiated a bit. How does something like that end up on an agenda or roadmap?

Exactly. We draw up a roadmap at the beginning of the year. This is coordinated with the business segments, where we also include their major topics. If we can foresee that the project will reach a certain size, then it will have a lead time of a year or so. And the rest, everything that is now more on going, that is really a completely agile process where I actually have my stakeholder appointments. They take, we have the Scrum process. We have review meetings every three weeks. The new developments are presented and half a week before this video, there is a sort of steering meeting for the next sprint. I briefly present what I have planned in my prioritisation and the colleagues can influence it. And this balancing, because it's an agile process, is of course not something that you calculate

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		es natürlich nicht so, dass man da jedes Mal im Business Case rechnet, sondern da habe ich halt gewisse Priorisierungsparameter. Da spielt natürlich irgendwie die Größe und der Umsatz des Business Segments an sich eine Rolle. Die Art der Anforderung spielt eine Rolle. Ist das jetzt irgendeine Farbänderungen hinten links? Oder ist es ein wichtiger Bug, den wir da haben? Das heißt, es sind alles Sachen, die ich da berücksichtige. Klassische Rollenbeschreibung von einem Product Owner.	every time in the business case, but rather I have certain prioritisation parameters. Of course, the size and turnover of the business segment itself plays a role. The type of requirement plays a role. Is this now some colour change at the back left? Or is it an important bug that we have there? In other words, they are all things that I take into account. Classic role description of a product owner.
Researcher	27:40	Ja, verstehe. Jetzt haben Sie gerade schon so ein, ich nenne es mal Stichwort KPI angesprochen, nämlich wie wichtig ist das Business Segment. Wenn es um solche Weiterentwicklungsthemen geht, werden da auch konkret Ziele gesteckt im Sinne von „Was ist der Business Impact?“	Yes, I see. You have just mentioned what I would call a key KPI, namely how important the business segment is. When it comes to such development topics, concrete goals are also set in the sense of "What is the business impact?"
Participant 6-2	28:03	Also implizit sollte das ja immer eine Rolle spielen. Also wir sollten ja wir sollten ja nichts tun, was kein Business Impact hat oder vielleicht sogar einen negative. Wo wir es schon immer machen, ist, wenn wir eben irgendwo sagen wir machen Projekte. Aber wir versuchen so dieses Zahlen getriebene und eben solchen Änderungen dann auch mit unseren klassischen KPIs nachzugehen. Das ist schon auch verankert. Wenn wir zum Beispiel beim Thema SEO irgendwas haben, dann gucken wir natürlich hinterher auch fortlaufend auf die SEO-Rankings und sagen: „Tut sich da was?“ -	So implicitly, that should always play a role. We shouldn't do anything that has no business impact or maybe even a negative one. Where we always do it is when we say we are doing projects somewhere. But we try to follow up this number-driven and such changes with our classic KPIs. That is also anchored. If we have something on the topic of SEO, for example, then of course we also look at the SEO rankings afterwards and say, "Is there anything happening?" -
Researcher	28:40	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	28:40	Das sind ja schon Treiber, die sind manchmal ein bisschen – das ist ja, glaube ich auch so der Punkt, wo sie herkommen in ihrer Doktorarbeit. Die Sachen gegeneinander zu ranken. Irgendwie ist es jetzt effizienter oder effektiver, vielleicht noch an der Stelle eine SEO-Änderung zu machen oder sollte ich lieber irgendwie an der Schnittstelle zu meinem Webinar-Tool arbeiten? Nicht ganz so einfach.	These are already drivers, they are sometimes a bit – I think that's also where they come from in their doctoral thesis. To rank things against each other. Somehow it is more efficient or more effective to make an SEO change here or should I rather work on the interface to my webinar tool? Not quite so simple.
Participant 6-2	29:06	Aber das versuchen wir schon immer. Also gerade natürlich, indem wir Annahmen treffen, was trägt es zur Generierung bei? Was ist der einzelne Lead wert? Da rechnen wir schon immer wieder Cases auf, die wir dann natürlich gegen den mit dem Aufwand auch gegenrechnen.	But we've always tried to do that. So just naturally, by making assumptions what does it contribute to generation? What is the value of the individual lead? We are always calculating cases, which we then of course offset against the effort involved.
Researcher	29:27	Ist quasi Lead-Generierung dann das zentrale KPI, um das sich alles dreht? Man könnte ja auch andersherum sagen, Image bei, ich weiß nicht, neuer Markterschließung, neue Zielgruppe oder wie auch immer steht mehr im Vordergrund.	Is lead generation then the central KPI around which everything revolves? You could also say the other way round that image is more important for, I don't know, new market development, new target groups or whatever.
Participant 6-2	29:44	Also ganz basic gucken wir eigentlich auf Reichweite und Leads.	So,, at a very basic level, we actually look at reach and leads.
Researcher	29:51	Okay, ja.	Okay, yeah.

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Participant 6-2	29:51	Das wird natürlich runtergebrochen, wie Sie es gesagt haben. Irgendwie ist es ein neuer Markt, wo wir rein wollen oder ist es in den Fokus Markt gerade? Das spielt schon eine Rolle. Wir gucken, wenn man wirklich nur wenn man es ganz stark reduziert, dann gucken wir halt fortlaufend auf die Reichweite, die wir erzielen und auf das was, was wir an Leads damit rauskriegen.	Of course, this is broken down as you said. Somehow it is a new market where we want to enter or is it in the focus market right now? That already plays a role. We look, if you really only if you reduce it very much, then we look continuously at the reach that we achieve and at what we get out in terms of leads with it.
Researcher	30:11	Ist das eigentlich ein Thema, was in der Organisation vielleicht auch von bestimmten Stakeholdern gefragt ist? Ist das, wie soll ich sagen, ist das die Diskussion halt in die Richtung geht? Oder ist das eher etwas, was Sie sich innerhalb des digitalen Marketing-Teams anschauen, weil Ihr Fokus natürlich, wie Sie es eingangs gesagt hatten, auf dem Thema Effizienzgewinne liegt und damit, dass er in der Natur der Sache ist als ein Organisational Need wo der Vertrieb oder ähnliches sagt: „Das ist die Kampagne, das wollen wir erreichen, wir müssen da mal an das System.“	Is this actually a topic that is perhaps also in demand by certain stakeholders in the organisation? Is that, how shall I say, is that the discussion just goes in that direction? Or is it something that you look at within the digital marketing team, because your focus is of course, as you said at the beginning, on the topic of efficiency gains and thus that it is in the nature of things as an organisational need where the sales department or similar says: “This is the campaign, this is what we want to achieve, we need to get to grips with the system.”
Participant 6-2	30:49	Also da tut sich auch, der Vertrieb tut sich mit harten Vorgaben schwer. Klassischerweise. Also Leads spielen immer eine Rolle. Wir haben auch und auch das ist, glaube ich, wenn ich mich umhöre, nicht untypisch für Unternehmen. Wir haben immer wieder das Problem Lead-Qualität. Was passiert mit Leads, die Marketing generiert? Also das spielt immer wieder mal eine Rolle. Wo wir halt auch teilweise dann Entscheidungen treffen, wo wir uns eigentlich, wenn wir wirklich nur diese zwei KPIs anlegen, Reichweite und Leads, wo wir uns selber behindern dann. Wenn wir zum Beispiel sagen ein Lead muss schon super weit angereichert sein, sonst schaut Sales nicht an. Dann verzichten wir damit explizit auf mehr Leads. -	So, the sales department also has a hard time with hard specifications. Classically. So, leads always play a role. We also have, and I think this is not atypical for companies when I ask around. We always have the problem of lead quality. What happens to leads that marketing generates? That plays a role again and again. We sometimes make decisions where we actually, if we really only apply these two KPIs, reach and leads, where we hinder ourselves. If we say, for example, a lead must be super rich, otherwise Sales won't look at it. Then we are explicitly waiving more leads. -
Researcher	31:33	Ja. -	Yeah. -
Participant 6-2	31:35	Sagen, die interessieren uns nicht. -	Saying we're not interested in them. -
Researcher	31:36	Genau. -	Exactly. -
Participant 6-2	31:38	Also das, das ist halt so eine Austarierungsprozess ganz oft. Und so die harten KPI's, die haben uns das eigentlich eher selber gesetzt, wenn wir ehrlich sind.	So that's just a balancing process quite often. And the hard KPIs, we actually set ourselves, if we're honest.
Researcher	31:50	Ja, super spannend. Ich habe die Frage auch mit gestellt, weil das genau einer dieser Eingangsmotivation war noch mit zur Thesis. Das ganze Thema Marketing Controlling auch bei uns im Alltag immer mehr gefragt wurde. Kam noch einmal mehr verstärkt dann durch die Corona-Pandemie auf, wo es hieß so sinngemäß: Messen fallen weg. Was machen wir jetzt alternativ? Und natürlich irgendwann mittelfristig auch wieder die Frage gestellt wurde: Hat das denn jetzt auch eine nachhaltig Implikationen auch auf den Mix	Yes, super exciting. I also asked the question because that was exactly one of the motivations for the thesis. The whole topic of marketing controlling was also increasingly in demand in our everyday lives. The Corona pandemic made it even more important, when it was said that trade fairs were no longer necessary. What are we going to do as an alternative? And of course, at some point in the medium term, the question was asked again: Does this have any lasting implications for the mix of

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		der Kanäle? Reduzieren wir Marketing-Budget in puncto Messen und allokiieren das quasi um oder sollten wir genauso bleiben? Das waren halt so die Fragestellungen, die da auf uns zukam und -	channels? Do we reduce the marketing budget in terms of trade fairs and reallocate it, so to speak, or should we stay the same? Those were the questions that came up for us and -
Participant 6-2	32:41	An diesem Punkt sind wir auch gerade. Wir hatten gestern einen Strategy-Workshop, wo eben auch - also so weit sind wir da noch gar nicht. Eigentlich erstmal Bestandsaufnahme gemacht, aber da war eben auch ein Punkt, der Moment, der noch nicht so verankert ist. Das wir halt mehr Daten gestützte Entscheidungen auch treffen wollen. Und es ist nicht immer alles, es ist schon meine Meinung auch, dass nicht immer alles ganz in Daten abbildbar. Gerade beim Messen geht es viel auch um um Reichweite, um Sichtbarkeit und das auch nicht mal so gut quantifizierbar, weil es geht da auch teilweise um Einzelpersonen.	We are at this point right now. Yesterday we had a strategy workshop where - well, we haven't got that far yet. Actually, we first took stock, but there was also a point, the moment, that is not yet so firmly anchored. That we want to make more data-based decisions. And it's not always everything, it's also my opinion that not everything can always be completely mapped in data. Particularly in the case of trade fairs, it's a lot about reach, about visibility, and that's not always so easy to quantify, because it's also partly about individuals.
Researcher	33:20	Ja, das stimmt.	Yes, that's right.
Participant 6-2	33:21	Entscheidungsträger, die ich nicht so gut quantifizieren kann. Wo ich irgendwie sage, ja gut, wenn ich die fünf Leute abgegriffen habe, dann wars das schon fast Wert irgendwie.	Decision-makers that I can't quantify that well. Where I kind of say, yes well, if I've picked up the five people, then it was almost worth it somehow.
Researcher	33:33	Ja, stimmt. Nachvollziehbar. Eine letzte Frage, wo wir jetzt relativ viel über Entscheidungsprozess, Vorgehensweisen, etc. gesprochen haben. Stichwort Marketing Automation. Sie haben da ja schon geschildert, dass sie viel in die Richtung auch machen. Wo ich sagen würde, dass das auch im deutschen Schnitt ist das eine oder andere Unternehmen da vielleicht auch noch mal eine Ecke weiter weg. Auch wenn vielleicht der Begriff schon bekannt ist. Wie kommen Sie auf solche Dinge? In welche Richtung entwickelt man sich da weiter? Ist so etwas, sage ich mal, Input von Agenturen? Hat man das vielleicht auch, um noch mal wieder die Brücke zu schlagen zur Marketing-Theorie, Dinge, wo sie sagen da informiere ich mich selber, gehe auf Konferenzen oder, oder? Um da halt auch immer up-to-date zu bleiben. Was ist da [ihr Vorgehen]?	Yes, that's right. Understandable. One last question, now that we have talked quite a lot about decision-making processes, procedures, etc.. Keyword: marketing automation. You have already described that you are doing a lot in this direction. I would say that on average in Germany, one or the other company is perhaps a bit further away. Even if the term is perhaps already known. How do you come up with such things? In which direction do you develop further? Is this kind of thing, shall I say, input from agencies? Do you perhaps also, to bridge the gap to marketing theory again, have things where you say you inform yourself, go to conferences or, or? In order to always stay up-to-date. What is [your approach]?
Participant 6-2	34:29	Ja, das sind schon die Agenturen auf der einen Seite. Supplier, Vendor auf der Anderen. Wir haben ja große Enterprise Software und die bemühen sich ja auch. Oder sie haben ein großes Interesse daran, gerade Salesforce ist da ja sehr aggressiv auch, dass ihre Produkte auch benutzt werden. Entsprechenden: Die triggern wir. Wir holen uns selber Infos um selber eigene Recherche, teilweise Konferenzen, Fortbildungen. Da achten wir schon drauf, dass wir da auch am Zahn der Zeit bleiben. Gucken uns sowas an wie den Gartner Quadranten, lesen Studien,	Yes, that's the agencies on the one hand. Supplier, vendor on the other. We have large enterprise software and they are making an effort. Or they have a great interest, Salesforce in particular is very aggressive, that their products are also used. Correspondingly: We trigger them. We gather information ourselves by doing our own research, sometimes at conferences and training courses. We make sure that we keep up with the times. We look at things like the Gartner Quadrant, read studies, talk to people we know in other companies

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		<p>führen Gespräche mit Bekannten in anderen Unternehmen, wie die heran gehen an gewisse Themen. Also ich glaube wir sind jetzt nicht, was Marketing Automation angeht, jetzt nicht der totale Vorreiter. Wir setzen es an vielen Stellen ein. Allerdings es ist schon noch deutlich ausbaufähig. Wir haben ja auch einen Online-Shop und fangen da jetzt gerade an erst. Sachen wie Warenkörbe zum Beispiel oder Warenkorb-Abbrüche zu automatisieren mit Nachfassern. Mit Mails, bei uns ist viel, war es halt viel automatisierte Kommunikation. Also jemand kommt auf die Messe, bekommt dann automatisch seine Dankes-E-Mail und solche Geschichten. Macht einen Download, bekommt den Fall zugeschickt. Bekommt nach drei Tagen noch mal die Frage, war alles in Ordnung? Brauchst du was? Bekommt nach drei weiteren Tagen oder nach einer Woche dann noch nochmal eine E-Mail, wo wir sagen, können wir noch was tun? Das hat das sind so die Sachen, die bei uns laufen und die Ausbaustufe, wo wir jetzt verstärkt darauf gucken werden, ist unser Kunden-Portal und die da anfallenden Daten können wir zu nutzen für Automationsideen. Daher erarbeiten wir schon relativ viel selber. Also von den konkreten Automations-Ideen. Da haben wir keine guten Erfahrungen extern gemacht. -</p>	<p>about how they approach certain topics. So, I don't think we are the total pioneer as far as marketing automation is concerned. We use it in many places. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement. We also have an online shop and are just getting started. Things like shopping baskets, for example, or automating shopping basket cancellations with follow-up. With e-mails, which we have a lot of, it was just a lot of automated communication. So, someone comes to the fair, then automatically gets his thank-you email and stories like that. They make a download, get the case sent to them. After three days they are asked again, was everything OK? Do you need anything? After three more days or after a week, he gets another e-mail saying, "Can we do anything else? These are the things that we have going on, and the expansion stage where we will now be looking more closely is our customer portal, and we can use the data that accumulates there for automation ideas. That's why we are already working out relatively much ourselves. That means concrete automation ideas. We haven't had any good external experiences in this area. -</p>
Researcher	36:35	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	36:36	Es waren, da kommt gefühlt immer das gleiche und nicht sonderlich weit gedacht bzw. geben die uns halt die Fragen, die wir eh schon haben, zurück. Das heißt, wir haben angefangen mit unseren verschiedenen Teams: Digital-Team, Shop-Team. Es gibt bei uns digitale Vertriebseinheit, mit denen hat viel zu sprechen und uns da Bälle zuzuspielen und mal zu überlegen, was können wir tun.	It felt like we always got the same questions and didn't think very far ahead, or they just gave us back the questions we already had. That means we started with our different teams: digital team, shop team. We have a digital sales unit with whom we have to talk a lot and pass the ball around and think about what we can do.
Researcher	37:04	Okay, und das ist dann quasi primär durch Sie bzw. Ihr Team im Lead vorangebracht?	Okay, and that is then primarily advanced by you or your team in the lead?
Participant 6-2	37:11	Genau. Das ist immer so, wir trennen halt, das habe ich ja vorhin schon gesagt, immer zwischen Content und Entwicklung. Das ist bei so Marketing Automation gar nicht so leicht zu trennen, weil wenn man sagt, Content ist nur die E-Mail, dann wäre ja quasi die Erstellung der Automations-Journey schon wieder komplett IT. Aber das geht ja eigentlich, das kann ich nur selber machen als Marketer. Aber dann habe ich noch eine abgefahrene Idee, weil ich brauche ein anderes Datum, auf das ich trigger und dann brauche ich doch wieder die IT. Also es ist halt ein Prozess, wo wir halt unseren agilen Drei-Wochen-Rhythmus dann nutzen, um halt solche Themen zu platzieren, wenn wir aus dem	Exactly. That's always the case, as I said earlier, we always separate content and development. With marketing automation, it's not so easy to separate the two, because if you say that content is just the email, then the creation of the automation journey would be completely IT again. But that's actually possible, I can only do that by myself as a marketer. But then I have another crazy idea, because I need another date on which to trigger and then I need IT again. So, it's a process where we use our agile three-week rhythm to place such topics when we need IT from the business. So we try as far as possible without it.

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Researcher	37:52	Business raus die IT brauchen. Also wir versuchen schon weitestgehend ohne. Verstehe. Letzte Frage: Wie würden Sie denn Ihr Wissen über die Kunden beschreiben? Also Sie sagten Marketing Automation ist ja quasi nur ein Bestandteil auch wieder von so etwas. Ist das schon gut vorhanden?	I see. Last question: How would you describe your knowledge about customers? You said that marketing automation is only one component of something like that. Is that already well present?
Participant 6-2	38:06	Also wir haben uns da vor vier Jahren committed. Wie gesagt, wir haben eine Datenbasis über unsere Kunden. Das ist nicht ganz richtig, aber wir versuchen schon, sobald wir jemanden persönlich identifizieren können. Versuchen wir, diese Daten auch an einer Stelle zu halten. Natürlich auch DSGVO konform. -	So, we committed ourselves there four years ago. As I said, we have a database of our clients. That's not quite right, but we try as soon as we can identify someone personally. We try to keep this data in one place. Of course, also DSGVO compliant. -
Researcher	38:28	Klar. -	Of course. -
Participant 6-2	38:28	Was uns da auch immer geholfen hat an der Stelle, dass wir gesagt haben, es gibt nur eine Datenbasis. Weil dann muss ich halt den Aufwand auch nur einmal treiben. Aber wir spielen in diesem Fall Primär-Daten, die wir da sammeln, schon mittlerweile relativ viele Quellen rein. Also da habe ich die klassischen persönlichen Daten, die ich Sales-Prozess irgendwie brauche. Da habe ich Webseite-Verhaltensdaten drin, da habe ich E-Mail-Daten drin. Da habe ich offline Daten drin zu Messebesuch, Kampagnen, Teilnahme XY. Und daraus kann ich natürlich schon relativ umfassende Profile erstellen und kann die dann natürlich auch wieder alle nutzen, um die Automatisierung zu triggern.	What has always helped us at this point is that we have said that there is only one database. Because then I only have to make the effort once. But in this case, the primary data that we collect now comes from a relatively large number of sources. So, I have the classic personal data that I somehow need for the sales process. I have website behaviour data in there, I have email data in there. I have offline data on trade fair visits, campaigns, participation in XY. And from this, I can of course create relatively comprehensive profiles and use them all to trigger automation.
Researcher	39:09	Ja, das stimmt. Jetzt haben Sie gerade Social Media nicht genannt. Was mich noch mal zu der Frage bringt: Was für Kommunikationskanäle sind vielleicht die drei wichtigsten, die [Company 6] nutzt? Und welche sind dann vielleicht zweitrangig? Also wir haben gesprochen über Messe, Websites, Shop, wenn man so will, ist ein aufbauender Punkt. Blog hatten wir, Newsletter-Marketing hatte ich eben schon gesagt. Was gibt es da noch?	Yes, that's right. Now you just didn't mention social media. Which brings me back to the question: What communication channels are perhaps the three most important that [Company 6] uses? And then which ones are maybe secondary? So, we talked about trade fair, websites, shop, if you like, is a building point. We had blog, newsletter marketing I had just said. What else is there?
Participant 6-2	39:43	Social spielt eine große Rolle. Wir tun es bei Social ehrlicherweise ein bisschen schwer, mit den Social-Daten in dem Vertriebskontext zu arbeiten. Selbst wenn wir Social Generierung machen, haben wir dasselbe Problem, was ich vorhin schon angesprochen haben, dass wir halt oft keine dankbaren Abnehmer dazu finden im Vertrieb. Aber Social ist schon ein relevanter Kanal, weil wir da halt auch brutale Reichweiten mittlerweile erzielen können. Wir haben wirklich gut gehende Social Kanäle. Vor allem in YouTube und LinkedIn sind wir wirklich gut. Facebook auch. Also die drei Kanäle laufen richtig gut. Wir haben auch gute Erfahrungen mit neuen Kanälen gemacht. Wir sind relativ schnell auf gute Nutzerzahlen auch in	Social plays a big role. We honestly find it a bit difficult to work with social data in the sales context. Even when we do social generation, we have the same problem that I mentioned earlier, that we often don't find any grateful customers for it in sales. But social is already a relevant channel, because we can now achieve brutal reach there. We have really good social channels. We're really good on YouTube and LinkedIn in particular. Facebook too. So, the three channels are doing really well. We have also had good experiences with new channels. We got good user numbers relatively quickly on Instagram, too, when we started with that. TikTok has also started well. Funnily enough,

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		Instagram gekommen, als wir damit angefangen haben. TikTok hat auch gut angefangen. Ist lustiger Weise so, dass Social Media nicht bei mir läuft, sondern wir haben dann immer Berührungspunkte mit Social Media, wenn es dann z.B. um die Integration von Social Leads in CRM geht. Solche Punkte. Wir haben jetzt zum Beispiel auf diesen Profilen, die ich vorher angesprochen habe, so Social Interaktionen haben wir da noch nicht. Wir haben mal ein bisschen experimentiert. Wir hatten Social Studio auch im Einsatz von Salesforce. Haben halt geguckt, wenn da irgendwie Unterhaltungen geführt werden, wie können wir das automatisieren, dass jemand dann direkt im CRM landet und der Vertrieb oder Service zugeordnet wird entsprechend. -	social media doesn't work for me, but we always have points of contact with social media, for example when it comes to integrating social leads into CRM. Such points. For example, we don't yet have social interactions on the profiles I mentioned earlier. We experimented a bit. We also used Social Studio from Salesforce. We just looked at how we could automate conversations so that someone ends up directly in the CRM and is assigned to sales or service accordingly. -
Researcher	41:14	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	41:14	Hat nicht gut funktioniert. Das haben wir aus Kostengründen dann gelassen. Das heißt, es sind jetzt alles manuelle Aktionen. Das heißt, jemand ist natürlich schon angehalten, wenn er als Social Media Manager in dem Land zum Beispiel eine Unterhaltung führt, weil jemand schreibt, er hat ein Problem, ist er natürlich angehalten, im CRM dann einen Services-Test zu erstellen. Aber da haben wir relativ wenig Durchgriff an der Stelle. Aber Sie haben nach den wichtigsten Kanälen gefragt.	Didn't work well. We dropped that for cost reasons. That means they are all manual actions now. This means that if a social media manager in a country has a conversation, for example, because someone writes that they have a problem, they are of course required to create a service test in the CRM. But we have relatively little control over that. But you asked about the most important channels.
Researcher	41:43	Genau.	Exactly.
Participant 6-2	41:49	Ja (--). Also wir sehen eigentlich schon eigentlich die Website und die Kunden-Plattform sind schon die beiden wichtigsten Kanäle für uns. Und dann glaube ich. Es ist so ein bisschen - dann tue ich mir mit einer absoluten Aussage ein bisschen schwer. Also wenn man es rein auf digital und online Kanäle bezieht, dann würde ich es relativ gleichwertig irgendwie social mit E-Mail setzen. -	Yes (--). So, we actually see the website and the customer platform as the two most important channels for us. And then I think. It's a bit - then I find it a bit difficult to make an absolute statement. So, if you relate it purely to digital and online channels, then I would put it relatively on a par somehow social with email. -
Researcher	42:16	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	42:16	Wobei E-Mail kann man halt nicht so ganz trennen zum Beispiel von dem Kunden-Portal. Jetzt haben wir vorhin über die Automatisierung gesprochen oder auch von der Website. Die werden ja darüber auch - es hängt halt alles zusammen. Aber ich würde sagen, das sind schon so die vier digitalen Kanäle, die für uns die relevantesten sind. Also Social und darin dann noch mal, habe ich ja gesagt, was so am besten funktioniert. Und E-Mail und die beiden wichtigsten Portale: Kunden-Plattform und Website.	But you can't quite separate e-mail from the customer portal, for example. Earlier we talked about automation and the website. They are also used for that - it's all connected. But I would say that these are the four digital channels that are the most relevant for us. So social and then again, as I said, what works best. And email and the two most important portals: customer platform and website.
Researcher	42:52	Zwei konkrete Rückfragen noch dazu. Veränderungen durch die Pandemie? Gab es da generell ein Shift, der vielleicht auch nachhaltig ist?	Two more specific questions. Changes due to the pandemic? Was there a general shift that is perhaps also sustainable?

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Participant 6-2	43:03	Hm, also es gab definitiv ein Shift. Wir haben experimentiert mit digitalen Formaten. Der Klassiker natürlich Webinar. -	Hm, so there was definitely a shift. We have experimented with digital formats. The classic webinar, of course. -
Researcher	43:12	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	43:13	Und ich glaube auch, dass das Thema Webinar nachhaltig bleibt. Wir haben allerdings schon gesehen, dass wir so in einem großen Scoop eine Müdigkeit gesehen haben. Am Anfang, als der erste oder wahrscheinlich zweite Lockdown war, da ging es sehr, sehr gut. Und das ist dann schon ganz schön abgeflaut. Aber letztlich, ich meine das Thema Webinar gab es ja vorher schon und da war es ja vorher auch schon so. Man muss halt einfach sicherstellen, dass man hochwertige Inhalte liefert. Das ist ja der zentrale Punkt bei fast allem, was wir machen. Und wenn ich mir eine Webinar-Serien mehr aus den Rippen schneide und gar nicht so richtig weiß, was ich jetzt eigentlich erzählen soll, dann fällt es auf und dann läuft es irgendwann nicht mehr so gut.	And I also believe that the webinar theme will remain sustainable. However, we have already seen that we have seen fatigue in a big scoop like this. At the beginning, when the first or probably second lockdown took place, it went very, very well. And then it died down quite a bit. But in the end, I mean, the topic of webinars already existed before and it was already like that before. You simply have to make sure that you deliver high-quality content. That is the central point in almost everything we do. And if I cut a webinar series more out of my ribs and don't really know what I'm supposed to be talking about, then it will stand out and at some point it won't go so well.
Researcher	43:59	Stimmt, der Content ist schon der Treiber, wie wahrscheinlich bei so vielen anderen Medien auch.	True, the content is already the driver, as it probably is with so many other media.
Participant 6-2	44:06	Das wird schon bleiben. Ein Stück weit. -	That will stay. A bit. -
Researcher	44:08	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	44:08	Es wird natürlich nicht Messen komplett ersetzen können und wo wir wirklich schlechte Erfahrungen gemacht haben, sind so andere Digital-Formate wie: Wir haben es mit so einer Sache Video Streaming Plattformen mit Live-Chat versucht. Relativ ernüchternde Ergebnisse erzielt. Wir haben so ein bisschen - das ist vielleicht schon etwas, was bleibt. Wir haben so ein bisschen mit 3D-Formaten guckt. So Showroom mäßig mehr. Das ist allerdings auch nichts, was komplett irgendwas ersetzen kann, sondern es ist halt wieder so ein Ding mehr noch. Noch einen Touch von mehr, den man anbieten kann oder auch nicht, je nachdem wieder, wie der Return on Invest sich dann halt auch abbildet. Wobei wir haben jetzt einen relativ neu, wir haben jetzt einen charmanten Weg gefunden, mit 3D mehr zu machen.	It won't be able to replace fairs completely, of course, and where we've had really bad experiences are other digital formats like: We tried one of those things video streaming platforms with live chat. Relatively sobering results. We've tried a little bit - maybe that's something that remains. We looked a bit with 3D formats. More showroom-like. But that's nothing that can completely replace anything, it's just one more thing. Another touch of something more that you can offer or not, depending on how the return on investment is reflected. Whereas we now have a relatively new, we have now found a charming way to do more with 3D.
Researcher	45:07	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	45:07	Weil wir Inhouse einen 3D-Tool haben. Gerade für [Product segment]. Da kann man sehr günstig ganz coole Features erstellen. Aber das ist halt nicht im Sinne von dem Digital-Event, das in einem 3D-Showroom stattfindet, sondern eher als punktuelle Ergänzung auf der Webseite eigentlich.	Because we have a 3D tool in-house. Especially for [product segment]. You can create very cool features very cheaply. But that's not in the sense of a digital event that takes place in a 3D showroom, but rather as a selective addition to the website.
Researcher	45:28	Ja, verstehe. Zweite Rückfrage Sie hatten gesagt, witzigerweise sei Social Media nicht bei Ihnen. Wo ist das genau aufgehängt?	Yes, I see. Second question You had said that, funnily enough, social media is not with you. Where exactly is that hung up?
Participant 6-2	45:38	Das ist in den Business Segmenten.	That is in the business segments.

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Researcher	45:40	Okay, ja.	Okay, yes.
Participant 6-2	45:44	Wir haben so eine bisschen schwammige Trennlinie Content. Und nachdem bei Social Media wenig, außer vielleicht eine Schnittstelle irgendwo hin, das heißt es wird wenig entwickelt. Das ist eigentlich reine Benutzung, reine Content-Aussteuerung und da organisieren sich die Business Segmente quasi ohne uns.	We have a bit of a fuzzy dividing line on content. And after little with social media, except maybe an interface somewhere, that means we develop little. This is actually pure use, pure content control, and the business segments organise themselves without us, so to speak.
Researcher	46:04	Ja okay, verstehe. Jetzt haben wir ja quasi auch noch mal ergänzen gesprochen über welche Kanäle werden genutzt und so weiter und so fort. Wie würden Sie den Umfang von allen Marketing-Kommunikations-Aktivitäten von [Company 6] bewerten? Passt der? Ist es eine gute Mischung der Methoden und Kanäle, die da gewählt ist? Oder gibt es vielleicht doch etwas, was fehlt?	Yes, okay, I see. Now we have also talked about which channels are used and so on and so forth. How would you rate the scope of all marketing communication activities of [Company 6]? Does it fit? Is it a good mix of methods and channels that has been chosen? Or is there perhaps something that is missing?
Participant 6-2	46:35	Also wenn man jetzt sich die Literatur anschaut und auch so Metastudien, dann denke ich, haben wir die großen Kanäle schon dabei. Also da mache ich mir eigentlich keine Sorgen, dass wir irgendwo komplett was verpassen in dem Sinne. Wir haben schon, wenn wir die einzelnen Sachen durchgehen - wir haben von der Gewichtung her, wir machen relativ wenig klassische Online-Werbung. -	So, if you look at the literature and the meta-studies, I think we already have the big channels. So, I'm not really worried that we're missing anything completely in that sense. We already have, if we go through the individual things - we have relatively little traditional online advertising in terms of weighting. -
Researcher	47:08	Okay. -	Okay. -
Participant 6-2	47:08	Also wir setzen relativ viel auf unsere generische Reichweite, auf SEO, auf Content Marketing und machen mit verhältnismäßig wenig wirklich Payed Spend, also etwa Pay-per-Klick oder Display. Bisschen Search, aber das sind jetzt von den Budgets her keine nennenswerte Größenordnung. Also da denke ich, habe ich halte auch nicht den Durchgriff. Das ist bei mir im Team aber auch schon so, dass da auch die Balance nicht ganz so. Wir haben ja hauptsächlich Image Themen, deswegen kann man es glaube ich noch einigermaßen argumentieren. Aber wenn ich so auf einem Business Segment Level gucke und sage wie kriege ich eigentlich jetzt neue Leute rein? Dann glaube ich, da könnten wir ein bisschen ausbalancieren an der Stelle.	We rely relatively heavily on our generic reach, on SEO, on content marketing and do relatively little actual paid spend, such as pay-per-click or display. A little bit of search, but in terms of budgets, these are not significant. So, I don't think I have any control over that either. But that's also the case in my team, where the balance isn't quite right. We mainly have image issues, so I think you can still argue it to some extent. But if I look at a business segment level and say how do I actually get new people in now? Then I think we could balance things out a bit at that point.
Researcher	48:06	Sehr spannend, weil ich wie gesagt bisher nur mit [Participant 6-1] zu tun hatte. Kann ich mir das so vorstellen, dass es in jedem Business Segment dann ein Marketing-Team gibt, was genau diese Fragestellung und den Marketing-Mix dann für die jeweilige Geschäftseinheit, also [Business Segment] und was auch immer sie noch haben, dass die dann für sich selber gucken?	Very exciting, because as I said, I've only dealt with [Participant 6-1] so far. Can I imagine that there is a marketing team in each business segment that looks at exactly these questions and the marketing mix for the respective business unit, i.e. [business segment] and whatever else they have?
Participant 6-2	48:33	Genau. Wir haben unterhalb der Marke [Company 6] haben wir [Business Segment] und das Business Segment [Name of Business Segment]. Ja, wobei	Exactly. Below the brand [Company 6] we have [Business Segment] and the Business Segment [Name of Business Segment]. Yes, where [Business

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		<p>[Business Segment] muss man eigentlich nicht nur Marke [Business Segment] nehmen, streng genommen auch [Brand] dabei, aber de facto ist es fast nur Marke [Company 6]. Und dann gibt es eben noch [Business Segment] und [Business Segment]. Und [Business Segment] und [Business Segment] sind eigentlich unsere beiden großen Kunden als Business Segmente, weil [Business Segment] im Anlagenbau nur sehr, sehr reduziert Marketing macht. Im Moment ist es eine halbe Stelle weltweit. Es fällt jetzt nicht weiter ins Gewicht, aber bei [Business Segment] und bei [Business Segment] ist es genauso, wie sie es beschrieben haben. Da gibt es Marketing-Teams und da gibt es halt auch mal die Funktion, dann Online-Marketing. Die machen aber in erster Linie Content bzw. dann mein Counterpart, wenn es halt um Anforderungen geht.</p>	<p>Segment] you don't have to take only brand [Business Segment], strictly speaking also [Brand], but de facto it's almost only brand [Company 6]. And then there is [Business Segment] and [Business Segment]. And [Business Segment] and [Business Segment] are actually our two big customers as business segments, because [Business Segment] only does very, very limited marketing in plant construction. At the moment it's half a position worldwide. It doesn't really matter now, but at [Business Segment] and at [Business Segment] it's exactly as you described it. There are marketing teams and sometimes there is also the function of online marketing. But they primarily do content, or my counterpart, when it comes to requirements.</p>
Researcher	49:29	<p>Ja, okay. Letzte Frage zu all diesen Dingen Weiterentwicklung, Prozess und so weiter. Gibt es irgendwo anders noch, oder sehen Sie noch einen Bedarf zur Weiterentwicklung der Tool-Landschaft, über den wir jetzt noch nicht gesprochen hatten? Wir hatten schon vieles angeschnitten, aber irgendwas, was noch da offen ist?</p>	<p>Yes, okay. Last question about all these things, further development, process and so on. Is there anything else or do you see a need for further development of the tool landscape that we haven't talked about yet? We had already touched on many things, but is there anything that is still open?</p>
Participant 6-2	49:54	<p>Also wir gucken eigentlich jedes Jahr. Machen jedes Jahr mindestens ein Major und eins bis viele meiner Einführungsprojekte. Wir haben letztes Jahr zwei spannende Sachen angefangen, die wir dieses Jahr, die ich noch gar nicht gesagt habe, die wir dieses Jahr ausrollen. Das ist Chat. -</p>	<p>So, we actually look every year. Do at least one major and one to many of my launch projects every year. We started two exciting things last year that we're rolling out this year that I haven't even said yet. This is Chat. -</p>
Researcher	50:17	<p>Okay. -</p>	<p>Okay. -</p>
Participant 6-2	50:17	<p>Wo wir einen MVP gemacht haben. Ein Piloten in einem kleinen Land, für uns kleinen Markt [Country]. Weil die eben eine sehr, sehr trockene Lead-Pipeline hatten. Wo wir gesagt haben, okay, da gibt es ein Team, das bereit ist. Die haben Manpower, wenig Budget, um irgendwie extern Werbung zu machen, aber sie können sich an den Chatbot hocken. Dann haben wir den Chat-Bot mit unserem Salesforce-Entwickler zusammen gemacht und haben da auch schon ganz gute Ergebnisse erzielt. Und es bekommt jetzt auch irgendwie so Konzernweit schon fast Sichtbarkeit und da gibt es auch wirklich ein paar Ideen, das größer aufzusetzen. Und das andere Thema ist so der Case Terminbuchung bei [Company 6]. Also für Kunden, Interessierte, Besucher, aber auch Bestandskunden. Das die bei ihrem Vertriebler, oder ihrem Key Account, je nachdem, wie sie aufgestellt sind im Vertrieb, sich da Ihre Termine buchen können, ohne dass man irgendwie das hin und her per E-Mail hat. Ich wollte Ihnen</p>	<p>Where we did an MVP. A pilot in a small country, for us small market [country]. Because they just had a very, very dry lead pipeline. Where we said, okay, there's a team that's ready. They have manpower, little budget to somehow advertise externally, but they can squat on the chatbot. Then we made the chatbot together with our Salesforce developer and have already achieved quite good results. And it is now somehow gaining almost group-wide visibility, and there are also a few ideas for making it bigger. And the other topic is the case of booking appointments at [Company 6]. So, for customers, interested parties, visitors, but also existing customers. That they can book their appointments with their salesperson or their key account, depending on how they are set up in sales, without having to go back and forth by e-mail. I almost wanted to send you my calendar as well. Why don't you just find an appointment? That's exactly</p>

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		schon fast meinen Kalender auch schicken. Suchen Sie sich doch einfach mal einen Termin. Genau das haben wir ausgegraben. Es ist bei uns in dem Microsoft-Paket mit drin. Microsoft Bookings heißt das. -	what we dug up. It's in the Microsoft package with us. It's called Microsoft Bookings. -
Researcher	51:39	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 6-2	51:39	Da gibt es ja zwei verschieden geartete Use Cases. Also einmal den, den ich jetzt gerade beschrieben habe, dass der einzelne Vertriebler sich buchbar macht oder das ich eben als Firma ein Team vorhalte, das auf Kundenanfragen reagieren kann mit schon fixen Terminen.	There are two different types of use cases. The first is the one I have just described, where the individual salesperson makes himself bookable or where I, as a company, have a team that can react to customer enquiries with fixed appointments.
Researcher	52:03	Dann vielleicht da noch jetzt so die abschließenden zwei, drei kleinen Fragen. Wenn man jetzt mal so einen Summen-Strich drunter ziehen würde. Das sind ja spannende weitere Entwicklungsprojekte, die Sie jetzt gerade angesprochen haben. Wie sehr entscheiden Sie quasi darüber zu sagen: Hey, wir machen das jetzt mal. Wir bringen das in dem und dem Markt vielleicht auch als MVP auf die Straße?	Then perhaps the final two or three small questions. If you were to draw a line underneath them. These are exciting further development projects that you have just mentioned. How much do you decide to say: Hey, we're going to do this. Maybe we'll put it on the road as an MVP in this and that market?
Participant 6-2	52:30	Also wir sind da relativ autark in unserem Umfeld. Es ist halt so. Also es gibt es gibt mehrere Szenarien. Es gibt natürlich die strategische Entscheidung zu sagen, wir gehen in die eine oder andere Richtung. Das haben wir zum Beispiel beim Digital Asset Management gemacht. Wobei da gab es auch Pull. Halt mehr zu sagen, es gibt irgendwo eine Anforderung. Manchmal wird auch aus einem kleinen Pull an ebenso eine relativ strategische Entscheidung. Aber es gibt auch kleinteiliger von uns dann wirklich einen Push, wo wir jetzt sagen das probieren wir jetzt mal aus, da suchen wir uns einen Abnehmer oder machen es sogar selber und machen mal einen Piloten um zu lernen und zu gucken, ob es das tut.	We are relatively self-sufficient in our environment. It's just the way it is. So, there are several scenarios. There is, of course, the strategic decision to go in one direction or the other. That's what we did with digital asset management, for example. But there was also a pull. Just more to say that there is a requirement somewhere. Sometimes a small pull also becomes a relatively strategic decision. But there is also a small push from us where we say we're going to try it out, look for a buyer or even do it ourselves and do a pilot to learn and see if it works.
Researcher	53:16	Letzte Frage dazu: Gibt es da eine Unterscheidung zwischen von Ihnen zentral seitig voran gebrachten Themen versus regionale Weiterentwicklung? Oder ist das so stark zentralisiert?	Last question on this: Is there a distinction between issues that you promote centrally versus regional development? Or is that so strongly centralised?
Participant 6-2	53:29	Es ist schon dahingehend zentralisiert, dass wir das einzige Team sind, das auf die IT-Ressourcen direkt zugreift. -	It is already centralised in the sense that we are the only team that directly accesses the IT resources. -
Researcher	53:36	Okay. -	Okay. -
Participant 6-2	53:37	Also die müssen im Grunde, sobald wir irgendwo Development haben, müssen die bei uns vorbei. Und sie müssen halt auch und da sind viele weder in der Lage noch Willens. Sie müssen halt, wenn Sie zum Beispiel Software einführen wollen. Sie müssen durch den Enterprise Architecture Prozess mit IT-Security, Datenschutz, etc.. Und wenn man es nicht schon mal gemacht hat, ist es sehr, sehr mühsam. Das führt halt auch oft dazu, dass solche Themen dann bei uns landen, wenn wir dann eine gewisse Routine drin haben.	Basically, as soon as we have development somewhere, they have to come to us. And they also have to, and many are neither able nor willing. They have to, for example, if they want to introduce software. They have to go through the enterprise architecture process with IT security, data protection, etc.. And if you haven't done it before, it's very, very tedious. This often leads to such topics ending up with us when we have a certain routine. And we are probably viewed more

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		Und hat da auch wohl gerade aus dieser Architecture-Ecke wohlwollender betrachtet werden, weil man eben uns zutraut, dass wir uns da einfügen in gewisse vorhandene Prozesse und keine totalen U-Boote unterwegs sind. (--) Aber es gibt schon auch Beispiele, wo entweder ein Business Segment oder sogar ein Land in dem Business Segment so etwas erwartet und es dann von dort aus größer wird. Gibt es auch nicht viel, aber gibt es.	favourably from this architecture corner, because they trust us to fit into certain existing processes and not to be total submarines. (--) But there are also examples where either a business segment or even a country in the business segment expects something like this and then it gets bigger from there. There exists also not much, but there exists.
Researcher	54:46	Wenn ich es richtig verstanden habe, sind sie dann meistens ja auch zumindest als Stakeholder mit einbezogen, um genau diesen Prozess zu erklären?	If I have understood it correctly, they are then usually also involved at least as stakeholders in order to explain precisely this process?
Participant 6-2	54:53	Das ist dann eigentlich so - da gibt es jetzt gerade ein konkretes Beispiel sind Präsentation Software. Da haben wir im Grunde halt Consulting gemacht. Ihr müsst dahin, wir haben geholfen den Projektplan bisschen aufzubauen und halt an so entscheidenden Stakeholder-Prozessen mitgewirkt. Zu sagen wie kriege ich jetzt den Datenschutzbeauftragten, ohne, dass er vom Stuhl fällt.	That's actually how it is - there's a concrete example right now - presentation software. Basically, we did consulting for that. You have to go there, we helped to build up the project plan a bit and participated in such crucial stakeholder processes. To say how do I get the data protection officer now without him falling off his chair.
Researcher	55:17	Na ja, perfekt. Also all das, was wir jetzt besprochen hatten, was ich mal so hinterfragen durfte bei Ihnen, hat mir auf jeden Fall wieder dazu geholfen, [Company 6] als Unternehmen zu verstehen bzw. auch die Herangehensweise an "wie treffen Sie Entscheidungen im Bereich Marketing Kommunikation"? Was für Skills sind gefragt? Wo geht da die Richtung hin? Welche Informationen werden mit einbezogen? Was sind die KPIs und Zielsetzung, so dass ich jetzt keine konkrete weitere Frage hätte. Gibt es vielleicht von Ihrer Seite aus irgendetwas, wo Sie sagen: Mensch, Herr Tipke, darüber haben wir noch nicht gesprochen, wenn es um das Thema Weiterentwicklung von Marketing-Kommunikation geht? Oder würden Sie jetzt so vom Gefühl sagen: Rundes Bild, was wir da jetzt diskutiert haben?	Well, perfect. So, all the things that we discussed, that I was allowed to question with you, have definitely helped me to understand [Company 6] as a company and also the approach to "how do you make decisions in the area of marketing communication"? What skills are in demand? Where is the direction going? What information is included? What are the KPIs and objective, so I wouldn't have a specific further question now. Is there perhaps anything on your part where you say: Gee, Mr Tipke, we haven't talked about that yet when it comes to the topic of further development of marketing communication? Or would you now say, based on your feeling, that what we have discussed is a rounded picture?
Participant 6-2	56:08	Nein, ich denke, das was Sie von uns aus wissen oder über uns wissen sollten, das glaube ich haben, sollten sie bekommen haben. Ich meine natürlich irgendwo diese Frage, die Sie am Anfang aufgeworfen haben: Es wird mehr, es wird komplexer, aber es gibt natürlich nicht mehr Leute, die es tun. Die treibt uns irgendwo schon um. Aber außer, dass man halt man sagt, gut ich muss halt Entscheidungen treffen, ich muss priorisieren und gucken, ich kann halt nicht alles machen, aber gewisse Sachen müssen/sollten wir halt vielleicht schon tun und dann muss man halt gucken wo die Ressourcen und auch die Skills auch herkommen, um das dann zu tun.	No, I think what you know from us or should know about us, I think you have, you should have got. I mean of course somewhere this question that you raised at the beginning: It's getting more, it's getting more complex, but of course there are not more people doing it. That's what's bothering us somewhere. But apart from saying, well, I have to make decisions, I have to prioritise and look, I can't do everything, but we have to/should perhaps do certain things and then we have to look where the resources and the skills come from to do them.

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Researcher	56:49	Ja, das ist ja quasi genau diese Verknüpfung zum ganzen Thema Marketing Controlling. Transparent aufzeigen was ist der Mehrwert, wo sich dann auch wieder da so der Loop schließt.	Yes, that is exactly the link to the whole topic of marketing controlling. Transparently showing what the added value is, where the loop closes again.
Participant 6-2	57:00	Genau. Da gibt es halt schon, es gibt ja jetzt auch Möglichkeiten oder es tun sich Möglichkeiten auf. Das kann man dann, das muss man gucken, wie man das dann - das ist dann Firmenpolitik, auch oft natürlich, wie man das dann spielt. Weil es wird ja um uns alle rum irgendwie digitaler. Also jede Abteilung führt irgendwo gewisse Prozesse ein oder versucht sie zu digitalisieren. Und da kann man sich als Marketing natürlich auch teilweise geschickt positionieren. Also jetzt bei dem Chatbot zum Beispiel: Es muss nicht unbedingt ein Marketingexperte sein, es kann genauso ein Sales- oder Service-Use-Case sein. Wir haben schon mal angefangen. Das kann jetzt gut sein für uns, weil wir gut positioniert sind. Es kann schlecht sein, wenn wir die ganze Arbeit haben. Das muss man halt dann im Unternehmen austarieren, denke ich. Aber ich möchte da eigentlich schon gestalten. Auf unserer Ebene und auch irgendwo die Richtung vorgeben. Es nicht einfach nur passieren lassen und den Mangel verwalten.	Exactly. There are already, there are now also opportunities or opportunities are opening up. You can then, you have to look at how you can then - that is then company policy, also often of course, how you then play it. Because it's becoming more digital all around us somehow. So, every department is introducing certain processes somewhere or is trying to digitalise them. And of course you can position yourself cleverly as a marketing department. In the case of the chatbot, for example, it doesn't necessarily have to be a marketing expert, it can just as easily be a sales or service use case. We have already started. That can be good for us now because we are well positioned. It can be bad when we have all the work. I think you have to balance that out within the company. But I would actually like to shape it. At our level and also to set the direction somewhere. Not just let it happen and manage the shortage.
Researcher	58:05	Ja. Spannende Einstellung. Was sich da vielleicht noch mal zurückspielen kann aus den anderen Interviews ist das Unternehmen durchaus auch noch mal die Fragestellung in meine Richtung geworfen haben. Wie sieht es in puncto agile Arbeitsweisen und Methodiken im Marketing aus? Weil man da klassisch natürlich aus dem reinen Projektmanagement kommt. Mensch, wir wollen eine Kampagne aufsetzen. Lass uns mal überlegen was? Wer sind die Stakeholder? Wie erreichen wir die am besten? Wie steuern wir es aussehen? Und wo können wir vielleicht noch optimieren, wenn wir es noch mal machen wollen? Mehr hin zu: Aus unterschiedlichsten Geschäftsbereichen kommen immer mehr Ideen, Anforderungen auf uns zu. Lasst uns die mal sinngemäß in ein Backlog reinschreiben und dann Stepp by Stepp agil abarbeiten. So und das kann auch genauso heißen, dass ein Kommunikations-Thema deutlich agiler abgearbeitet wird oder eine Kampagne als es vielleicht von der Herangehensweise noch vor einer geraumen Zeit war in Führungszeichen.	Yes, that's an exciting attitude. What can perhaps be played back from the other interviews is that companies have also thrown the question in my direction again. How do things look in terms of agile working methods in marketing? Because classically, of course, you come from pure project management. Man, we want to set up a campaign. Let's think about what? Who are the stakeholders? What is the best way to reach them? How do we manage it? And where might we tweak if we want to do it again? More towards: More and more ideas and requirements are coming to us from different business areas. Let's write them down in a backlog and then work through them step by step in an agile way. This can also mean that a communication topic or a campaign is processed in a much more agile way than it might have been a while ago, in inverted commas.
Participant 6-2	59:11	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	59:12	Das waren durchaus Fragestellungen, die da auch andere Unternehmen gerade bewegt haben, um etwas mehr Herr zu	These were certainly issues that other companies were also concerned about in order to get a better handle on

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		werden über genau diese Komplexität, Priorisierung und Weiterentwicklung unter einen Hut zu bekommen.	precisely this complexity, prioritisation and further development under one roof.
Participant 6-2	59:26	Also wir versuchen es ähnlich zu handhaben. Wir diskutieren sogar und ich weiß nicht, ob das ist, wirklich in diese Richtung gehen wird. Aber wir haben in unserem Strategie-Workshop jetzt auch wirklich so ein Thema diskutiert, wir verabschieden uns von diesem klassischen Kampagnen-Gedanken und gucken wirklich nur noch und es wird wahrscheinlich in dieser Radikalität wird es nicht passieren, aber gucken nur noch auf Customer Journeys, Touchpoints und wie die möglichst gut zusammenpassen.	So, we are trying to handle it in a similar way. We are even discussing it and I don't know if it will really go in that direction. But in our strategy workshop we really discussed a topic like this, we are saying goodbye to this classic campaign idea and are really only looking - and it probably won't happen in this radical way - but only looking at customer journeys, touchpoints and how they fit together as well as possible.
Researcher	59:55	Hm. Würde in dieser radikalen Herangehensweise dann bei einem Produkt Launch konkret heißen Sie machen jetzt sinngemäß gesprochen nicht mehr das zentrale Presse- und Kunden-Event, zu dem Sie alle einladen. Sondern wirklich rein auf die Customer Journey bezogen. -	Hm. Would this radical approach to a product launch mean that you no longer do the central press and customer event to which you invite everyone? But really purely related to the customer journey. -
Participant 6-2	01:00:15	Wir bauen eigentlich nur einen neuen Baustein in so eine Customer Journey ein.	We are actually just adding a new building block to such a customer journey.
Researcher	01:00:20	Okay, verstehe. Super spannend. Vielen Dank für die Insights. Mich hat es auf jeden Fall sowohl für die Thesis weitergebracht als auch persönlich um noch einmal mehr zu verstehen, wie gehen andere Unternehmen daran. Vielen Dank für Ihre Zeit.	Okay, got it. Super exciting. Thank you very much for the insights. It definitely helped me both for my thesis and personally to understand even more how other companies go about it. Thank you very much for your time.
Participant 6-2	01:00:39	Ich hätte auch noch Fragen.	I also have some questions.
Researcher	01:00:43	Auf jeden Fall!	Absolutely!
Participant 6-2	01:00:44	Wie ordnen Sie das jetzt ein von dem, was Sie gehört haben? Waren da jetzt Sachen dabei, die Sie überrascht haben? Die Sie bei anderen so noch nicht gehört haben? Wo sind so die Überschneidungen auch zu anderen?	How do you classify this now from what you have heard? Were there things that surprised you? Things that you have not heard before from others? Where are the overlaps with others?
Researcher	01:00:59	Also ich würde es natürlich noch mal im Nachgang mit der Handlungsempfehlungen näher herausarbeiten, wenn ich wirklich die Daten zusammenbringe.	So, of course I would elaborate on it again in the follow-up with the recommendations for action, if I really bring the data together.
Participant 6-2	01:01:05	Ah, okay.	Ah, okay.
Researcher	01:01:06	Aber so die ersten Eindrücke, die ich gerne teilen würde: Was mich sehr beeindruckt hat, ist tatsächlich die agile Herangehensweise. In der Form habe ich das jetzt das erste Mal wahrgenommen als Best in Class, wenn man es mal so neben die anderen Cases setzen wollen würde. Da wird es in vielen Unternehmen einfach noch deutlich starrer gehandhabt. Das habe ich auch in vielen anderen Unternehmen hier aus meiner Befragung so wahrgenommen. Und was ich auch sehr spannend finde ist, dass Insourcing von den Kanälen bzw. dann auch die Umsetzung. Also zu sagen wir wollen weg von einer reinen Agentur-	But these are the first impressions or impressions that I would like to share: What really impressed me was the agile approach. This is the first time I've seen it in this form as best in class, if you want to put it next to the other cases. In many companies, it is still handled much more rigidly. I have also noticed this in many other companies from my survey. And what I also find very exciting is the insourcing of the channels and then also the implementation. So, to say we want to get away from a pure agency dependency. And just as I have heard from team size and the like, I don't have

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		<p>Abhängigkeit. Und so wie es jetzt auch mal aus Teamgröße und ähnlichem herausgehört habe, hätte ich nicht das Gefühl, dass dadurch sich jetzt bei Ihnen innerhalb der gesamten Organisation vielleicht jetzt neben Ihrem Team sich eine große Blase aufgebaut hat. Sondern, dass das von der Herangehensweise der Methodiken sehr schlank gehandhabt wird. Auch das hätte ich jetzt, oder habe ich bei vielen anderen so nicht herausgehört. Da war natürlich immer auch wieder die Frage: Mensch, wie schaffen wir es, dass unser Fachbereich auch dieses vernetzte, integrierte Wissen über "Wie funktionieren eigentlich Kanäle gemeinschaftlich", das versucht wird so etwas aufzubauen. Das ist natürlich im ersten Schritt immer in dieser Marketing Bubble vielleicht gut funktioniert. Wenn es dann aber Business Unit oder Unternehmens übergreifend der Fall sein soll, dass es halt genau an diesen Punkten auch nach wie vor immer hakelt.</p>	<p>the feeling that a big bubble has built up within your entire organisation, perhaps alongside your team. But rather that the approach to the methodologies is very lean. I wouldn't have heard that either, or I haven't heard that from many others. Of course, there was always the question: how do we make it so that our department also has this networked, integrated knowledge about "how channels actually work together", which we are trying to build up. Of course, this always works well in the marketing bubble at first. But if it is to be the case across business units or companies, it is precisely at these points that there are still problems.</p>
Participant 6-2	01:03:06	Ja. Na ja, super, danke schön.	Yeah. Well, great, thank you.
Researcher	01:03:10	Gerne, dann würde ich sagen, sobald ich alle Daten angefangen habe, gehe ich den geschilderten Weg auf [Participant 6-1] mal zu. Versuche das noch mal so zu aggregieren und vielleicht bietet sich dann ja noch mal die Möglichkeit, dass man sich nochmals wieder begegnet oder sieht. Wenn ich das vorstellen soll oder wenn [Participant 6-1] sagt „Schicken Sie es einmal durch“. Wir gucken das an und bei Bedarf melden wir uns. Das lässt sich dann ja rausfinden. Genau. Und von daher ganz vielen Dank für die Zeit für den Input und weiterhin einen schönen Freitag und ein schönes Wochenende voraus.	I'd like to say that as soon as I've started with all the data, I'll approach [Participant 6-1] the way I described. I'll try to aggregate it again and maybe we'll have the opportunity to meet or see each other again. If you want me to introduce it or if [Participant 6-1] says "Send it through once". We'll look at it and get in touch if necessary. Then we can find out. Exactly. And so thank you very much for your time for the input and have a nice Friday and a nice weekend ahead.
Participant 6-2	01:03:45	Danke Ihnen auch gutes Gelingen. Danke! Und ja, vielleicht sehen wir uns ja wieder.	Thank you also good luck. Thank you! And yes, maybe we will see each other again.
Researcher	01:03:51	Würde mich freuen. Bis dahin würde ich.	I'd love to. Until then I would.

Appendix 14 – Example transcript – “Supervisor / C-Level”

Participant 1-5 – Interview

Date of record: 20/12/2021

Participant 1-5	00:00	Na perfekt. Freut mich. Dann zu meiner Person. Ich bin [Participant 1-5], CSO. Bin hier seit 20 Jahren bei [Company]. War vorher im Bereich [Branche] und von der Ausbildung auch - heute würde man sagen Mechatroniker – was ich gemacht habe und bin dann eben so vor 25 Jahren über den technischen Vertrieb dann eben im Vertrieb und Marketing gelandet und eben klassisch in dem Bereich Investitionsgüter. Also ich bin jetzt nicht der Marketeer für Konsumgüter. -	Perfect. I'm glad. Then to my person. I am [Participant 1-5], CSO. I've been with [Company] for 20 years. I was previously in the [industry] sector and also trained as a mechatronics engineer, which is today's apprenticeships name – and 25 years ago I ended up in sales and marketing via technical sales and then classically in the area of capital goods. So, I'm not a marketeer for consumer goods. -
Researcher	00:36	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	00:36	Beispielsweise Johnson und Johnson, wäre ich falsch aufgehoben. Aber mit dem, mit dem Background Investitionsgüter, das passt.	For example, Johnson and Johnson, I would be in the wrong place. But with the capital goods background, that fits.
Researcher	00:47	Ja, bringt mich tatsächlich auch, wenn es okay ist, einfach direkt zur Überleitung zur ersten Frage. Ich habe hier bei mir den Interview Guide einfach parallel aufgemacht. Ich würde das so sehen. Sie müssten das nicht als Orientierung haben. Kann das natürlich auch gerne teilen. Im Wesentlichen sehe ich das so als lockeres Gespräch in Anführungszeichen, wo ich entsprechende Zwischenfragen auch stellen würde. -	Yes, actually, if it's okay, just take me straight to transition to the first question. I just opened the interview guide here in parallel. I would look at it like this. You wouldn't have to have that as an orientation. Can share that, of course. Essentially, I see it as a casual conversation in inverted commas, where I would also ask appropriate intermediate questions. -
Participant 1-5	01:12	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	01:13	Mh, okay. Dann Sie haben jetzt gerade kurz schon Ihren beruflichen Hintergrund beschrieben. Funktion CSO, seit wann sind Sie [in der Funktion]?	Mh, okay. Then you have just briefly described your professional background. Function CSO, since when have you been [in the function]?
Participant 1-5	01:24	Seit 2014.	Since 2014.
Researcher	01:25	Seit 2014, okay. Und von den akademischen Kenntnissen und vom Hintergrund könnten Sie da auch noch mal kurz beschreiben, was Sie da ausmacht?	Since 2014, okay. And from your academic knowledge and background, could you briefly describe what makes you fit in?
Participant 1-5	01:36	Ja, also ich habe studiert. Allgemeiner Maschinenbau mit Schwerpunkt Regelungstechnik in [City] und in [Country] und habe dann nach dem Studium in [Country] und der Diplomarbeit in der Industrie, habe ich mich dann entschieden zu promovieren und hab das gemacht auf dem Gebiet der Steuerungs- und Regelungstechnik.	Yes, I studied. General mechanical engineering with a focus on control engineering in [City] and in [Country]. After my studies in [Country] and my diploma thesis in industry, I decided to do a doctorate in the field of control engineering.
Researcher	01:59	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	01:59	Habe ihn in Deutschland studiert und in [Country]. Also ein halbes Jahr war ich in [Country] und mein Thema war [business segment].	I studied it in Germany and in [Country]. So, I was in [Country] for half a year and my topic was [business segment].
Researcher	02:09	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	02:09	Hab da nebenbei, damals hieß es nicht Industrie 4.0, sondern damals hieß es Computer Integrated Manufacturing. Da	I didn't call it Industry 4.0 at the time, but Computer Integrated Manufacturing. I was the [Title] at the University of

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		hat man auch von der großen Automatisierung geträumt und war dann dort neben meiner Promotion war ich der [Title] der Universität Stuttgart und hat in den letzten drei Jahren meine Promotion im Maschinenbau, das wissen Sie auch, in Deutschland gibt es große Institute, die nebenbei dann noch ihre eigenen Firmen haben, und dort habe ich dann drei Jahre als Geschäftsführer gearbeitet und dort war dann die Aufgabe ganz klar das Know how, was wir dort im Bereich Steuerungs- und Regelungstechnik hatten, über Industrie-Projekte sozusagen zu verkaufen. -	Stuttgart, and in the last three years I completed my doctorate in mechanical engineering, as you know, there are large institutes in Germany that have their own companies on the side, and I worked there for three years as Managing Director, and my task there was quite clearly to sell the know-how we had there in the area of control and regulation technology through industrial projects, so to speak. -
Researcher	02:59	Okay. -	Okay. -
Participant 1-5	02:59	Und das war dann eben auch für Firmen wie [Unternehmen] und [Unternehmen] und auch [Unternehmen]. Mit [Unternehmen] hatten wir auch ein gutes Projekt und da kam auch dann glaube ich auch der Fable dann auch her, weil dann war es in den letzten drei Jahren nicht mehr Promotion in der Tiefe Technik, sondern es war tatsächlich Vertrieb. Ja? Und ja, dann habe ich meine erste Stelle gehabt. Das war im Bereich [Branche]. Auch technischer Vertrieb und dann wie gesagt, habe ich bei [Company 1] angefangen. Auch erstmal im technischen Vertrieb 2002. 2007 habe ich dann den weltweiten Vertrieb übernommen und 2014 dann eben zusätzlich den Vertrieb, Services und Marketing.	And that was also for companies like [Unternehmen] and [Unternehmen] and also [Unternehmen]. We also had a good project with [Unternehmen] and I think that's where the preference came from, because in the last three years it was no longer promotion in the depth of technology, but it was actually distribution. Yes? And yes, then I had my first job. That was in the [sector]. Also technical sales and then, as I said, I started at [Company 1]. In 2007 I took over worldwide sales and in 2014 I also took over sales, services and marketing.
Researcher	03:44	Verstehe. Ja. Nächste Frage, die ich bei mir hier auf dem Zettel hätte, wäre auch noch mal einleitend in punkto Unternehmen und Organisationskultur. Wie würden Sie das aus Ihrer Perspektive beschreiben? Und mit Organisationskultur meine ich konkret Themen wie wird Fehlerkultur gelebt? Ist die Machtdistanz zwischen den einzelnen Ebenen größer oder eher geringer? Verstehen Sie sich als [Company 1] oder auch in der Zusammenarbeit bei Projekten eher sage ich mal als Kollektiv, oder ist ein starkes Silodenken ausgeprägt? Könnten Sie das mal so aus Ihrer Warte beschreiben?	I see. Yes. The next question that I would have on my mind here would also be an introductory question regarding the company and organisational culture. How would you describe that from your perspective? And by organisational culture I mean specifically topics such as how is error culture lived? Is the power distance between the individual levels greater or rather less? Do you see yourselves as a [Company 1] or also in the cooperation on projects rather as a collective, I would say, or is there a strong silo thinking? Could you describe this from your point of view?
Participant 1-5	04:26	Ja, das ist alleine schon durch die Kunden vorgegeben und das war auch über viele Jahre so. Alle Organisationsformen, die wir haben und wir sind da gerade wieder in einer im Umbruch in eine neue Organisationsform, funktionieren nicht als Silo, sondern funktionieren immer von Kundenanforderungen bis hin zur lebenslangen Betreuung dieser Anlagen, die wir liefern in den Service. Alle bei den gleichen Kunden. Wir sind seit 75 Jahren in [Branche]. Das heißt, jeder unserer einzelnen Bereiche hat eigentlich die gleichen Kunden. Eben nur mit	Yes, this is dictated by the customers alone and has been so for many years. All the organisational forms we have, and we are currently in the process of changing to a new organisational form, do not function as a silo, but always function from customer requirements to the lifelong support of these systems that we deliver to the service. All with the same customers. We have been in [the industry] for 75 years. That means that each of our individual divisions actually has the same customers. Just with different focuses. Depending on

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		<p>verschiedenen Schwerpunkten. Je nachdem, was wir anbieten. Aber der Kunde, der Kunde sieht uns als Ganzes, sieht uns als [Company 1] und deswegen aber auch den Vertrieb so aufgestellt. Kann man immer fragen wie stellt man Vertrieb. Stellt man den produktorientiert auf oder stellt man den kundenorientiert auf? -</p>	<p>what we offer. But the customer, the customer sees us as a whole, sees us as [Company 1] and that's why the sales department is set up this way. You can always ask how you set up sales. Do you set it up product-oriented or customer-oriented? -</p>
Researcher	05:21	<p>Mh. -</p>	<p>Mh. -</p>
Participant 1-5	05:21	<p>Und egal wo sie hingehen, bei der [Company 1] sind wir sehr global. Das funktioniert alles kundenorientiert und das ist eigentlich das Mittel der letzten Jahre in jeder Organisationsform gewesen, dass es eben keine Silos sind. Es gab mal Organisationsformen in der Vergangenheit, wo man einfach zu viele kleine, junge, zarte oder aber sehr schnell klar wurde, Moment mal, es geht immer um das gesamte Thema bei dem Kunden, um eine gesamte Linie. Die Produkte, die vielleicht aus einzelnen Bereichen kommen, die finden sich immer in der gleichen Linie und deswegen haben wir das dann auch wieder mehr zusammengefasst. Und auch eine Verantwortung für den Kunden ist jetzt nicht nur bei den Vertrieb, sondern geht über das letztendlich über das ganze hinaus.</p>	<p>And no matter where they go, at [Company 1] we are very global. It all works in a customer-oriented way and that has actually been the means of the last few years in every form of organisation, that there are no silos. There were organisational forms in the past where you simply had too many small, young, tender or very quickly realised, wait a minute, it's always about the entire issue with the customer, about an entire line. The products that perhaps come from individual areas are always found in the same line and that's why we have then combined them again more. And responsibility for the customer is now not only with the sales department, but ultimately goes beyond that.</p>
Researcher	06:12	<p>Sehr spannend das auch so zu sehen. Ich hatte von in den Vorgesprächen auch durchaus die eine oder andere Diskussion rund um, ich nenne es mal neue Geschäftsfelder. All das, was wir zum Beispiel mit [Produktsegment] und ähnlichem aufkommt. Ich vermute mal, dass da werden jetzt andere Kundengruppen aus meinem Verständnis erschlossen, aber die Funktionsweise der Organisation ist auch da entsprechend geprägt?</p>	<p>It's very exciting to see it that way. In the preliminary talks I also had one or two discussions about, let's call it new business areas. All the things we are coming up with, for example, [product segment] and the like. I suppose that other customer groups are now being opened up from my understanding, but the functioning of the organisation is also shaped accordingly?</p>
Participant 1-5	06:35	<p>Die Funktionsweise ist die gleiche. Wobei man ganz klar sagen muss Bei dem Thema [Produktsegment], da sind wir am Anfang. Wir haben gerade mal zwei Kunden ein, einen großen Kunden. Dann würde ich schon fast als Key Account bezeichnen und noch einen kleinen. Aber dennoch war und ist unser Ansatz auch in den Markt genauso zu gehen. Es gibt eine Vertriebsverantwortung nach vorne, aber dann sind es letztendlich über alle Gewerke, die dann dort aktiv werden bei den Kunden. Ob jetzt der Maschinenbau sozusagen, indem wir die Maschinen und Anlagen liefern oder der Service. Das ist immer über die Breite. Über die Breite gestreut über das Haus. Und dann auch bewusst, dass es verschiedene direkte Touchpoints mit den Kunden eben gibt, ja? Also der Kunde hat immer, muss merken, dass [Company 1] spricht mit einer</p>	<p>The way it works is the same. But it has to be said quite clearly that we are at the beginning of the [product segment]. We have just two customers, one large customer. Then I would almost call it a key account and another small one. But nevertheless, our approach was and is to go into the market in the same way. There is a forward sales responsibility, but then ultimately it is all the trades that become active there with the customers. Whether it's mechanical engineering, so to speak, in which we supply the machines and systems, or service. It's always across the board. Spread across the whole company. And then also consciously that there are various direct touchpoints with the customers, yes? The customer always has to notice that [Company 1] speaks</p>

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		Stimme. Es sind aber nicht immer die gleichen Leute. -	with one voice. But it's not always the same people. -
Researcher	07:30	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	07:31	Der Kunde hat, der Kunde [aus dem Produktsegment] hat einen Account-Verantwortlichen. Das ist der Hauptgrundverantwortliche. Aber er hat Touchpoints in den Service. Er hat Touchpoints in die Entwicklung. Und das hat uns immer ausgezeichnet. Und das ist auch immer die Stärke gewesen von der [Company 1].	The customer has, the customer [from the product segment] has an account manager. That is the main account manager. But he has touchpoints in the service. He has touchpoints into development. And that has always distinguished us. And that has always been the strength of [Company 1].
Researcher	07:51	Jetzt sind sie gerade schon beim Puntco Touchpoints gewesen, was mich zur nächsten Frage bringen würde. Touchpoints und ich sage mal „One voice to the customer“ sogesehen oder zumindest eine einheitliche Kommunikation heißt ja auch, oder ist ja so ein bisschen auch die indirekte Frage, die hinter Marketing-Kommunikation steckt. Was für mich die Frage aufwirft, wie würden Sie den Stellenwert von Marketing-Kommunikation bei Ihnen im Unternehmen beschreiben? Und mit Marketing-Kommunikation, um das einmal konkret zu beschreiben, was ich damit meine, verstehe ich alle Maßnahmen, die dazu dienen, Produkte und Dienstleistungen von Ihnen zu vermarkten. Also primär die Vermarktungsseite, weniger die After Sales Seite.	Now you have just been to the topic Touchpoints, which would bring me to the next question. Touchpoints and I would say “One voice to the customer”, so to speak, or at least uniform communication also means, or is also a bit of the indirect question behind marketing communication. Which raises the question for me, how would you describe the importance of marketing communication in your company? And by marketing communication, to describe what I mean in concrete terms, I mean all measures that serve to market your products and services. So primarily the marketing side, less the after-sales side.
Participant 1-5	08:35	Ja (--), dadurch, dass wir eben auch in den vergangenen Jahren durchaus verschiedene Produkte hatten, ist der Auftritt der [Company 1] nach draußen ist der gleiche. Und für all diese, das ging früher los in den Design Richtlinien, bis hin zum Auftreten auf Messen, bis hin zu der Gestaltung von Logos auf den Maschinen, aber auch den ganzen Content, den wir nach draußen, früher noch in Printmedien, heute natürlich digital, wobei früher in den Printmedien egal aus welchem Bereich es bei der [Company 1] kam, da haben wir auch verschiedene Brands mit [Marke] und [Marke], dass das eine Handschrift ist. Und das war und ist immer die Aufgabe von Marketing und von Kommunikation gewesen. Früher eben in den Printmedien und heute eben mehr, mehr digital.	Yes (--), because we have had different products in the past years, the external appearance of [Company 1] is the same. And for all these, it started in the past with the design guidelines, up to the appearance at trade fairs, up to the design of logos on the machines, but also all the content that we put out there, in the past still in print media, today of course digitally, whereas in the past in the print media, no matter which area it came from at [Company 1], we also have different brands with [brand] and [brand], that this is a signature. And that has always been the task of marketing and communication. In the past it was in the print media and today it is more, more digital.
Researcher	09:38	Ist das Thema strategisches Marketing auch was? -	Is the topic of strategic marketing also something? -
Participant 1-5	09:45	So, und jetzt sag mal, wenn Sie das vielleicht auch verfolgt haben. Wir haben auch bei dem Thema Marketing, hieß früher Marketing und Kommunikation. Heute haben wir das Thema Strategie da vorgestellt und auch dick unterstrichen. Weil das geht eben heute auch um das ganze Thema Unternehmensentwicklung. Also gerade dann, wenn man in den Bereich [Geschäftsfeld] möchte, bauen Sie auch irgendwo für den ganzen Bereich	So, now tell me, if you have perhaps also been following this. We have also dealt with the topic of marketing, which used to be called marketing and communication. Today we have introduced the topic of strategy and also underlined it. Because today it is also about the whole topic of corporate development. So especially if you want to go into the area of [business area], you also build somewhere for the whole

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		strategischer Unternehmensentwicklung. Es ist gut Ideen zu haben für [Geschäftsfeld]. Aber wir müssen uns natürlich auf der einen Seite die Märkte angucken. Sind sie für uns überhaupt relevant? Also die Me-Too-Märkte, die können wir als [Company 1] mit unseren Fähigkeiten, die wir haben und den Kostenstrukturen, die wir haben, immer schon ausreichen. Also es macht keinen Sinn bei uns, jetzt sage ich mal, den nächsten, den nächsten Kaffeeröster zu entwickeln, der genau gleich ist wie der von den anderen Lieferanten. Und genau diese Aufgabe hat das strategische Marketing auf der einen Seite zu schauen, welche Kompetenzen haben wir also? -	area of strategic business development. It's good to have ideas for [business area]. But of course we have to look at the markets on the one hand. Are they relevant for us at all? So, the me-too markets, we as [Company 1] can always suffice with the skills we have and the cost structures we have. So, it doesn't make sense for us, now I say, to develop the next, the next coffee roaster that is exactly the same as the one from the other suppliers. And this is precisely the task of strategic marketing, on the one hand, to look at what competencies we have, and on the other hand, to look at what we can offer. -
Researcher	10:53	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	10:54	Das sind tatsächlich unsere Kernkompetenzen. Passen Sie zu diesen Markt? Und passt dieser Markt auch zu uns? Also ist es eben kein Me-Too-Markt. Markt, der vielleicht gerade wächst. Ist es ein Markt, der besondere Herausforderungen hat? Und so hat man eben das Thema [Produktsegment]. Das kam ganz klar durch Regularien und die Regularien für [Rohstoff] nicht gegeben hätte, dann wären wir auch nicht [Geschäftsfeld] eingestiegen. -	These are indeed our core competencies. Do you fit this market? And does this market also fit us? So, it's not a me-too market. Market that is perhaps just growing. Is it a market that has special challenges? And so you have the topic [product segment]. This was clearly due to regulations and if the regulations for [raw material] had not existed, then we would not have entered [business segment]. -
Researcher	11:22	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	11:23	Andere Themen, die wir jetzt eben bearbeiten. Da muss man genau gucken. Okay ist es, dass ein Markt, der das Potenzial hat zu wachsen? Ist es ein globaler Markt? All diese Dinge eben immer zu bewerten und das dann mit unseren Capabilities zu bewerten und dann zu entscheiden, jup macht Sinn mit einer Idee. Da haben wir verschiedene Quality Gates mit so einer Idee in einen neuen Markt zu gehen. Und dann wissen wir auch alle, wenn Sie zehn Ideen haben, in der Regel müssen Sie dann zu neun Ideen nein sagen.	Other topics that we are working on now. You have to take a close look. Is it a market that has the potential to grow? Is it a global market? We always have to assess all these things and then evaluate them with our capabilities and decide that yes, it makes sense with an idea. We have various quality gates to enter a new market with such an idea. And then we all know that if you have ten ideas, you usually have to say no to nine of them.
Researcher	11:58	Capabilities finde ich ein spannendes Stichwort. Wenn wir jetzt noch mal von dem strategischen Marketing wieder ein bisschen mehr in Richtung Kommunikation schwenken würden und da jetzt sagen es verändert sich ja, wie eingangs geschildert, relativ viel. Neue Kommunikationskanäle, digitale Medien und so weiter und so fort. Was würden Sie in der näheren Zukunft als Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen sehen, die so ein Marketing-Kommunikationsbereich bei Ihnen im Unternehmen mitbringen müsste?	I found capabilities an exciting keyword. If we were to move from strategic marketing back a bit more in the direction of communication and say that, as described at the beginning, a lot is changing. New communication channels, digital media and so on and so forth. In the near future, what do you see as the skills and competences that a marketing communications department in your company would have to have?
Participant 1-5	12:29	Die Kompetenzen, die zusätzlichen Kompetenzen?	The competences, the additional competences?
Researcher	12:32	Genau.	Exactly.
Participant 1-5	12:34	Ja, klar. Ich sage mal Social Media zu verstehen. Wenn man Content, Personen und Marken über Social Media alle drei	Yeah, sure. I say understanding social media. If you want to market content, people and brands via social media,

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		vermarkten möchte, muss man natürlich wissen, wie Social Media funktioniert. Und was mich da ganz ehrlich so ein bisschen, so ein bisschen neugierig macht, wie sich das entwickelt. Wir machen zum Beispiel heute auch sehr viel auch über LinkedIn. Wenn ich allerdings, bin da jetzt ungefähr seit 4-5 Jahren auf dem LinkedIn Kanal und merke, dass ich einfach weil sehr, sehr viele Nutzer da drauf gehen kann, dass sich Dinge auch ein bisschen verändert. Also es wird weniger zu einem geschäftlichen Netzwerk, als manchmal dann doch zu sehr, zu einem reinen Verkaufskanal. Zu Geschichten, die schon irgendwie Facebook-Charakter haben. Und da muss man halt aufpassen. Ich glaube, da muss ein LinkedIn aufpassen, dass eben so ein Kanal, da wirklich sehr wertvoll ist, einfach nicht verwässert. So und das zu verstehen, auch wenn neue sich aufkommende Kanäle auch lokal, wie WeChat in China, eben zu nutzen. Das ist sicherlich eine Fähigkeit, dann auch den Content und die Marke und die Personen darauf zuzuschneiden. -	you have to know how social media works. And what makes me a bit curious is how it will develop. Today, for example, we also do a lot via LinkedIn. However, when I've been on the LinkedIn channel for about 4-5 years now, I notice that simply because a lot of users are on it, things are changing a bit. So, it's becoming less of a business network and sometimes too much of a pure sales channel. Stories that somehow have the character of Facebook. And that's where you have to be careful. I think LinkedIn has to be careful that such a channel, which is really very valuable, doesn't become watered down. And to understand that, even if new emerging channels are also used locally, like WeChat in China. That is certainly an ability to tailor the content and the brand and the people to it. -
Researcher	14:01	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	14:01	So, und die andere Fähigkeit ist dann im doing. Auch die, die Leads, die man dadurch bekommt, auch wirklich zeitnah zu verfolgen und entsprechend zu reagieren. Denn, das wissen wir alle aus der Nutzung von Social Media, wenn Sie mehr oder weniger innerhalb von 24 Stunden eine Antwort bekommen, dann ist es nicht die Erwartungen, die jemand hat, der in Social Media unterwegs ist.	So, and then the other skill is in doing. Also that of following up the leads that you get through that in a really timely manner and responding accordingly. Because, we all know from using social media, if you get a response more or less within 24 hours, then it's not the expectations that someone who is on social media has.
Researcher	14:27	Sind ja auf der anderen Seite auch genauso dann entsprechende Ressourcen und Teams, step-by-step.	On the other hand, there are also corresponding resources and teams, step by step.
Participant 1-5	14:33	Und dann brauchen Sie auch die Ressourcen dazu, ganz klar, das zu bespielen. Genau.	And then you also need the resources to do that, quite clearly, to play that. Exactly.
Researcher	14:39	Was sind denn aus Ihrer Warte die drei wichtigsten Kontaktpunkte in Ihrem Geschäftsfeld, wenn Sie jetzt auf Kunden zugehen?	From your point of view, what are the three most important contact points in your business field when you approach customers now?
Participant 1-5	14:50	Also die allerwichtigsten in unserem Geschäftsfeld, weil es eben wirklich so eine Insel ist. Das Thema [Produktsegment] sind die persönlichen Kontakte auf meiner Ebene auf C-Level und eben die Account Manager, die für ihre Kunden verantwortlich sind. Die werden und sind und bleiben die wichtigsten Kontakte, die wir haben.	So, the most important ones in our business field, because it really is such an island. The topic [product segment] is the personal contacts at my level at C-level and the account managers who are responsible for their customers. They are and will remain the most important contacts we have.
Researcher	15:12	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	15:13	So, das zweite, das zweite sind (-) - es muss einfach sein, mit [Company 1] Geschäft zu machen. Es muss einfach sein, Geschäft zu machen. Das heißt, wir müssen den Kunden in unseren digitalen Plattformen, ob es im Service ist oder bei der neuen Maschinen, Werkzeuge an die	So, the second, the second are (-) - it must be easy to do business with [Company 1]. It has to be easy to do business. That means we have to give the customers tools in our digital platforms, whether it's in the service or in the new machinery, where we

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		Hand geben, wo wir mit dem Kunden in den Dialog treten. Sag mal wenn wir ein Webinar machen, das ist – es kann eine einseitige Geschichte sein, indem wir quasi eine Art, eine Art der Präsentation machen. Aber auch da versuchen, in den Dialog zu treten. Natürlich geht das Cross-Company.	engage in dialogue with the customer. Say if we do a webinar, that is – it can be a one-page story by sort of, doing a presentation. But even there, we try to engage in dialogue. Of course, that goes cross-company.
Researcher	15:56	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	15:58	Dann muss man halt. In so einem Webinar muss man eben Arbeitsgruppen bilden etc. Und das dritte ist bei den Touchpoints wirklich dem Kunden interaktiv, wenn er nach Ersatzteilen schaut, wenn er vielleicht eigene Dinge selber konfiguriert, ihm das Leben eben so einfach wie möglich zu machen. Es muss einfach sein mit [Company 1] Geschäft zu machen. Nehmen wir, nehmen wir als gutes Beispiel Amazon. Ich glaube, das ist einer der besten Kanäle, die wir haben. Wenn wir privat einkaufen. Ich sehe meine Ware, ich sehe wann sie verschickt wird. Also ich habe den ganzen Customer Journey empfinde ich als Privatanutzer ideal. Und da können wir eine ganze Scheibe abschneiden im Sinne der Konfiguration und in den Dialog zu treten mit dem Kunden.	Then you have to. In a webinar like this, you have to form working groups, etc. And the third thing is to really interact with the customer at the touchpoints, when he looks for spare parts, when he perhaps configures his own things, to make his life as easy as possible. It has to be easy to do business with [Company 1]. Let's take, let's take Amazon as a good example. I think that's one of the best channels we have. When we shop privately. I see my goods, I see when they're going to be shipped. So, I feel the whole customer journey is ideal as a private user. And we can cut a whole slice off that in terms of configuration and entering into dialogue with the customer.
Researcher	16:50	Das heißt -	That is -
Participant 1-5	16:50	Persönliche Kontakte, diese Webinare und den Content und das dritte eben die digitalen Touch Points wirklich dialogfähig zu machen und für den Kunden so einfach wie möglich.	Personal contacts, these webinars and the content, and the third thing is to make the digital touch points really capable of dialogue and as simple as possible for the customer.
Researcher	17:03	Jetzt haben Sie insbesondere die digitalen Touchpoints ja gerade angesprochen. Würden Sie sagen, dass es insgesamt auch eine Veränderung durch die Corona Pandemie in der Hinsicht gab?	Now you have just mentioned the digital touchpoints in particular. Would you say that the Corona pandemic also brought about a change in this respect?
Participant 1-5	17:16	Selbstverständlich hat Corona einen absoluten Schub gegeben. Definitiv. Definitiv hat Corona einen Schub gegeben. Vor allem was die, was die Kontakte betrifft. (--) Nach wie vor sind die persönlichen Kontakte, die fanden alle nicht persönlich statt, sondern fanden dann halt so statt wie jetzt, wie wir beide. -	Of course, Corona has given an absolute boost. Definitely. Definitely Corona has given a boost. Especially in terms of contacts. (--) As before, the personal contacts, they all didn't take place in person, they just took place like now, like the two of us. -
Researcher	17:36	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	17:36	Aber dieser Dialog, dieser Austausch war auch in der Zeit immens wichtig. Aber hin zu digital. Ganz klar hat Corona da ein riesen Schub gegeben. Wobei muss ich sagen bei dem Thema unseres Kunden Portals, was wir seit Jahren anbieten und unsere Workshops, da waren wir schon immer Vorreiter. Auch in der Industrie. Haben uns da auch mit anderen Industrien gebenchmarked. Und das ist ein Touchpoint, denen wir einfach auch weiter im Sinne von Kundenerlebnis und es noch einfach einfacher zu machen ausbauen.	But this dialogue, this exchange was also immensely important at the time. But towards digital. Clearly, Corona has given us a huge push. But I have to say that with the topic of our customer portal, which we have been offering for years, and our workshops, we have always been pioneers. Also, in the industry. We have benchmarked ourselves with other industries. And that is a touchpoint that we are simply expanding in terms of customer experience and making it even easier.
Researcher	18:11	Mh (-). Jetzt hatten wir ja schon gesprochen über das ganze Thema Webinare, Social Media Kanäle wie	Mh (-). We've already talked about the whole topic of webinars, social media channels like LinkedIn and others. If

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		LinkedIn und Ähnliches. Wenn man jetzt mal so mal einen Strich drunter zieht und sagt unser Marketing-Kommunikations-Mix, all die Kanäle, die wir aktuell gerade nutzen, um unsere Kunden zu erreichen, verschiedenste Touchpoints abzubilden, wie würden Sie den bewerten? Ist der umfänglich genug? Fehlt da aus Ihrer Sicht etwas?	you draw a line under it and say our marketing communication mix, all the channels that we are currently using to reach our customers, to map the most diverse touchpoints, how would you assess it? Is it comprehensive enough? Is there anything missing from your point of view?
Participant 1-5	18:40	Ne, der ist schon ganz gut. Ich sag mal was wir, was wir jetzt noch weiter treiben werden in den nächsten, in den kommenden Monaten und Jahren, ist das Stichwort Ecosystem. Wir arbeiten sehr viel mit Partnern zusammen, wo wir auch gemeinsame Lösungen an Kunden anbieten. Aber wir vermarkten es noch nicht als solches. Ich gebe Ihnen mal ein Beispiel. Wenn Sie eine Anlage von uns an die Kunden liefern, dann kommt es immer auf ein gutes Zusammenspiel von den Materialien, die Sie dafür brauchen, Sie ein [Produkt] herzustellen, also [Rohstoff], [Rohstoff] etc.. Und wir arbeiten mit diesem Material-Herstellern zusammen. Auch bei uns im Labor. Und bei den Kunden. -	No, it's already quite good. I'd like to say that what we will continue to do in the coming months and years is to focus on the ecosystem. We work a lot with partners, where we also offer joint solutions to customers. But we are not marketing it as such yet. Let me give you an example. When you deliver a system from us to the customers, it always comes down to a good interplay of the materials that you need to make you a [product], so [raw material], [raw material], etc.. And we work together with these material manufacturers. Also with us in the laboratory. And with the customers. -
Researcher	19:28	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	19:28	Aber als gemeinsame Lösung in Richtung Kunde zu vermarkten, das machen wir sehr wenig, sodass wir dann auch wiederum über Social Media eine Cross-Verbindung herbekommen. Also wenn der [Hersteller] sozusagen sein Produkt in seinen Kanälen vermarktet, dann gleich die Referenz auf [Company 3] und umgekehrt. Natürlich haben wir da auch eine Wettbewerbssituation. Die muss man dann halt gut spielen, aber dadurch haben sie diesen Multiplikator auf der einen Seite in den Social Media und auf der anderen Seite erleichtern Sie auch da wieder den Kunden manche Arbeit, weil sie ihm manche Koordination einfach abnehmen sollen.	But we do very little marketing as a joint solution in the direction of the customer, so that we then also get a cross-connection via social media. So, if the [manufacturer] markets its product in its channels, so to speak, then the reference to [Company 3] and vice versa. Of course, we also have a competitive situation. You have to play it well, but on the one hand you have this multiplier in the social media and on the other hand you make some work easier for the customer, because you simply have to take over some coordination.
Researcher	20:12	Mh.-	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	20:14	Und dieses Cross Marketing sozusagen mit ihren Partnern für ihre Kunden, das ist was, wo wir auch noch aufbauen können.	And this cross-marketing, so to speak, with their partners for their customers, that is something we can also build on.
Researcher	20:27	Mh. (-) Ist das der einzige Bereich oder gibt es auch konkret was, wo Sie sagen wir aus rein [Company 3]-Sicht, haben an folgender Stelle noch Nachholbedarf, oder das heißt noch nicht mal Nachholbedarf, sondern Entwicklungspotential.	Mh. (-) Is that the only area or is there also something concrete where you say, from a purely [Company 3] point of view, you still have some catching up to do in the following area, or that doesn't even mean catching up, but development potential.
Participant 1-5	20:39	Form ist, was ich vorhin sagte, die ganze Lead-Generierung und die Lead-Verfolgung. Unserer heutigen Systeme erlauben das leider nur eingeschränkt. Deswegen sind wir dabei uns ein neues CRM-System zu gönnen. (-) Wo wir eben von den digitalen Touchpoints eine direkte Verbindung auch und Verfolgung und Transparenz haben, bis hin eben vom	Form is what I said earlier, the whole lead generation and lead tracking. Unfortunately, our current systems only allow for that to a limited extent. That's why we are in the process of treating ourselves to a new CRM system. (-) Where we have a direct connection and tracking and transparency from the digital touchpoints, right through to the

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		Marketing, die das machen, bis hin zu den Vertriebs-Leuten da, die dann am Ende des Tages die Angebote machen und die Aufträge bekommen. Da wir dann immer noch diverse Systemebrüche drin, die wir über neues CRM-System bereinigen wollen.	marketing people who do it, right through to the sales people who make the offers and get the orders at the end of the day. There are still various system discontinuities, which we want to eliminate with the new CRM system.
Researcher	21:21	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	21:22	Das andere ist ein Dauerthema. Okay. Der Positionierung unserer Brands unserer Personas. Auch da können wir noch mehr machen. Auch das Wissen, was wir mit verschiedenen Personen und die Rolle, die wir bei den Leuten haben, gerade wenn es um digitale Produkte geht, auch da müssen wir noch eine Schippe drauflegen.	The other is an ongoing issue. Okay. The positioning of our brands of our personas. We can do more there as well. Also the knowledge of what we do with different people and the role we have with people, especially when it comes to digital products, we need to step it up a notch there as well.
Researcher	21:49	Wenn man jetzt mal von der Kommunikationskanal-Diskussion, die wir gerade hatten, weggeht hin zu dem Prozess, wie Sie vielleicht einzelne Maßnahmen festlegen. Könnten Sie aus Ihrer Sicht bitte beschreiben, wie Sie halt innerhalb der Kommunikationsmaßnahmen abstimmen, festlegen und was vielleicht auch Ihre Rolle genau in dieser Abstimmung mit ist?	If we now move away from the communication channel discussion we just had to the process of how you perhaps determine individual measures. Could you please describe from your point of view how you coordinate and determine communication measures and what your role is in this coordination?
Participant 1-5	22:15	Ja, also ich sage mal, lehnen nicht ein bisschen an das Beispiel, wie er das vorher gemacht haben. Wenn wir unsere Kundenzeitung gemacht haben. Da haben wir sozusagen einfach festgelegt, was sind die Themen in dieser Kundenzeitschrift, die dann drei Mal im Jahr herauskommt. Was sind die Themen, die wir dort präsentieren? Das sind die Personen, die wir dort beschreiben? Also die Kunden. Welche Kunden involvieren wir dort? Und diese Abstimmung, die findet heute natürlich über die digitalen Inhalte statt. Also wenn es gerade Webinars geht mit dem Vertrieb zusammen und ich kucke da auch am Ende dann noch mal drüber. Das sind dann die nächsten, die nächsten Seminare, die wir machen. Das sind die Contents. Und das ist immer ein Zusammenspiel, sage ich mal, zwischen Marketing, Kommunikation und Vertrieb und dann mir, als CSO.	Yes, so I say, don't lean a bit on the example of how he did it before. When we made our customer magazine. We simply determined, so to speak, what the topics were in this customer magazine, which then comes out three times a year. What are the topics that we present there? What are the people we describe there? So, the customers. Which customers do we involve there? And this coordination, of course, takes place today via digital content. So, when it comes to webinars, we do it together with the sales department and I also look over it again at the end. These are then the next, the next seminars that we do. These are the contents. And that is always an interplay, I would say, between marketing, communication and sales and then me, as CSO.
Researcher	23:12	Das heißt sie wenn ich es richtig verstanden habe, gehen Sie auch direkt in die Themengestaltung mit rein, oder ist das sage ich mal, ein Vorschlag wird gemacht und Sie sind die freigebende Distanz?	That is, if I have understood correctly, you are also directly involved in shaping the topic, or is it, shall I say, that a proposal is made and you are the releasing distance?
Participant 1-5	23:22	Gestaltung weniger. Wir gucken uns die Haupt-, die Überschriften sozusagen an. Über welche Themen, also jetzt zum Beispiel, was jetzt gerade aktuell ist, ist eben auch wieder durch das Thema [Markttrend] sind biologisch abbaubare [Produktkomponente] für [Produkt] also hin [Material] wahrscheinlich. So, da gibt es einen Beitrag. Der Inhalt wird dann von Marketing-Kommunikation erstellt, zusammen mit den Experten aus den	Design less so. We look at the main headlines, so to speak. About which topics, for example, what is currently topical, is also likely due to the topic of [market trend] biodegradable [product component] for [product], i.e. [material]. So, there is a contribution. The content is then created by Marketing Communications together with the experts from the individual areas at [Company 3] and when we have such a

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		einzelnen Bereichen bei [Company 3] und wenn wir dann so einen Text haben, dann lese ich den. Ich lese ihn aber heute, habe ich auch bewusst gesagt, nicht mehr komplett für alle digitalen Medien. Das ist die Aufgabe und da habe ich auch genügend Vertrauen uns Marketing-Kommunikation, das eben abzustimmen. Sowohl was den Inhalt betrifft mit den Bereichen [Company 3] intern, aber auch was die, was soll man sagen (-), der Fit für einen digitalen Kanal mit [Konzern] betrifft, ja?	text, then I read it. Today, however, I have consciously said that I no longer read it completely for all digital media. That's the task, and I have enough confidence in marketing communication to coordinate it. Both in terms of content with the [Company 3] divisions internally, but also in terms of the, what can I say (-), the fit for a digital channel with [Group], yes?
Researcher	24:26	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	24:26	Also insofern wir definieren die Themen. Inhalt wird von den Experten und vom Vertrieb der [Company 3] erstellt. Dann geht es dann auch zu[m] [Konzern], die dann den digitalen Kanal bedienen. Und dort wird halt noch mal geschaut, ist halt einfach auch vom beim Aufbau des Textes, vom Hintergrund etc., passt es auch in die Landschaft der digitalen Medien oder der Social.	So insofar as we define the topics. Content is created by the experts and the sales department of [Company 3]. Then it also goes to [the] [group], which then serves the digital channel. And there we look again to see whether the structure of the text, the background, etc., fits into the landscape of digital media or social media.
Researcher	24:50	Mh. (-) Das heißt [Konzern] bzw. [Konzern]-Digital ist dann auch ein möglicher Stakeholder, der sagt diesen Inhalt so bitte nicht?	Mh. (-) That means [corporate group] or [corporate group]-digital is then also a possible stakeholder who says this content so please don't?
Participant 1-5	24:58	Genau. -	Exactly. -
Researcher	24:59	Oder ist das ein reines Umsetzungs-Organ?	Or is this purely an implementation body?
Participant 1-5	25:02	Also das ist Umsetzungs-Organ, aber geben auch Tipps über den Aufbau. Die würde ich sagen das Thema bitte nicht.	So, this is implementation organ, but also give tips about the structure. I would not say the topic please.
Researcher	25:09	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	25:09	Das Thema ja, aber bitte innerhalb ein bisschen in die Richtung eben verbessern, abändern.	The theme, yes, but please improve it a little bit, change it.
Researcher	25:17	Wenn man jetzt noch mal einen Schritt weiter. Wir haben jetzt gerade gesagt, Sie legen die Themen fest, die Inhalte stehen. Man hat auch definiert, welche Touchpoints möchte man konkret jetzt mit diesem Thema dann bedienen. Gibt es andersherum in der Planung aus Ihrer Sicht auch, ich sage mal, Informationspools, die Sie vielleicht auch mit einbeziehen, um zu sagen das ist jetzt das richtige Thema? Das brauchen wir, um unsere Planung hier auch mit festzuzurren. Stichwort Kundeninformationen, Kundendaten, all die Dinge, die Sie vielleicht aus dem Alltag mitnehmen. Könnten Sie das beschreiben, was da aus Ihrer Sicht vielleicht auch noch mit Einfluss nimmt?	If you now go one step further. We have just said that you define the topics and the content. You have also defined which specific touchpoints you would like to serve with this topic. From your point of view, are there also, let's say, information pools in the planning that you might also include in order to say that this is the right topic now? We need that to be able to establish our planning here as well. Keyword customer information, customer data, all the things that you perhaps take with you from everyday life. Could you describe what you think might also have an influence?
Participant 1-5	25:56	Gut, klar. Wenn wir so ein Thema haben, dann ist es dann die Aufgabe, der Fachbereich. Jetzt nehme ich mal den Account Manager oder den Vertrieb eben zu sagen, okay, welche Themen sind denn aus Kundensicht da relevant? Welche Themen sind vielleicht auch Confidential? Lieber besser nicht schreiben. Und die	Good, sure. If we have such a topic, then it is the task of the department. Now I take the account manager or the sales department to say, okay, which topics are relevant from the customer's point of view? Which topics are perhaps also confidential? It's better not to write.

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<p>Researcher 26:18 Participant 1-5 26:18</p>	<p>Quelle sind natürlich auch die Kunden, ganz klar. Mh.- Welche Themen sind für die relevant? Wir haben zumindest noch ein Printmedium. Das wird sich wahrscheinlich auch ändern, wenn wir irgendwann von den Printmedien mal ganz weggehen. Unsere Zeitschrift. Haben wir immer einen Kundeninterviewt, wo wir von einem unserer Kunden auch noch mal direktes Feedback für dann nicht nur für die [Company 3], sondern das ist eine Zeitschrift, die wir an alle Kunden versenden. Und dann ist es halt vor allem für die anderen Bereiche auch Aufgabe, auch Aufgabe der Account Manager, den Input der Kunden zu bekommen für gewisse Themen.</p>	<p>And the source is of course also the customers, that's for sure. Mh. - What topics are relevant for them? At least we still have a print medium. That will probably change when we move away from print media altogether. Our magazine. We always have a customer interview where we get direct feedback from one of our customers, not only for [Company 3], but it's a magazine that we send to all our customers. And then it is also the task of the account managers, especially for the other areas, to get the input of the customers for certain topics.</p>
<p>Researcher 26:55</p>	<p>Ja. Wenn man da, wenn ich da noch mal nachfragen darf im Detail. Wie würden Sie das Wissen über Ihre Kunden beschreiben? Also es ist vollumfänglich vorhanden? Gibt es da durchaus auch Dinge, die wie soll ich sagen, von denen man weniger weiß? Wie ist es da so in Ihrem Geschäft aufgestellt?</p>	<p>Yes, if I may ask again in detail. How would you describe the knowledge about your customers? So, it is fully available? Are there also things that, shall I say, you know less about? How is your business set up?</p>
<p>Participant 1-5 27:15</p>	<p>Naja, ich sage mal, zu behaupten, wir würden für den Kunden alles kennen, das hat glaube ich niemand. Wenn ich mal so auf einer Skala von 0 bis 10, würde ich mal sagen das, was für uns relevant ist, das was für uns relevant ist, da sind wir auf einer 8. Also nur ein Beispiel. Wir bekommen von einem Kunden Organisationsänderungen mit. Zum Teil bevor der Kunde es intern kommuniziert.</p>	<p>Well, I'd say that claiming we know everything for the customer is something I don't think anyone has. On a scale of 0 to 10, I would say that what is relevant for us, what is relevant for us, we are on an 8. So just one example. We hear about organisational changes from a client. Partly before the client communicates it internally.</p>
<p>Researcher 27:43 Participant 1-5 27:43</p>	<p>Ja. - Auf eine Vertrauensbasis, dann den Account oder Key Account Manager. Höre mal zu, in dem Bereich Engineering im Bereich Einkauf wird sich zum xx folgendes ändern.</p>	<p>Yes. - On a basis of trust, then the account or key account manager. Listen, in the field of engineering in purchasing, the following will change at xx.</p>
<p>Researcher 27:55 Participant 1-5 27:55</p>	<p>Ja. - Hier schon mal schon mal Vorabinfo, wer jetzt zu dem Thema neu dazukommt oder was sich ändert. Ihre strategischen Themen, da sage ich mal (-), ist relativ viel natürlich bekannt über das, da die großen Kunden ohnehin Publikationsauflagen haben, ist das bekannt. Über ihre Marktentwicklung etc. Aber wenn es um neue Produkte geht, die noch nicht im Markt sind, wo wir maßgeblich daran beteiligt sind, da sagen wir mal, das, was für uns relevant ist, da sind wir vollumfänglich würde ich mal sagen, informiert und gerade wenn es jetzt um neue Bereiche wie z.B. digital geht. Da würde ich uns gerne acht geben, aber da sieht man die [Company 3] noch nicht. Also nicht digitale Kommunikation, sondern digitale Themen im Bereich Smart Factory, digitale Lösungen, die wir auch anbieten. Da wissen wir lange nicht, was die Kunden</p>	<p>Yes. - Here is some preliminary information about who is new to the topic or what is changing. Their strategic topics, I'll say (-), are relatively well known, of course, because the big clients have publication requirements anyway. About their market development etc. But when it comes to new products that are not yet on the market, where we are significantly involved, let's say that what is relevant for us, I would say we are fully informed and especially when it comes to new areas such as digital. I would like to give us some attention there, but you don't see [Company 3] there yet. Not digital communication, but digital topics in the area of smart factories, digital solutions, which we also offer. We haven't known for a long time what the customers actually have</p>

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		dort eigentlich an Roadmap oder an Partnern oder an Projekten haben. Und uns da einfach noch nicht.	in the way of a roadmap or partners or projects. And we simply don't know yet.
Researcher	29:21	Sie erwähnten, dass das Thema CRM bzw. neues oder potenzielles neues CRM ein Thema ist. Heißt das, dass die Daten oder das Wissen, was Sie jetzt gerade beschrieben haben, trotzdem schon systematisch abgelegt ist und es eher um die Ergänzung dann, um gewisse Touchpoints im System geht, oder?	You mentioned that the topic of CRM or new or potential new CRM is a topic. Does that mean that the data or the knowledge that you have just described is nevertheless already systematically stored and it is more a question of supplementing it, of certain touchpoints in the system, or?
Participant 1-5	29:44	Also ich sage mal wir haben heute einfach zu viele Systeme. Als wir haben zwar SAP, ist unser Hauptanteil. Aber wir haben dann zum Beispiel unsere Strategieplan, die machen wir quasi außerhalb von SAP. Das ganze Thema Lead-Generierung digital machen wir außerhalb von SAP. Und diese Systembrüche sozusagen weg zu haben, das erfordert einfach viel Aufwand, die Transparenz und dadurch geht uns sicherlich das eine oder andere auch verloren.	So, I say we simply have too many systems today. We do have SAP, which is our main part. But then we have our strategy plan, for example, which we do outside of SAP, so to speak. We do the whole topic of digital lead generation outside of SAP. And having these system discontinuities gone, so to speak, simply requires a lot of effort, transparency, and we certainly lose one or two things as a result.
Researcher	30:20	Verstanden. Wenn man jetzt nochmals zur Kommunikations-Planung einmal zurückspringt. Jetzt haben wir darüber gesprochen. Auf der einen Seite wer nimmt alles Einfluss. Also was ist ihre Rolle auch im Entscheidungsprozess? Und so weiter und so fort. Definieren Sie auch von sich aus zusätzlich mit Ziele, also Erfolg quasi in der strategischen Planung auf 18 Monatsbasis, 12 Monate Basis, wie auch immer, eine konkrete Zielformulierung für den Bereich?	Understood. If we now go back to the communication planning once again. Now we have talked about it. On the one hand, who is influencing everything? So, what is their role in the decision-making process as well? And so on and so forth. Do you also define your own goals, i.e. success in strategic planning on an 18-month basis, 12-month basis, whatever, a concrete formulation of goals for the area?
Participant 1-5	30:52	Also das ganze Thema digitales Marketing ist ja noch ein junges Feld. Das haben wir ja quasi im Prinzip sind da erstmal nur zwei KPI's definiert. Der eine KPI ist, wie viel Auftragseingang generieren wir dann über digitale Kanäle gegenüber den klassischen Kanälen? Also wir machen, wir machen Webinar, was wir machen andere Internet Search. Wie viel Geschäft generieren wir darüber (-) eigentlich? (-) So und andere, kein harter Kritiker, klar guckt jeder, auch bei LinkedIn auf seine Follower. Wie kriegen wir die Zahl eben nach oben? Und da haben wir uns ja auch immer für jedes Jahr was vorgenommen. Fürs nächste Jahr haben wir uns zum Beispiel den durch digitale Kanäle generierten Auftragseingänge mal mehr oder weniger fast verdoppelt. Und das ist dann schon ein definierter KPI.	The whole topic of digital marketing is still a young field. In principle, we have only defined two KPI's. One KPI is how much incoming orders do we generate via digital channels compared to traditional channels? So, we do, we do webinars, what we do other internet search. How much business do we generate through that (-) actually? (-) So and others, no harsh critic, of course everyone looks at their followers, even on LinkedIn. How do we get the number up? And we've always set ourselves something for each year. For next year, for example, we have more or less almost doubled the number of orders generated through digital channels. And that is already a defined KPI.
Researcher	31:57	Im puncto Lead-Generierung bzw. Umsatz danach - wie wir da quasi die Aufschlüsselung, dass man wirklich sagen kann, das war jetzt ein Beitrag, den die digitalen Medien geleistet haben im Vergleich zu dem Hauptanker ist immer noch der Direktvertrieb?	In terms of lead generation or turnover afterwards - how do we break it down, so to speak, so that we can really say that digital media have made a contribution compared to the main anchor, which is still direct sales?
Participant 1-5	32:16	Absolut. Also ich sag mal, wenn ich Ihnen sage, die wir definiert haben, dann sind	Absolutely. So, I'll tell you, if I tell you what we have defined, for the next year,

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Researcher	32:28	das fürs nächste Jahr, über digitale Kanäle, sind es ungefähr [Prozentwert].	through digital channels, it's about [percentage].
Participant 1-5	32:38	Okay, also das heißt, der KPI steht dort und ist erst mal losgelöst von allen weiteren Touchpoints, die dieser Kunde mit durchlebt?	Okay, so that means that the KPI is there and is first detached from all other touchpoints that this customer experiences?
Participant 1-5	32:38	Genau. Okay, noch völlig losgelöst. Weil Sie wissen alle, Sie bekommen pro Monat, wenn Sie in den digitalen Kanälen gut unterwegs sind, bekommen Sie Hunderte von Leads. -	Exactly. Okay, still completely detached. Because you all know, you get per month, if you do well in the digital channels, you get hundreds of leads. -
Researcher	32:50	Mh. -	Mh. -
Participant 1-5	32:51	Da haben wir sozusagen einen Funnel definiert von dem Marketing Qualified Lead bis zu einem Sales Qualified Lead und dann werden es schon immer weniger. Und dann gibt es irgendwann ein Angebot, dann werden es noch weniger. Und aus den Angeboten kommt irgendwann ein Auftrag heraus, noch weniger. Und da wir uns eben speziell für den Kanal ein KPI vorgenommen. Und da ist so ein Thema, was wir heute über verschiedenste Systeme nach-tracken müssen, um es überhaupt rauszubekommen.	We have defined a funnel, so to speak, from the marketing qualified lead to the sales qualified lead, and then there are fewer and fewer of them. And then at some point there is an offer, and then there are even fewer. And at some point an order comes out of the offers, even fewer. And since we have undertaken a KPI specifically for the channel. And this is a topic that we have to track today using a wide variety of systems in order to get it out at all.
Researcher	33:19	Genau, ja. Verstanden. -	Right, yeah. Got it. -
Participant 1-5	33:22	Da wir uns neues CRM-System helfen. Und gerade wenn wir eben außerhalb unseres klassischen Bereiches gehen, haben wir schon festgestellt, wie schnell, wie schnell wir uns einen Markt erschließen konnten. Zum Beispiel [Produktsegment], also den Markt. Wir kannten von dem Markt niemanden, niemanden. Und in super schneller Zeit haben wir uns sozusagen über die digitalen Kanäle die ganzen Marktplayer erschlossen und haben über den Kanal auch direkte Aufträge sozusagen. Klar ist es dann, der Prozess erst mal den Kunden zu bekommen. Der Prozess nach der Verhandlung der Angebotserstellung, der dauert dann genauso lang wie im klassischen klassischen Weg. Muss aber auch erst mal den Kunden zu bekommen hat. Da das Mittel natürlich super geholfen, auch in einem neuen Markt.	Because we have a new CRM system to help us. And especially when we just go outside our classic area, we have already noticed how quickly, how quickly we have been able to tap into a market. For example [product segment], the market. We didn't know anyone from that market, no one. And in a super fast time, we have, so to speak, tapped into all the market players via the digital channels and also have direct orders via the channel, so to speak. Of course, it is then the process of first getting the customer. The process after negotiating the offer takes just as long as in the traditional way. But you also have to get the customer first. Of course, this tool is a great help, even in a new market.
Researcher	34:24	Ja, verstehe. Beziehen Sie für genau diese Bewertung, also jetzt mal fiktiv gesprochen: [Produktsegment] war das letzte Geschäftsfeld oder der Bereich, den Sie gerade genannt haben. Sie identifizieren die Kunden. Da wird es wahrscheinlich mit einer entsprechenden Marktanalyse vielleicht auch rangehen. Das man sagt folgende, potenzielle Kunden, Interessenten wollen wir jetzt hier ansprechen. Aber gibt es neben der, dem strategischen Marketing, was über die Marktanalyse geht, noch weitere Informationen, die Sie halt mit einbeziehen, zum Beispiel Marketing-Theorie oder ähnliches? Wenn es wirklich darum geht zu verstehen, wie kann ich	Yes, I see. Do you refer for exactly this assessment, so now let's speak fictitiously: [product segment] was the last business area or the area you just mentioned. You identify the customers. That's probably where it's going to go with an appropriate market analysis perhaps. That one says the following, potential customers, interested parties we want to address here now. But apart from strategic marketing, which is about market analysis, is there other information that you include, for example marketing theory or something similar? If it's really about understanding how can I reach this target group? So [product segment] is

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		dann diese Zielgruppe erreichen? Also [Produktsegment] ist vielleicht ja eher ein neueres Geschäftsfeld, wo man sagen kann, haben wir jetzt nicht über 75 Jahre Erfahrung gemacht. Wir müssen erst verstehen, wie diese Leute ticken. Aber wo haben sie das Wissen halt her?	perhaps rather a newer business field, where you can say, we haven't had over 75 years of experience. We first have to understand what makes these people tick. But where do they get this knowledge?
Participant 1-5	35:21	Ja, gut. Ich meine, wir haben uns ja erst mal über den Markt an sich informiert. Da können Sie auch über verschiedene Quellen auf Euro-Monitor oder andere Berater können sich eben Marktdaten kaufen. Das haben wir gemacht, um den Markt zu verstehen. Wie groß ist der Markt? Wo findet er vor allem statt? Wie sieht die legale Struktur aussieht? Also welche Länder sind legal? Was ist für das für das Produkt, was wir anbieten wollen, ein Marktpotential? Es werden all die Fortschritte zu sehen. Ist dieser Markt relevant für uns? Wer sind die wirklichen Wettbewerber? Und als wir das dann, als wir das dann alles erörtert hatten, dann ging es halt wirklich darum zu sagen: Ja, wir haben den Markt einigermaßen verstanden. Jetzt brauchen wir das richtige Produkt dafür. Da haben wir dann den Kontakt zu den ersten Kunden gesucht, um uns sozusagen auch das Lastenheft für sein Produkt zu definieren. Und dann die eigentliche Vermarktung in die Breite, die haben wir tatsächlich dann einfach über über Social Media oder auch über Google Search Engine. Einfach die Kunden gesucht und dann gezielt diese Kunden eben angeschrieben.	Yes, good. I mean, we first informed ourselves about the market itself. You can also buy market data from various sources on Euro-Monitor or other consultants. That's what we did to understand the market. How big is the market? Where does it take place? What does the legal structure look like? So which countries are legal? What is the market potential for the product we want to offer? There will be all the progress to see. Is this market relevant for us? Who are the real competitors? And when we had discussed all that, it was really a matter of saying: Yes, we have understood the market to some extent. Now we need the right product for it. We then sought contact with the first customers in order to define the specifications for their product, so to speak. And then we did the actual marketing on a broad scale via social media or Google Search Engine. We simply searched for customers and then wrote to them specifically.
Researcher	36:37	Ja, (-) verstanden. Und jetzt ich noch einfach nur einmal konkret nach.	Yes, (-) understood. And now I'm just going to ask you specifically once more.
Participant 1-5	36:46	Ja klar.	Yeah, sure.
Researcher	36:46	Auch, ich sage mal, um es mit protokolliert zu haben. Sie haben Sie Social Media angesprochen. Gab es daran die bewusste Entscheidung, dass zum Beispiel über so einen sozialen Kanal zu machen im Vergleich zu wir schicken eine Broschüre raus, wir laden alle zu einem Webinar ein, oder, oder?	Also, I'll say, to have it on record. You mentioned social media. Was there a conscious decision to do that, for example, through a social channel as opposed to we send out a brochure, we invite everyone to a webinar, or, or?
Participant 1-5	37:05	Ja, das war. Also das Thema Webinar muss ich erst einmal bekannt machen. Über Webinare folgt jetzt irgendwann, wenn man einen größeren Bekanntheitsgrad haben. Und da ging es tatsächlich einfach nur, ich sage mal, als ich mein Beruf angefangen hatte und man wollte man den neuen Markt erschließen. Also die Gelben Seiten. Und den Prozess einfach beschleunigt. Natürlich mussten wir uns vorher den Markt anschauen. Das habe ich beschrieben. Über gekaufte Daten über den Markt. Über Marktanalysen von Beratern etc. und dann aber gezielter zu gucken, wie komme ich jetzt möglichst schnell an Lead. Wie	Yes, that was. So, I first have to make the topic of webinars known. About webinars now follows at some point when you have a greater degree of awareness. And there it was really just, I'll say, when I started my job and you wanted to tap into the new market. So the yellow pages. And just speed up the process. Of course, we had to look at the market first. That's what I described. About bought data about the market. Using market analyses by consultants etc. and then looking more specifically at how I can get leads as quickly as possible. How do I get leads as quickly as possible?

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		komme ich jetzt möglichst schnell an Leads.	
Researcher	37:54	Ich habe noch mal zwei, drei Fragen, die so ein bisschen, wie soll ich sagen, all das, was wir bisher diskutiert haben, framen würden. Nämlich einmal die Frage ob Sie zu ihrer Position und Rolle in diesem Entscheidungsprozess, um Dinge anzustoßen. Habe ich das richtig verstanden, dass bei Ihnen grundsätzlich qua Funktion natürlich auch die Freigabe für diese einzelnen Maßnahmen erfolgt und damit auch zum Beispiel Freigabe für Budgets? Oder ist das -	I have two or three more questions that would, how shall I put it, frame everything we have discussed so far. Firstly, the question of whether you have a position and role in this decision-making process to initiate things. Have I understood correctly that in principle you are also responsible for the approval of these individual measures and thus also, for example, for the approval of budgets? Or is that -
Participant 1-5	38:25	Genau, bei mir erfolgt die Freigabe der Budgets. Bei mir erfolgt die Freigabe von den Themen, die wir also gerade in unserer Kundenzeitschrift machen, die wir bei dem Webinar machen. Aber dort schaue ich mir keinen Content an, das macht, das machen die Teams für sich. Einfach die Geschwindigkeit, da brauchen sie eine ganz andere Geschwindigkeit und ich sage mal Vertrauen, damit sie Komplexität. Das macht das Marketing-Team und Sales-Leute. Das ist deren Fähigkeit und die machen das.	Exactly, with me the release of the budgets takes place. I approve the topics that we are currently doing in our customer magazine, that we are doing in the webinar. But I don't look at any content there, the teams do that for themselves. Just the speed, there they need a whole different speed and I say trust so they complexity. That's what the marketing team and sales people do. That's their ability and they do that.
Researcher	39:01	Folgt das für alle Maßnahmen, oder würden Sie sagen, es gibt einen Unterschied zwischen all den Maßnahmen, die aus der Zentrale herauskommen, versus den Maßnahmen, die in einer Region vielleicht auch aufgesetzt werden?	Does that follow for all measures, or would you say there is a difference between all the measures that come out of the head office versus the measures that might also be set up in a region?
Participant 1-5	39:14	Ja gut, also unser Strategisches Marketing, Kommunikation in [Standort], die sind zuständig für alles, was da draußen passiert. Alles, was Richtung geht. Das macht unser strategisches Marketing. Nicht [Participant 1-5], sondern hier Headquarter, Strategisches Marketing als die Kollegen, in den zentralen machen. Was bestimmte andere Firmen lokal machen, das liegt dann zum Teil sogar in deren Hoheit. Also WeChat Kanäle oder wenn hier [Firmen-Marke], was praktisch über die Firma selber, was nicht Kunden relevant sind, das machen sie haben sie dann auch vor Ort. Aber alles was Kunden relevant ist, das macht, das geht über den Tisch vom Strategischen Marketing und Kommunikation.	Yes, well, our strategic marketing, communication in [location], they are responsible for everything that happens out there. Everything that goes in the right direction. That's what our strategic marketing does. Not [Participant 1-5], but here Headquarters, Strategic Marketing as the colleagues, in the central ones do. What certain other companies do locally is then partly even under their sovereignty. So, WeChat channels or if here [company brand], which is practically about the company itself, which is not relevant to customers, they do that locally. But everything that is relevant to customers, that goes over the table of Strategic Marketing and Communication.
Researcher	40:07	Ja, dann sind das tatsächlich schon alle Fragen meinerseits gewesen, um wirklich die verschiedenen Perspektiven mit den anderen Interviews abzugleichen und da halt auch das Bild zu vervollständigen. Gibt es vielleicht von Ihrer Seite aus noch irgendwie weitere Themen oder Überlegungen? Die Gedanken, die Sie jetzt vielleicht haben, basierend auf unserem Gespräch?	Yes, then those were actually all the questions on my part, in order to really compare the different perspectives with the other interviews and to complete the picture. Are there perhaps any further topics or considerations from your side? The thoughts that you might have now, based on our conversation?

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Participant 1-5	40:33	Ja also, ich sage mal was mich immer interessiert, wenn Sie jetzt auch mit [Firmenname] oder solchen Firmen arbeiten, die dann konsonal sind. Also wenn Sie sagen, Sie können uns auch so ein bisschen dann eine Gap-Analyse geben und Sie sagen okay, da mal hinschauen [Company 1], das würde mich freuen. Was wie gesagt uns vor allem nach vorne bringen könnte noch mehr in der Wahrnehmung im nächsten Jahr ist dieses ganze Thema Ökosysteme. Also dieses Cross-Marketing. -	Well, I'll tell you what I'm always interested in, if you also work with [company name] or companies like that, which are then consonal. So, if you say you can give us a bit of a gap analysis and you say okay, take a look at [Company 1], that would make me happy. As I said, what could bring us forward even more in terms of perception next year is this whole topic of ecosystems. So, this cross-marketing. -
Researcher	41:05	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	41:07	Mit Partnern, die um einfach auch ihre - damit schaffen sie ja mehr. Damit erhöhen Sie den Markenwert. Sie erhöhen auch den Content, machen den Content, den Sie machen, eigentlich noch wichtiger und nehmen darin eigentlich dem Kunden, wie gesagt, eine Menge an Koordinationsaufgaben weg. Da ist wirklich noch proaktiver zu machen. Und das andere sind entlang unserer Touchpoints für die Kunden immer wieder zu gucken, ok, gilt dieser Slogan? Es muss einfach sein mit [Company 1] Geschäft zu machen gilt. Gilt der überall?	With partners who, in order to simply also create their - they create more. In this way, you increase the brand value. You also increase the content, make the content you create even more important and, as I said, take a lot of coordination tasks away from the client. That's where you really have to be more proactive. And the other thing is to keep checking along our touchpoints for the customers, ok, is this slogan valid? It must be easy to do business with [Company 1]. Does it apply everywhere?
Researcher	41:45	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	41:46	Da kann man manches tatsächlich noch vereinfachen. Wo ich wirklich stolz bin, ist unser E-Commerce Anteil. Wir haben uns immer wieder verglichen, auch mit anderen Firmen. Wir haben eine recht hohe, mittlerweile fast [Prozentangabe] unserer Ersatzteile und das ist ein gutes Geschäft, ist ein großes Geschäft machen [Prozentangabe] unserer Ersatzteile über unseren Webshop. Und dort auch schon ein Großteil über WMI und WOI Konzepte. Also da sprechen die SAP-Systeme miteinander und der Kunde stellt sozusagen bei sich bei sich ein Minimumbestand ein. Und sobald ein Minimum unterschritten ist, wird automatisch eine Bestellung ausgelöst, ja?	Some things can actually be simplified. Where I am really proud is our e-commerce share. We have always compared ourselves, also with other companies. We have a quite high, meanwhile almost [percentage] of our spare parts and that is a good business, is a big business making [percentage] of our spare parts via our web shop. And there also already a large part via WMI and WOI concepts. The SAP systems talk to each other and the customer sets a minimum stock level, so to speak. And as soon as the stock falls below a minimum, an order is automatically triggered, right?
Researcher	42:30	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 1-5	42:31	Und so eine Integrationstiefe ist natürlich super und in den Touchpoints eben dem Kunden noch mehr Möglichkeiten zu geben, auch in Produkten zu konfigurieren und auszuarbeiten etc. etc. Das ist noch was, wo wir unsere Touchpoints noch weiter ausbauen können.	And such a depth of integration is of course super and to give the customer even more possibilities in the touchpoints, to configure and elaborate in products etc. etc.. That's something else where we can expand our touchpoints even further.
Researcher	42:52	Also das Thema Best Practice, was Sie angesprochen haben, das ist auf jeden Fall etwas, was ich in jedem Fall ja zurück spiegeln werde. Und da vielleicht mal aus dem Nähkästchen zu plaudern, was bisher vielleicht auch in anderen Gesprächen. Ich habe jetzt mit zwei anderen Unternehmen parallel gerade die Interviews laufen, die anderen folgen dann im Januar, Anfang Februar. Ist das all die Dinge, die Sie	So, the topic of best practice, which you mentioned, is definitely something that I will reflect back in any case. And maybe I'll be able to talk about what has happened so far in other conversations. I'm currently interviewing two other companies in parallel, the others will follow in January, early February. Is that all the things you have described are also found as common sense in the

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		beschrieben haben, sich durchaus auch als Common Sense in den anderen Unternehmen wiederfinden. Eine spannende Geschichte dabei fand ich bei dabei, dass viele gerade weg wollen von einer reinen Kanal-Verantwortlichkeit. Also wenn man jetzt zum Kommunikationsteam hat. Das ist häufig so, dass es immer noch Kanal-Verantwortliche gibt. Eine Person, die nur Social Media macht, eine, die sich nur um die Website kümmert, die dritte Person für alles was in Richtung Print, Broschüren und so weiter geht. Und viele wollen da gerade halt weg, weil sie sagen wir versuchen immer mehr einen integrierten Kommunikationsansatz zu fahren. -	other companies? One exciting story I found was that many companies want to move away from pure channel responsibility. So, if you now have a communication team. It is often the case that there are still channel managers. One person who only does social media, one who only looks after the website, the third person for everything that goes in the direction of print, brochures and so on. And many people want to get away from that, because they say we are trying more and more to take an integrated approach to communication. -
Participant 1-5	43:57	Ja, das wollte ich jetzt gerade noch einmal sagen. Wir sind im Marketing auch ein relativ kleines Team und gerade in Kommunikation, was die Jungs und Mädels echt geschafft haben, den Content wieder zu verwenden. Also Broschüren machen wir keine mehr, aber ich habe trotzdem die Webinars, ich habe verschiedene Social Kanäle, ich hab interne Kundenkommunikation. Das der Content sozusagen wirklich über alle Kanäle das gleiche Format und die gleiche Stimme hat. Wir haben kein Kanalverantwortlich, sondern alles läuft über über Marketing und Kommunikation. Und ich versuchen wirklich die Inhalte, die Inhalte Cross Channel wiederzuverwenden, ja.	Yes, I just wanted to say that again. We are also a relatively small team in marketing and especially in communication, which the guys and girls have really managed to do, to use the content again. So, we don't make brochures anymore, but I still have the webinars, I have various social channels, I have internal customer communication. That the content really does have the same format and the same voice across all channels, so to speak. We don't have a channel person in charge, it's all through marketing and communications. And I really try to reuse the content, the content cross channel, yes.
Researcher	44:44	Das ist natürlich auch eine grundsätzlich agile Arbeitsweise. Wenn ich so etwas step by step weiter intensivieren und sage ich habe keine Channel Ownership mehr, sondern wirklich eine reine Themenverantwortung. -	Of course, this is also a fundamentally agile way of working. If I intensify something like this step by step and say I no longer have channel ownership, but really have pure thematic responsibility. -
Participant 1-5	44:59	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	44:59	Das ist was, was wo Unternehmen dann durchaus auch noch gesagt haben, da würden sie gerne weitergehen, wäre sozu sagen (-) das bedingt ja zum einen, dass jeder, der im Bereich Kommunikation arbeitet, auch über die Wirkweisen, Mechanismen aller Kanäle an sich Bescheid weiß, damit dieses Thema bestmöglich wieder für die Zielgruppe angesteuert wird. Was natürlich ein interner Lernprozess auch ist. Sich entsprechend breit von den Kompetenzen jedes Einzelnen aufzustellen. Zum anderen könnte man dann natürlich weiterdenken und sagen, warum haben wir nicht, arbeiten wir nicht wie ein Service-Center? Indem man sagt, es gibt einen Backlog an Themen, die werden uns irgendwie reingeworfen. Das wird vielleicht noch von einem Kommunikationsleiter oder wem auch immer als Instanz durch priorisiert. Und dann heißt es sobald ich als	This is something that companies have also said that they would like to go further, so to speak (-) this requires, on the one hand, that everyone who works in the field of communication also knows about the effects and mechanisms of all channels, so that this topic can be steered in the best possible way for the target group. Which is of course also an internal learning process. To position oneself accordingly broadly in terms of the competences of each individual. On the other hand, one could of course think further and say, why don't we have, don't we work like a service centre? By saying that there is a backlog of issues that are somehow thrown at us. This is perhaps prioritised by a communications manager or whoever else is the authority. And then as soon as I, as an employee, run out of this

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		Mitarbeiter dieses Kommunikations-Team leerlaufen bzw. sage, ich könnte ohne Weiteres eine weitere Verantwortung aufnehmen, dann zieh es mir einfach aus dem Backlog. Das ist natürlich dann schon relativ agil im Vergleich zu einem starren System mit Verantwortlichkeiten. Also das vielleicht mal so als als eine Sache, die ich so aus den ersten Gesprächen herausgehört habe. Und das zweite, was ich, womit ich nicht gerechnet hätte, was ich aber zumindest in den drei Unternehmen bisher widergespiegelt hat, ist, dass eine immer Budgetplanung basierend auf einzelnen Maßnahmen häufig gar nicht so stark gegeben ist, wie ich es vermutet hätte. Sondern dass man halt sagt, man hat so ein.	communication team or say that I could easily take on another responsibility, I simply pull it out of the backlog. Of course, this is relatively agile compared to a rigid system with responsibilities. So maybe that's one thing that I heard from the first conversations. And the second thing that I would not have expected, but which I have seen reflected at least in the three companies so far, is that there is often not as much budget planning based on individual measures as I would have expected. Instead, they just say that they have one.
Participant 1-5	46:31	Genau. -	Exactly. -
Researcher	46:31	Es gibt so Projekte, wie eine CRM-Einführung oder ähnliches, die dann sowieso nicht nur einen Fachbereich betrifft, sondern insgesamt. Und dass man dann halt wirklich sehr agil und flexibel schaut, was für Themen sind jetzt gerade für den Kunden interessant? Und das entsprechend -	There are projects, such as the introduction of CRM or similar, that don't just affect one department, but all of them. And then you look very agilely and flexibly at what topics are interesting for the customer right now? And that accordingly -
Participant 1-5	46:49	Genau, das ist bei uns auch. CRM ist natürlich eine globale Planung des Budgets, aber für die ganzen Social Media Kanäle für Printmedien etc., da hat unser Marketing ein Gesamtpaket. Also ich möchte gar nicht wissen, was der einzelne Kanal kostet oder die einzelne Initiative kostet. Es gibt ein Gesamtbudget und dann ist es eben die Entscheidung in dem Bereich Strategische Marketing und Kommunikation. Ich sage jetzt mal für was gebe ich das Geld aus, ne?	Exactly, that's the same for us. CRM is of course a global planning of the budget, but for all the social media channels for print media etc., our marketing has an overall package. I don't even want to know what the individual channel costs or what the individual initiative costs. There is an overall budget and then it is the decision in the area of strategic marketing and communication. I'm just going to say what I spend the money on, right?
Researcher	47:20	Und das habe ich tatsächlich auch schon mal bei einem anderen Unternehmen genau andersherum wahrgenommen, was sehr Controlling getrieben war. Da hieß es für die Jahresplanung einmal die konkrete Maßnahmenliste. Ich sage mal runter bis auf 5.000 € Projekte und entsprechend wird dann noch mal ein kurzes Gespräch geschaut, was nicht, salopp gesprochen 5 Prozent bitte reduzieren, aber am besten alle Maßnahmen gleich erhalten und dann wirke dieser Bereich wieder.	And I have actually experienced this the other way round in another company, which was very controlling-driven. For the annual planning, it was once a concrete list of measures. I'd say down to 5,000 € projects and then a short discussion would take place to see what wasn't, casually speaking, reduce by 5 percent, but preferably keep all measures the same and then this area would work again.
Participant 1-5	47:49	Das ist keine agile Arbeitsweise. Absolut nicht. Was würden Sie dann sagen von den Kanälen? LinkedIn ist wahrscheinlich Nummer eins. Was können Sie dann? Was werden denn überhaupt für Kanäle genutzt? Google Platzierung okay, können Sie kaufen, aber was sind so die Kanäle, die genutzt werden?	That is not an agile way of working. Absolutely not. What would you say of the channels then? LinkedIn is probably number one. What are you able to do then? What are the channels that are used at all? Google placement okay, you can buy that, but what are the channels that are used?
Researcher	48:11	Also es kommt natürlich so ein bisschen auf die einzelnen Zielgruppen wieder drauf an. Und auch wie sind ist der Geschäftstyp aufgestellt. Sie sind ja in einem Oligopol,	Of course, it depends a bit on the individual target groups. And also how the business type is positioned. You are in an oligopoly, which is of course

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		<p>das natürlich anders als wenn Sie ich sage mal eher in Richtung, weiß nicht, hunderttausende Kunden potenziell haben über den Globus verstreut. Aber der wesentlichste Kanal und das was aus meiner Sicht auch persönlichen Sicht auch Sinn macht, ist sozusagen die Unternehmenswebsite ist immer ein sehr guter Anker. Egal was ich drumherum tue, egal ob es ein Social Media Kanal ist, egal ob es vielleicht sogar auch eine Unternehmensbroschüre ist. Ich versuche immer aus diesen einzelnen anderen Kanälen alle auf die Website zu bekommen. -</p>	<p>different from when you have, I don't know, hundreds of thousands of potential customers scattered around the globe. But the most important channel and what also makes sense from my personal point of view is the company website, so to speak, is always a very good anchor. No matter what I do around it, no matter if it's a social media channel, no matter if it's maybe even a company brochure. I always try to get everybody from those individual other channels to the website. -</p>
Participant 1-5 Researcher	48:53 48:53	<p>Ja. - Entlang der Kanal-Strategie. So und das kann natürlich in der Broschüre hatte ich jetzt gerade ein Unternehmen. Die haben es so gemacht, dass sie auf jeder zweiten Seite einen QR-Code integriert haben, haben quasi die Unternehmensgeschichte von 19XX bis zum heutigen Zeitpunkt drin. Und dann kann ich mir über die ein, zwei Sätze und Bilder, die in der Broschüre stehen, über den QR-Code direkt auf meinem Handy detailliertere Geschichten zu dem Themenfeld anschauen und so. Das heißt, -</p>	<p>Yes. - Along the channel strategy. So, of course, I just had a company in the brochure. They did it in such a way that they integrated a QR code on every second page, so to speak they have the company history from 19XX to the present day. And then I can use the one or two sentences and pictures in the brochure to look at more detailed stories about the subject area directly on my mobile phone via the QR code. That is, -</p>
Participant 1-5 Researcher	49:21 49:21	<p>Ja haben wir auch an zwei Stellen, genau. Genau das heißt, da ist auch wieder so eine Verknüpfung aus digital und physischen Elementen in der Tendenz einfach sichtbar, aber immer wie gesagt mit ich versuche Traffic auf die Webseite zu holen und über die Website dann die Konversion zu schaffen zu einer Kontakthanfrage. Sei es jetzt Marketing Qualified Lead oder Sales Qualified Lead je nach Abstufung und wie Sie es bewerte. Das kann ich schon sehen und was ich auch bemerke ist, dass es durchaus auch die Bereitschaft gibt, neue Kanäle immer mit auszutesten. Zu neuen Kanälen würde ich jetzt mal zählen, auf der auf der einen Seite Unternehmen wie [Company], die zum Beispiel im Bereich TikTok unterwegs. Mh. -</p>	<p>Yes, we also have two places, exactly. Exactly that means that there is also a linkage of digital and physical elements that is simply visible in the tendency, but always as I said with I try to get traffic to the website and then create the conversion to a contact enquiry via the website. Be it a Marketing Qualified Lead or Sales Qualified Lead depending on the gradation and how you evaluate it. I can already see that and what I also notice is that there is also a willingness to always test out new channels. I would count new channels on the one hand as companies like [Company], which are on the move in the area of TikTok, for example. Mh. -</p>
Participant 1-5 Researcher	50:03 50:03	<p>TikTok würde ich sagen es ist halt ganz klar dann eher eine Image/Marken Aufwertung, weniger die Konversion. Dafür muss man natürlich die Ressourcen haben, um auch Imagesrelevanz zu erzeugen. Und das andere, was ich auch immer als Tendenz zumindest zum Beispiel in meinem Unternehmen gerade sehe, sind die Diskussionen rund um Podcasts. Kann das eine Ergänzung sein oder nicht? Ich würde behaupten, es kommt so ein bisschen auf die Strategie an, was möchte ich dann als Interaktionspunkt haben? Podcast ist halt sehr eindimensional. Wenn ich hingegen ein Webinar aussetze,</p>	<p>TikTok, I would say it is clearly more of an image/brand enhancement, less the conversion. Of course, you have to have the resources to create image relevance. And the other thing that I always see as a tendency, at least in my company for example, are the discussions about podcasts. Can that be a complement or not? I would say it depends a bit on the strategy, what do I want to have as a point of interaction? Podcast is just very one-dimensional. If, on the other hand, I put out a webinar,</p>

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<p>Participant 1-5 50:43 Researcher 50:43</p>	<p>Genau. - ...ist man halt durchaus im Dialog möglich und deswegen bin ich davon überzeugt, das Webinar zumindest auf Unternehmenssicht mehr Sinn macht. Es sei denn, ich habe ein entsprechend großes Team, eine Content Strategie, wo ich sage das Webinar kann ich auch in leicht anderer Art und Weise dann noch mal als Podcast ausspielen.</p>	<p>Exactly. - ...it's possible to have a dialogue and that's why I'm convinced that webinars make more sense, at least from a company's point of view. Unless I have a correspondingly large team, a content strategy, where I say I can also play out the webinar in a slightly different way as a podcast.</p>
<p>Participant 1-5 51:02</p>	<p>Aber ich sage mal, wie die Frage ist wie lange hält man denn Kunde überhaupt an so einem, an so einem Thema dran? Und wenn ich einen Podcast mache oder so ein Interview, glaube ich habe damals die Studie gelesen. Länger als eine Minute länger als anderthalb Minuten hört da sowieso keiner zu. Und bei einem Webinar, sobald ich in das Thema bilateral komme, dann schaltet niemand einfach ab. Und wenn uns das gelingt, dann diese Touchpoints eben bilateral mehr zu schaffen. Dann (-) habe ich auch eine viel höhere Aufnahmefähigkeit bei den bei den Kunden einen Podcast oder ein Interview. Machen wir alle selber mit. Wie gut er ist, ist maximal – also mehr hört man dann nicht zu, ne?</p>	<p>But I say, like the question is how long do you keep a customer on such a, on such a topic? And when I do a podcast or an interview, I think I read the study at the time. Nobody listens for more than a minute, more than a minute and a half anyway. And with a webinar, as soon as I get into the topic bilaterally, then nobody just switches off. And if we succeed in creating more of these touchpoints bilaterally. Then (-) I also have a much higher receptiveness to a podcast or an interview. We all do it ourselves. How good it is, is maximum – so that's all you listen to, isn't it?</p>
<p>Researcher 51:52</p>	<p>Bin ich total dabei. Und dann vielleicht noch mal der letzte Punkt, wo Sie es auch zwischendrin schon einmal angesprochen hatten. Das ganze Thema Influencer, Schrägstrich, Meinungsbildner. Ich sehe auch die Gefahr, dass LinkedIn immer mehr zu einem Sales Channel wird oder zumindest an der einen oder anderen Stelle so gehandhabt wird. Ich persönlich würde es auch immer eher sehen aus ich teile einen relevanten Inhalt und vermittelt dann zum Beispiel zu einer Website, wenn ich der Meinung bin. Reine Vertriebs-, Vertriebsstrategie, Kundenakquise sehe ich persönlich weniger da, wenn auch gleich natürlich diese Funktionen anbietet. Und beim Thema Meinungsbildner, das sehe ich schon tatsächlich, dass das zumindest im Maschinenbau häufig noch unterschätzt wird. Was meine ich konkret damit? Und wo wir auch gerade beim Podcast sprachen, vor ein, zwei Monaten mal von dem Vertriebschef von Vodafone bei einem Podcast mit reingehört, der sagte Ja, ich nutze zum Beispiel alle sozialen Kanäle, um zum einen meine gesamten Mitarbeiter-Teams intern auf dem Laufenden zu halten über was denke ich, wo geht die Reise hin und so weiter und so fort. Und noch darüber dann natürlich den aktiven Diskurs Suche.</p>	<p>I'm totally with you. And then perhaps the last point, which you had already mentioned in between. The whole topic of influencers, slash, opinion leaders. I also see the danger of LinkedIn becoming more and more of a sales channel, or at least being handled like that in one place or another. Personally, I would also always rather see it from I share a relevant content and then refer to a website for example, if I am of the opinion. I personally see less of a pure sales, distribution strategy, customer acquisition there, even though it naturally offers these functions. And when it comes to opinion leaders, I can see that this is often underestimated, at least in mechanical engineering. What do I mean by that in concrete terms? And while we were talking about the podcast, one or two months ago the head of sales at Vodafone listened in on a podcast and said Yes, I use all social channels, for example, to keep my entire employee teams up to date internally about what I think, where the journey is going, and so on and so forth. And then, of course, to search for active discourse.</p>
<p>Participant 1-5 53:11 Researcher 53:11</p>	<p>Ja. - Über neben den internen natürlich auch, um mit Kunden und ähnlichem in Kontakt zu bringen. Das heißt, man sieht auch da über die sozialen Medien immer mehr eine</p>	<p>Yes. - In addition to the internal ones, of course, also to get in touch with customers and the like. In other words, we are seeing more and more a mixture</p>

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		<p>Vermischung aus interner und externer Kommunikation. Und wenn man dann natürlich die großen CEOs dieser Welt von Microsoft über Apple und so weiter anschaut, stellt man häufig sogar fest, dass genau diese deutlich höhere Followerschaften haben als dann das Unternehmen selbst, was natürlich auch diese Meinung unterstreicht. Und ich glaube, dass das halt häufig verkannt wird. Es gibt genügend Leute in entsprechenden Positionen, die noch nicht in den sozialen Medien aktiv sind, die es vielleicht nur rein zum Netzwerken nutzen, aber selbst gar keine großen Inhalte teilen. Und ich glaube, dass da durchaus noch mehr Potenzial steckt, wenn man es entsprechend nutzt. Und da vielleicht mal als als letztes Beispiel so ein Herbert Diess von von Volkswagen, der hat ja schon ein ganzes Social-Media-Team nur für sich, quasi im Hintergrund. Das ist natürlich das andere Extrem.</p>	<p>of internal and external communication via social media. And if you look at the big CEOs of this world, from Microsoft to Apple and so on, you often find that they have significantly higher followings than the company itself, which of course also underlines this opinion. And I think that this is often misunderstood. There are enough people in relevant positions who are not yet active in social media, who perhaps use it purely for networking, but do not share any great content themselves. And I believe that there is definitely more potential there if it is used appropriately. And perhaps the last example is Herbert Diess from Volkswagen, who already has a whole social media team just for himself, in the background, so to speak. That is, of course, the other extreme.</p>
Participant 1-5	54:16	<p>Der ist ja sehr, sehr aktiv. Genau das. Das finde ich auch ein guter Punkt und um die andere Frage nochmal abzuschließen. Website, ja auch. Wobei wir auch da versuchen, für bestimmte Themen eigene Landingpages zu machen, wo man, wo man quasi erst mal über das themenbezogenen Website dann zur Firmen-Webseite kommt. Also was mache ich, wenn ich [Produkt] habe, dann bekomme ich erst mal auf einer Website zu dem Thema, und dann sozusagen bei der [Company 1].com lande.</p>	<p>He's very, very active. Exactly that. I think that's also a good point, and to conclude the other question. Website, yes, too. Whereby we also try to make our own landing pages for certain topics, where you first get to the company website via the topic-related website, so to speak. So, what do I do if I have [product], then I first get to a website on the topic, and then I land, so to speak, at the [Company 1].com.</p>
Researcher	54:52	<p>Finde ich spannend. Wir haben uns zum Beispiel bei [Unternehmen] vor ungefähr zwei, zweieinhalb Jahren genau dagegen entschieden, separate Landingpages zu machen. -</p>	<p>I find that exciting. For example, at [company] we decided exactly against doing separate landing pages about two, two and a half years ago. -</p>
Participant 1-5	55:02	<p>Ja. -</p>	<p>Yes. -</p>
Researcher	55:02	<p>Nicht weil die Relevanz nicht da ist, sondern weil wir immer gesagt haben an sich bin ich ja so oder so auf einer digitalen Plattform unterwegs. Und ob ich jetzt direkt quasi verweise auf ein direktes, gezieltes Thema, was in der Website integriert ist oder ob es eine separate Seite ist, macht keinen großen Unterschied. Der einzige kleine Vorteil ist, dass wenn ich das in der Website direkt integriert habe, dann springe ich vielleicht noch mal anders oder einfacher auf alle umliegenden Themen, als wenn ich jetzt halt nur auf dieser Landingpage lande und von da aus vielleicht nicht unbedingt das gesamte Portfolio im Überblick habe oder über das Menü dann darauf aufmerksam werde. Ist wahrscheinlich eine philosophische Frage. Aber finde ich spannend, wo sie es noch mal so als letztes genannt.</p>	<p>Not because the relevance is not there, but because we have always said that I am on a digital platform anyway. And whether I directly refer to a direct, targeted topic that is integrated into the website or whether it is a separate page makes no great difference. The only small advantage is that if I have integrated it directly into the website, then I might jump to all the surrounding topics in a different way or more easily than if I just land on this landing page and from there I might not necessarily have an overview of the entire portfolio or become aware of it via the menu. That's probably a philosophical question. But I find it exciting where they mentioned it last.</p>
Participant 1-5	55:50	<p>Also klar. Natürlich ist es dann auch verlinkt auf der Website, aber da geht es</p>	<p>So sure. Of course, it is also linked on the website, but it is more about saying</p>

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		eher darum zu sagen okay, man präsentiert sich dort dann eher als der Kenner dieses Themas, als der Experte für das Thema und jetzt weniger sozusagen [Company 1] sozusagen vorne zu schieben, sondern es geht halt erst mal ganz neutral um das Thema und um dann erst im zweiten Schritt (--) dann ah ok, Angebot von [Company 1].	okay, you present yourself there as the expert on this topic, as the expert for the topic and not so much about pushing [Company 1] to the front, so to speak, but rather about the topic in a neutral way first and then only in the second step (--) then ah ok, offer from [Company 1].
Researcher	56:24	Da vielleicht dann noch eine direkte Rückfrage, wenn es Ihre Zeit noch erlaubt? Das Stichwort Blog-Marketing nutzen ja auch jetzt mittlerweile Schritt für Schritt immer mehr Firmen. Ist Ihnen da das Konzept bekannt?	Then perhaps a direct query, if your time still permits? More and more companies are now using the keyword blog marketing step by step. Are you familiar with the concept?
Participant 1-5	56:39	Also der Blog Marketing mit G, meinen Sie jetzt?	So, the blog Marketing with G, you mean now?
Researcher	56:42	Blog Marketing mit G.	Blog Marketing with G.
Participant 1-5	56:44	Also es ist ungefähr vorstellen was es ist, aber sagt mir jetzt nichts.	So, I can roughly imagine what it is, but don't tell me anything now.
Researcher	56:47	Kann man an sich so ein bisschen sehen, wie man eine neutrale Plattform, ein News-Bereich der halt rein über Unternehmens-News hinausgeht, sondern eher die Art eines Forums quasi klassisch hat, aber integriert in die Website, was natürlich dann auch genau diese Beschreibung auf neutraler Ebene, wir sprechen über Thema XY, was vielleicht im ersten Schritt nichts mit unserem Produkt zu tun hat, aber im zweiten Schritt, wo unser Produkt zufällig eine Antwort darauf geben kann, ist. -	Can you see a bit of a neutral platform, a news area that goes beyond just company news, but rather has the kind of a forum quasi classical, but integrated into the website, which of course then also exactly this description on a neutral level, we talk about topic XY, which perhaps in the first step has nothing to do with our product, but in the second step, where our product can give an answer to it by chance, is. -
Participant 1-5	57:18	Mh. -	Mh. -
Researcher	57:19	Das nutzen halt auch viele, weil dieses Blog-Format, sag ich mal, wie so eine Galerie-News-Übersicht halt dann etwas neutraler wahrgenommen wird als die Website, obwohl es halt integriert ist. Und der Vorteil da ist natürlich wieder, dass je mehr Content ich ja direkt verknüpfe auf der Website, desto relevanter ist das natürlich auch aus Google Gesichtspunkten. Sie hatten angesprochen ich kann mir natürlich ein Ranking über Anzeigen erkaufen oder über bestimmte Keywords auf meine Seite nach oben booster. -	Many people use this because this blog format, I say, like a gallery news overview, is perceived somewhat more neutrally than the website, even though it is integrated. And the advantage is, of course, that the more content I link directly to the website, the more relevant it is from Google's point of view. You mentioned that I can of course buy a ranking through advertisements or booster my page upwards through certain keywords. -
Participant 1-5	57:49	Ja, genau. -	Yes, exactly. -
Researcher	57:50	Aber unter all diesen Platz 1 bis 5 Platzierung ist ja immer noch die organische Suche sehr relevant. Und genau da würde sich quasi das Thema Blog-Marketing bekannt, also bemerkbar machen, weil es halt eben nicht über verschiedene Landingpages machen, die alle bei Google wieder an unterschiedlichen Stellen geranked werden, sondern dann ist es Bestandteil der Website und entsprechend wird die Website hochgespült. Das ist so ein bisschen der mechanische Gedanke dahinter.	But among all these rankings from 1 to 5, the organic search is still very relevant. And that's where the topic of blog marketing would become known, so to speak, because it's not done via different landing pages that are all ranked in different places on Google, but it's part of the website and the website is flushed up accordingly. That's a bit of the mechanical idea behind it.
Participant 1-5	58:19	Ja gut, also dann Herr Tipke. Vielen Dank.	Yes, well, Mr Tipke then. Thank you very much.

Appendix 14 – Example transcript – “Supervisor / C-Level”

Researcher **58:23** Ich habe zu danken.

I have to thank you.

Appendix 15 – Example transcript – “Stakeholder” (Head of Sales)

Participant 4-3 – Interview

Date of record: 31/01/2022

Researcher	00:00	<p>Dann, nachdem wir jetzt den Hintergrund meinerseits etwas umrissen haben, vielleicht die erste Frage in Ihre Richtung. Ob Sie sich einmal bitte kurz vorstellen könnten vom beruflichen Hintergrund her und was Ihre Aufgaben aktuell im Unternehmen [Company 4] ausmachen.</p>	<p>Then, now that we have outlined my background somewhat, perhaps the first question is in your direction. Could you please briefly introduce yourself in terms of your professional background and what your current tasks are in the company [Company 4]?</p>
Participant 4-3	00:19	<p>Ich fange mal mit dem Hintergrund an. Also ich bin ausgebildeter Diplomingenieur, habe Maschinenbau und Verfahrenstechnik und habe mehrere Stationen durchlaufen in verschiedenen Firmen, die alle meistens die Prozessindustrie gedient haben. Angefangen von der [Company], aber auch [Company] viele Jahre. Mittelständler und Konzerne, also größere Unternehmen, sodass ich beide Seiten kenne. Konzern als auch mittelständische Welt und auch vom Anlagenbau bis zu sehr Produkt-Geschäften. Bei [Company] die ein Dax-Konzern sind, waren es damals halt auch die [Product segment] oder eben halt auch andere Bereiche, die also sehr stark im Marketing sehr viel stärker engagiert haben, viel breitere Kundengruppen bedienen, als wir das heute hier bei [Company 4] machen. Und ich bin jetzt schon mehr als zehn Jahre bei [Company 4]. Und die Vertriebsverantwortung. Wir haben das bisher getrennt in neue Maschinen und Service, weil der Service damals noch sehr gebooster werden sollte. Für das jetzt gerade wieder zusammen. Und bin global-funktional verantwortlich. Das heißt, wir haben elf Tochtergesellschaften, jetzt zwölf, gerade eine neue dazu gekriegt, die in den lokalen Märkten ihre Verantwortung auch wahrnehmen und die aber hier von hier aus dem Headquarter heraus natürlich gesteuert werden. Wir haben die Strategie, das ist eine sehr klare Zweiband-Straße, keine Einbahnstraße. Wir sagen, was geht, sondern die sind natürlich deshalb stark aufgebaut worden mit sehr starken Service Network, um lokal stark zu sein. Und da ist mein Kollege [Name], der vielleicht auch hier ein Interview hat. Ich bin mir nicht sicher, aber ich glaube noch hat oder schon hatte. Der Kollege, der auch im Service genau diese Struktur mit aufbauen soll und da auch die Verantwortung hat, dass das gut läuft. Weil damit verkauft man natürlich in unserem Geschäft sehr stark unsere Maschinen. Das ist auch vielleicht</p>	<p>I'll start with the background. Well, I am a qualified engineer, have a degree in mechanical and process engineering and have worked for several companies, mostly in the process industry. Starting with [Company], but also [Company] for many years. Medium-sized companies and corporations, larger companies, so I know both sides. Group as well as medium-sized world and also from plant construction to very product businesses. At [Company], which is a DAX company, it was also the [Product segment] or other areas that were much more involved in marketing and serve much broader customer groups than we do here at [Company 4] today. And I have been with [Company 4] for more than ten years now. And the sales responsibility. We used to separate that into new machines and service, because at that time the service was still to be very much boosted. Now I'm just putting it back together. And I have global responsibility. This means that we have eleven subsidiaries, now twelve, and we have just added a new one, which also assume their responsibilities in the local markets and which are, of course, controlled from here at headquarters. We have a strategy that is a very clear two-way street, not a one-way street. We say what is possible, but of course they have been strongly built up with a very strong service network in order to be strong locally. And there is my colleague [name], who might also have an interview here. I'm not sure, but I think he still has or has already had one. The colleague who is also supposed to build up exactly this structure in the service and who is also responsible for making sure that it runs well. Because in our business, this of course sells our machines very strongly. This is perhaps another important point, that we sell more</p>

Appendix 15 – Example transcript – “Stakeholder” (Head of Sales)

		<p>noch an anderer Stelle ein wichtiger Punkt, dass wir mehr Produktivität verkaufen als Produkte verkaufen. Die Transformation machen wir schon seit einiger Zeit. Das heißt, wir sind sehr mit Kunden verbunden. Wie gesagt, meine Aufgabe ist global-funktional. Ich bin verantwortlich in dem Sinne. Global-funktional sagt Ihnen etwas?</p>	<p>productivity than products. We have been doing the transformation for some time now. That means we are very connected to customers. As I said, my role is global-functional. I am responsible in that sense. Global-functional means something to you?</p>
Researcher	02:37	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 4-3	02:37	51 Prozent, wenn Sie so wollen. Und zu meinem Aufgabenbereich gehört neben dem Vertrieb auch das Produkt-Management und auch die Kompetenz Center, Technology Center. Die haben wir in fünf Zeitzonen, in den [quantity] Unternehmen, unsere Unternehmung in [quantity] Zeitzonen, besser gesagt - [quantity] verschiedene. Dort machen wir ein Produktversuche und insbesondere machen wir dort auch die teilweise FATs, aber eben auch die Trainings und die Maschinenvorführung. Also dort wird eigentlich ein sehr großer Anteil des Geschäfts kreiert, weil man sich inhaltlich in unserem Bereich differenziert, um die Maschinen bessere und mehr [Goods] produziert, weniger Produktverluste hat und das findet integriert statt. Die gehören auch zum Vertrieb und werden auch von uns gesteuert. Das ist im Kern meine Aufgabe.	51 percent, if you like. And in addition to sales, my area of responsibility also includes product management and also the competence centres, technology centres. We have them in five time zones, in the [quantity] companies, our company in [quantity] time zones, better said - [quantity] different ones. There we do product trials and in particular we do the partial FATs, but also the training and the machine demonstrations. So a very large share of the business is actually created there, because we differentiate ourselves in terms of content in our area, produce better and more [goods] around the machines, have fewer product losses and that takes place in an integrated way. These are also part of sales and are also controlled by us. That is essentially my task.
Researcher	03:40	Spannend. Zwei Rückfragen dazu die erste: Sie sagten Sie sind vor zehn Jahren zu [Company 4] gekommen. Haben Sie damals dann auch schon direkt diese Funktion eingenommen, oder? -	Exciting. Two questions about that, the first: You said you came to [Company 4] ten years ago. Did you then also directly take on this function, or? -
Participant 4-3	03:49	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	03:50	Und die zweite Frage, wo Sie sagten, das Hauptgeschäft wird quasi in diesen Technologie Centern mit generiert, weil da halt immer die Customer Experience stattfindet, so wie ich es verstanden habe? Vorführungen und ähnliches? -	And the second question, where you said that the main business is generated in these technology centres, because that's where the customer experience always takes place, as I understand it? Demonstrations and the like? -
Participant 4-3	04:04	Ja. -	Yes. -
Researcher	04:05	Das heißt, nur schon mal vorweg gefragt: Sehen Sie da auch tatsächlich dann, ich sage mal, die Haupt-Kommunikationsschnittstelle zu Ihren Kunden? Ist das einer der wesentlichen Touchpoints, die Sie bedienen?	That is, just to ask you in advance: Do you actually see this as, let's say, the main communication interface to your customers? Is that one of the main touchpoints that you serve?
Participant 4-3	04:17	Absolut einer der wesentlichen Touchpoints. Also ich würde sagen, das ist sogar der Wesentlichste, weil entschieden wird - heute natürlich auch ein Hybrid Selling, also weil nicht alle Kunden können hierher kommen. Die schicken halt ihr Produkt Corona-bedingt. Das wird sich sicherlich auch noch mal in der nicht nur negativen Erfahrungen stabilisieren. Natürlich haben wir die Kunden am liebsten hier. Man zeigt die Maschine und beweist dann die Maschinenperformance. Das ist die Kompetenz der Mitarbeiter in	Absolutely one of the essential touchpoints. I would say it's even the most important, because it's decided - today, of course, it's also hybrid selling, because not all customers can come here. They just send their product to Corona. That will certainly stabilise again in the not only negative experiences. Of course, we prefer to have the customers here. They show the machine and then prove the machine performance. That is the competence of the employees in the

Appendix 15 – Example transcript – “Stakeholder” (Head of Sales)

		<p>den Technologie Centern. Auch die strukturelle Kompetenz, Wissens-Datenbanken und sozusagen das inhärente Wissen in der Unternehmung, wie man eine solche Maschine optimal gestalten kann, damit sie den besten Output. Das ist der Hauptdifferentiator. Also das ist und Sie dürfen nicht vergessen wir sind nicht in einem Markt. Also bei uns ist ein Großteil des Geschäfts [Industry]. [Industry] ist übersichtlich. Es gibt weltweit vielleicht [quantity] Sites, die relevant sind. Und wenn Sie gucken, wie viel sind dominanter Weltmarktführer? Das heißt, wenn Sie gucken, wie viel davon ein Großteil des Geschäfts ausmachen, dann ist das eine sehr überschaubare Gruppe von Kunden und die verändert sich auch nicht dynamisch. Da gibt es immer wieder Konsolidierung, und hier wird gekauft und hier wird verkauft. Aber das ist nicht so - in anderen Geschäften, in denen ich war, haben wir intensiv versucht, alle Kunden zu erreichen, weil das 20.000 in verschiedenen Branchen waren oder 40.000 oder 100.000.</p>	<p>technology centres. Also the structural competence, knowledge databases and, so to speak, the inherent knowledge in the company on how to optimally design such a machine so that it produces the best output. That is the main differentiator. So that is and you must not forget we are not in a market. So with us a lot of the business is [Industry]. [Industry] is clear. There are maybe [quantity] sites worldwide that are relevant. And if you look, how many are dominant world market leaders? That is, if you look at how many of them make up a large part of the business, then that is a very manageable group of customers and it does not change dynamically. There is always consolidation, and people buy here and sell here. But it's not like that - in other shops I've been in, we tried hard to reach all the customers, because there were 20,000 in different branches or 40,000 or 100,000.</p>
Researcher	05:40	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 4-3	05:40	Und hier reden wir von denen. Unsere Kunden kennen uns. Wir sind super bekannt. Also selten, dass uns jemand nicht. Mal in einem kleinen Marktsegment hier oder da oder [Industry], [Industry]. Gut, dann muss man vielleicht in bestimmten Regionen auch mal nachkarten, weil man da nicht so präsent war. Aber im Großen und Ganzen ist unser Geschäft, das muss man einfach erst mal verstanden haben, unser Geschäft tatsächlich im großen Teil mit Kunden, die uns kennen und mit denen wir auch in direkte Interaktion gehen können. Also ich muss jetzt keine - is ist schön LinkedIn zu haben, aber ich muss jetzt nicht irgendwie 10.000 Kunden ansprechen, die ich gar nicht anders erreichen kann, um vielleicht 300 zu finden, die Suspects sind und rund 100 Prospects unter die zu generieren, das ist nicht unser Geschäft. Unser Geschäft ist, wir kennen unsere Kunden, die Kunden kennen uns. Und deswegen sind diese Touchpoints Customer Experience, unsere Kompetenz Center - das ist zentral.	<p>And here we are talking about them. Our customers know us. We are super well known. So it's rare that someone doesn't. Sometimes in a small market segment here or there or [Industry], [Industry]. Well, then maybe we have to do some follow-up work in certain regions, because we weren't so present there. But on the whole, you have to understand that our business is really largely with customers who know us and with whom we can interact directly. So I don't have to - it's nice to have LinkedIn, but I don't have to somehow address 10,000 customers that I can't reach any other way to find maybe 300 who are suspects and generate around 100 prospects among them, that's not our business. Our business is, we know our customers, the customers know us. And that's why these touchpoints are customer experience, our competence centres - that's central.</p>
Researcher	06:32	Jetzt haben Sie gerade ausführlich geschildert, dass Sie relativ viel Vertriebserfahrung und Background über die letzten Jahre gesammelt haben. Wie sieht es aus in puncto Kommunikation und Marketing? Haben Sie da vielleicht auch in irgendeiner Art und Weise akademisch was mitgenommen oder ist das, sage ich mal, etwas, was on the job sich immer ich habe?	<p>Now you have just described in detail that you have gained quite a lot of sales experience and background over the last few years. What about communication and marketing? Have you perhaps also picked up something academically in some way or is that, let's say, something that has always come to me on the job?</p>
Participant 4-3	06:57	Ich habe ja mal eine Business Ausbildung in St. Gallen gemacht. Nachdem ich mein	<p>I once did a business apprenticeship in St. Gallen. After I finished my studies -</p>

Studium - Ich bin kein Wirtschaftsingenieur, das war damals noch. Sie sind Wirtschaftsingenieur, deshalb darf ich dabei sein. Mein Sohn übrigens auch. Deswegen - heute ist ja nicht mehr verpönt. Damals war man beides nicht. Man war kein richtiger BWLer, man war kein richtiger Ingenieur. Heute ist es verstanden, dass kein Mensch die ingenieurwissenschaftlichen Tiefenausbildung, die man an der TU bekommt, tatsächlich im realen Leben braucht, wenn er nicht in die Entwicklung geht oder ganz spezifische Gruppen. Insofern ist Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen okay. Ich habe das damals tatsächlich nachgeholt. Das ist natürlich sehr Marketing und BWL lastig gewesen. Business Development und ähnliche Geschichten. Habe da verschiedenstes gemacht und bin mein ganzes Leben lang auch Sales & Marketing, war auch Vice President Sales & Marketing. Ich bringe auf der Marketing-Seite mit Sicherheit eine Menge Kompetenz, also wenn es darum geht. Er natürlich hat sich verändert, aber das würde ich mal als mein Metier auch bezeichnen, dass ich weiß, was im Marketing gemacht werden muss, um auch vielleicht jetzt in unserer spezifischen Ausrichtung nicht oft so intensiv erforderlich, aber zu wissen, was man eigentlich macht, um eben halt auch Kommunikation nach außen zu organisieren. Das ist sehr stark vom Business abhängig, sehr stark von dem, was verkaufen Sie? Verkaufen Sie eine Million Standardprodukte bei [Company]? Diese Erkenntnis habe ich, glaube ich, durchaus für einen deutschen Maschinenbauer. Die Unterschiede kenne ich ganz gut, glaube ich.

Researcher 08:17

Bringt mich tatsächlich zu der nächsten Frage auch direkt. Ich habe alle Ihre Kollegen bisher gefragt, ob Sie auch kurz beschreiben könnten, wie Sie organisatorisch eingeordnet sind und würde jetzt vor dem, was Sie gerade geschildert haben, noch eine konkretere Rückfrage stellen wollen. Sie sagten nämlich in Ihrer Funktion für Sales & Marketing, da geht es ja um verschiedene Dinge. Also Marketing ist ja deutlich breiter aufgestellt. Geht ja an sich um alle Aktivitäten von über welchen Kanal vertreiben wird welche Produkte, wie bewerben wir sie und so weiter und so fort. Jetzt hatte mir der Kollege [Participant 4-2] schon geschildert, dass klassisch sein Bereich Marketing eher als die, ich möchte jetzt nicht despektierlich sagen, Reklame-Abteilung oder Kommunikationsabteilung, aber von der Ausrichtung haben Sie das Produktmanagement, was sage ich mal in

I'm not an industrial engineer, that was then. You are an industrial engineer, that's why I'm allowed to be there. My son, too, by the way. That's why - today it's no longer frowned upon. Back then you weren't either. You weren't a real business graduate, you weren't a real engineer. Today it's understood that no one actually needs the in-depth engineering education you get at the TU in real life unless they go into development or very specific groups. In that respect, industrial engineering is okay. I actually caught up on that at the time. Of course, it was very marketing and business studies-heavy. Business development and similar things. I've done a lot of different things and I've been Sales & Marketing my whole life, I was also Vice President Sales & Marketing. I certainly bring a lot of competence on the marketing side, so when it comes to that. Of course, it has changed, but I would describe that as my profession, that I know what needs to be done in marketing, perhaps not so intensively required now in our specific orientation, but to know what one actually does in order to organise external communication. That depends very much on the business, very much on what you sell. Do you sell a million standard products at [Company]? I think I have this insight for a German mechanical engineering company. I know the differences quite well, I think.

That actually brings me directly to the next question. I have asked all your colleagues so far if you could also briefly describe how you are classified organisationally and I would now like to ask a more specific question before what you have just described. You said that in your function for Sales & Marketing, it is about different things. Marketing is much broader. It's about all activities from which channel we use to sell which products, how we advertise them and so on. Now, my colleague [Participant 4-2] had already described to me that classically his marketing department is more like the, I don't want to say disrespectfully, advertising department or communication department, but in terms of orientation you have the product management, which I would say is very strongly on the way in the direction of sales channels,

Participant 4-3 09:31

Richtung Vertriebskanäle, Produktangebot etc. sehr stark unterwegs ist? Der Marketing-Bereich, so hatte ich es verstanden, eher sich durchaus fokussiert auf Kommunikation? Sodass da halt die Schnittstellen, wie soll ich sagen, klar definiert sind. Wie spielt Vertrieb genau dort rein in diesen Schnittstellen?

Also erst mal zur Klarstellung. Einordnung, Unternehmen. Ich berichte an den CEO und das Produkt-Management hängt bei mir, aber nicht das Marketing Communication, also [Participant] ist ein Kollege von mir. Marketing Communication hing auch deshalb, wir sind gerade noch dabei die Organisation zu gestalten, bisher beim CEO, weil da sehr Marketing-lastig war. Besser gesagt, der frühere CEO. Insofern hat er das auch bei sich geführt und das heißt, dass [Participant 4--2], ich und [Participant 4-1], ein Mitarbeiter von mir. Ist ja egal, weil das ist nicht relevant für unsere Arbeit, wie wir arbeiten. (--) [Participant 4-1], der das Produkt-Management leitet. Wir sitzen dann oft zusammen mit [Name] auch, der Service noch mal eigene Belange hat, und mit unsem CI, Head of our CI, also den digitalen Produkten, [Name] und die auch spezifischere Belange hat. Wir steuern quasi die Inhalte. Natürlich hat der Vertrieb da eine sehr mächtige Rolle, weil die Messen sind ja auch wichtig. Der [Participant 4-2] mit seinem Team organisiert alles für uns, aber die kommunikativen Schwerpunkte und die inhaltliche Ausrichtung, die kommt aus dem Vertrieb. Also ich würde schon sagen und natürlich auch zum Service, der dann auch noch die für Tool-Geschäft, das sind die Werkzeuge, die werden in Maschinen eingesetzt werden, verantwortlich. Und der hat natürlich auch noch seine spezifischen Belange. Zu sagen, wir müssen noch mal gucken, dass wir hier ein bestimmtes Produkt noch mal nach vorne bringen oder was auch immer. Aber im Kern ist das sozusagen eine Teamarbeit. Aber natürlich hat Vertrieb dort sehr gut, ich würde fast sagen mächtige Position, weil das ist ja die Marketing Communication, das Produkt-Management. Oft ist alles natürlich letztendlich dafür da, dass wir erfolgreich verkaufen und deswegen ist, glaube ich, jetzt hier in dem Thema auch der Vertrieb natürlich auf den Messen dann immer derjenige, der eigentlich letztendlich veranstaltet und natürlich auch die Stoßrichtung vorgibt. So würde ich es sehen. Kann natürlich sein, dass die Kollegen das anders sehen. Das wäre natürlich interessant, aber das ist meine persönliche Sicht. Fair enough würde ich sagen.

product range etc.? The marketing department, as I understood it, is rather focussed on communication? So that the interfaces are, how shall I say, clearly defined. How exactly does distribution play into these interfaces?

So first of all, for clarification. Classification, company. I report to the CEO and the product management hangs with me, but not the marketing communication, so [participant] is a colleague of mine. Marketing Communication also hung with the CEO because we are still in the process of shaping the organisation, because it was very marketing-heavy. Better said, the former CEO. In this respect, he also managed it himself and that means that [Participant 4--2], me and [Participant 4-1], a colleague of mine. It doesn't matter because it's not relevant to our work, how we work. (--) [Participant 4-1], who is in charge of product management. We often sit together with [name], who has his own concerns, and with our CI, head of our CI, the digital products, [name], who also has more specific concerns. We control the content, so to speak. Of course, sales has a very powerful role because the trade fairs are also important. Participant 4-2] and his team organise everything for us, but the communication focus and the content orientation come from Sales. So I would say and of course also to the service department, which is also responsible for the tool business, that is the tools that are used in machines. And of course they also have their own specific concerns. Saying that we have to look again, that we have to bring a certain product forward again or whatever. But in essence, it's a team effort, so to speak. But of course, sales has a very good, I would almost say powerful position there, because that is marketing communication, product management. Often, of course, everything is ultimately there to ensure that we sell successfully, and that's why, I think, here in this topic, sales is of course always the one at the trade fairs who ultimately organises and of course also sets the direction. That's how I would see it. Of course, it may be that colleagues see it differently. That would be interesting, of course, but that is my personal view. Fair enough, I would say.

Appendix 15 – Example transcript – “Stakeholder” (Head of Sales)

Researcher	11:35	<p>Habe ich tatsächlich auch so aus den Unterhaltungen der anderen Kollegen mitgenommen. Vielleicht da noch als Randergänzung war, dass ich dem [Participant 4-2] zugesagt hatte, war, dass sobald ich die Promotion abgeschlossen habe, auch noch mal als Take Aways eine konkrete Handlungsempfehlungen für Sie ausspreche und das dann entsprechend Ihnen noch mal zukommen lasse. Weil neben [Company] durchaus auch andere Unternehmen mit dabei sind, sodass man da vielleicht auch noch mal einen Hinweis oder für Sie geben, für sich mit rausziehen können. Jetzt haben wir schon gerade über das Thema Messen gesprochen und sie haben gesagt, Sie legen die Inhalte da fest. Entscheiden Sie dann auch unterm Strich darüber, auf welche Messen Sie gehen wollen, wenn Sie da sagen, Sie haben eine hohe Entscheidungsmacht mit?</p>	<p>That's what I actually took from the conversations of the other colleagues. Perhaps as an addition, I had promised [Participant 4-2] that as soon as I had completed the promotion, I would also give you concrete recommendations for action as takeaways and then send them to you again. Because apart from [Company], there are also other companies involved, so that you can perhaps also give a hint or take it out for yourself. We have just talked about the topic of trade fairs and you said that you determine the content. Do you also decide at the end of the day which trade fairs you want to go to when you say that you have a high degree of decision-making power?</p>
Participant 4-3	12:32	<p>Das entscheiden wir im Vertrieb und das ist auch die Regel. Wir haben mit dem Marketing eigentlich den Anspruch, einen rulierenden Marketing-Masterplan zu machen, um die Kommunikation abzustimmen. Das machen wir auch. Wir haben natürlich noch Potenziale, besser zu werden, um die sozusagen jährliche und international gesteuerte Ausrichtung noch zu verbessern. Weil wir wollen natürlich jetzt überall in der Welt mit der gleichen Kommunikation rausgehen. Wo wir bei LinkedIn waren. Der eine macht das und der andere macht was ganz anderes. Das funktioniert nicht. Und natürlich haben wir auch von unserer Produktpolitik klare Schwerpunkte und die sind natürlich dabei. Wir wissen, es kommt Launch eines neuen Produktes mit dem Produktmanagement und dann wird natürlich irgendwie gemeinsam entschieden, welche Bedeutung hat das für unseren und unsere Vertriebspläne, für unser Budget und auf unsere strategische Positionierung - manchmal beides. Meistens passt das soweit zusammen. Aber auch kann natürlich sein, dass man bei bestimmten Jahr einfach nur mal Launched und ganz massiv die Glocke läutet und aber eigentlich nicht erwartet, dass man verkauft. Dann ist natürlich eine mittelfristige Geschichte. Aber diese Geschichten sind natürlich maßgebend für uns. Welche Messen besuchen wir dann auch? Wo nehmen wir sie international? Und das wird auch von hier gesteuert. Wobei klar ist, dass wir die letzten Jahre immer stärker in die regionalen Messen gehen. Also die Lead-Messen, die großen Deutschen [Name] und [Name] sind das für uns, verlieren an Bedeutung, weil wir natürlich mit den verschiedenen lokalen Messen in [Country] und in [Country] auch</p>	<p>We decide that in sales and that is also the rule. With marketing, we actually have the claim to make a relative marketing master plan in order to coordinate communication. We also do that. Of course, we still have the potential to improve our annual and international orientation. Because of course we now want to go out everywhere in the world with the same communication. Where we were with LinkedIn. One does one thing and the other does something completely different. That doesn't work. And of course we also have clear focal points from our product policy and of course they are there. We know that there will be a launch of a new product with the product management and then, of course, we will somehow decide together what significance this has for our and our sales plans, for our budget and for our strategic positioning - sometimes both. Most of the time it all fits together. But it can also be the case that in a certain year you just launch and ring the bell massively and don't actually expect to sell. Then, of course, it's a medium-term story. But these stories are of course decisive for us. Which trade fairs do we attend? Where do we take them internationally? And that is also controlled from here. It's clear that we've been going more and more to the regional fairs in recent years. So the lead fairs, the big German ones in [name] and [name], are becoming less important for us, because of course we have also got relevant fairs in particular with the various local fairs in [country] and in [country]. And you can see the same products there. You don't necessarily</p>

Appendix 15 – Example transcript – “Stakeholder” (Head of Sales)

		<p>insbesondere relevante Messen bekommen haben. Und man dieselben Produkte dort sehen kann. Man muss nicht unbedingt mehr hier rüberkommen oder auch in [Country], [Country]. Das heißt, wir haben schon eine Verschiebung in die Märkte hinein. Lead-Messen spielt immer noch eine Rolle im Sinne des Images. Aber diese Entscheidung wo gehen wir hin? Mit welchem Aufwand gehen? Treffen wir natürlich gemeinsam. Wir haben eine Konsenskultur. Das klägt etwas schräge. Der [Participant 4-3] hat gesagt und dann wird das so gemacht. Nein, das wird dann diskutiert. Das ist der Stil des Hauses. Aber es gibt da auch keine großen Streitpunkte, weil das ist einfach selfe speaking. Wenn wir neues Produkt haben, dann sagen wir alle kommen, das muss jetzt raus. Und dann diskutieren wir, wie wir es am besten präsentieren können, auf welche Messen wir rausgehen oder welche anderen Kommunikationskanäle wir nutzen, oder auch ein in-house Event machen zum Beispiel, wenn die Messe vielleicht für uns ungeeignet erscheint oder schlechtes Timing hat. Das wird dann eigentlich in dem eben genannten Gremium diskutiert und auch gemeinsam entschieden.</p>	<p>have to come over here or to [Country]. In other words, we have already seen a shift into the markets. Lead fairs still play a role in terms of image. But this decision where do we go? At what expense? We make it together, of course. We have a consensus culture. That sounds a bit weird. The [Participant 4-3] said and then that's how it's done. No, that is then discussed. That is the style of the house. But there are no big disputes there either, because that is simply selfe speaking. When we have new product, then we all come and say, this has to go out now. And then we discuss how we can best present it, which trade fairs we should go to or which other communication channels we should use, or even do an in-house event, for example, if the trade fair seems unsuitable for us or has bad timing. This is then actually discussed in the aforementioned committee and also decided together.</p>
Researcher	15:07	<p>Zwei Rückfragen dazu. Erste Frage. Sie haben jetzt das Gremium gerade angesprochen. Gibt es neben Vertrieb, Marketing, Produktmanagement und Services quasi noch weitere Bereiche, die in diese Diskussion mit involviert sind? Also beispielsweise Ihr CEO? Oder ist das Ihr Terrain? Das Sie das primär auf der Management-Ebene abstimmen und das reicht, genügt?</p>	<p>Two questions on this. First question. You have just mentioned the committee. Are there other areas involved in this discussion besides sales, marketing, product management and services? For example, your CEO? Or is that your terrain? That you primarily coordinate this at the management level and that is enough, is it enough?</p>
Participant 4-3	15:34	<p>Ja, nein natürlich. Also ich habe ja gerade gesagt, unser jahrelanger CEO war wirklich ein sehr starker Marketing-getriebener Mensch und auch äußerst kompetent und der hat natürlich an der Stelle dann auch immer die Diskussion geleitet. Also wo wir dann eben halt gemeinsam zu einer Entscheidung gekommen. Mit dem ich auch immer sehr eng zusammengearbeitet haben. Ich glaube, da gab es auch keine großen Friktion oder sowas. Aber natürlich hat der die Rolle noch mal vielleicht intensiver wahrgenommen als unser jetziger CEO, der das natürlich auch macht. Keine Frage. Also das ist natürlich wichtig bei großen Messen und so weiter und so fort und der auch sehr kundenorientiert ist.</p>	<p>Yes, no of course. As I just said, our CEO of many years was really a very strong marketing-driven person and also extremely competent, and of course he always led the discussion at that point. So we came to a decision together. I also always worked very closely with him. I don't think there was much friction or anything like that. But of course he took on the role even more intensively than our current CEO, who of course also does that. No question about it. So of course that's important at big trade fairs and so on and so forth, and he's also very customer-oriented.</p>
Researcher	16:13	<p>Mh. -</p>	<p>Mh. -</p>
Participant 4-3	16:13	<p>Insofern gibt es natürlich diese Runden auch. Aber sie müssen sich das so vorstellen: Wir arbeiten etwas aus und stellen es dann vor. Und dann gibt es vielleicht, dann gibt es die Diskussionen zusammen und dann gibt es noch mal so</p>	<p>In this respect, of course, there are also these rounds. But you have to think of it like this: We work out something and then present it. And then there are perhaps, then there are the discussions together and then there are again a few</p>

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		ein paar Richtung, die dann halt eben auch aus der Sicht des CEOs vielleicht noch mal stärker ausgehandelt werden sollen und insofern ist er natürlich ein wichtiger Bestandteil der Diskussion, aber nicht auf - ich bin ich auf der operativen als auf der Steuerungs-Ebene würde ich sagen.	directions that should be negotiated more strongly from the CEO's point of view and in this respect he is of course an important part of the discussion, but not at the operational level than at the steering level, I would say.
Researcher	16:40	Gibt der dann auch das Budget final frei?	Does he then also finally release the budget?
Participant 4-3	16:45	Wir budgetieren. Also bisher haben wir relativ stark budgetorientiert gearbeitet im Sinne wir machen unser Budget im Vorjahr frühzeitig, verabschieden das dann rechtzeitig und wir wissen, was im nächsten Jahr kommt. Und das ist dann eben halt das Budget innerhalb dem wir uns bewegen und dann ist die guckt man sich die Geschäftsentwicklung an. Wir haben zwar ein Forecasting, die wir durchführen und dann wird entsprechend auch Budget mal gesteuert. Aber üblicherweise ist das der Rahmen, in dem sich dann jeder bewegt. Und dann steuern wir eigentlich sozusagen eher operativ, wohin wo was geht. Aber natürlich gibt es auch dann an der Stelle mal eine Meinung von unserem CEO, der sagt irgendwie, das ist ihm zu teuer mit der Messe und dann wird das diskutiert und dann gucken wir oder das findet er nicht gut oder so. Aber ich kann auch nicht sagen, dass ist nicht direktiv. Es ist die sachliche Kompetenz und die wird dann schon vereinbart. Also das ist jetzt keine autokratische Struktur. So nach Motto das mal x, x, x, so ist das oder nimmt dann mal ein Stück vom Budget weg oder so was. Aber natürlich, das haben Sie vom [Participant 4-2] gehört. Der hat natürlich die meisten Streitpunkte, weil er hat ein großes Budget und da gibt es natürlich auch, wie soll ich sagen, das eine oder andere, den ein oder anderen Diskussionsrahmen, in dem man auch mal fragt "Muss das jetzt wirklich so viel sein für eine solche Messe?" und machen wir das und so weiter und so fort. Und das da kann natürlich auch mal das hier um die Ecke in der Vergangenheit auch. Wir haben ein neuen CEO, [Name], die noch ein bisschen im ankommen ist noch nicht so lange dabei ist. Insofern ähm, jetzt kann ich das noch nicht so klar sagen, aber das war in der Vergangenheit auch durchaus so, dass da mal gesagt wurde "Muss das so viel sein?". Das sind dann die Runden, wo dann nämlich quasi miteinander im Vorjahr, geschliffen und teilweise auch hart verhandelt wird, was wirklich über bleiben kann, aus dem EBIT-Zielgebiet diskutiert. Aus den top lines diskutiert. Wie viel haben wir denn überhaupt zur Verfügung? Müssen wir wirklich so viel ausgeben? Also diese Diskussion haben wir schon und die sind	We budget. So far, we have worked relatively budget-oriented in the sense that we make our budget early in the previous year, adopt it in time and we know what will come next year. And that is the budget within which we operate and then we look at the business development. We do have forecasting, which we carry out and then the budget is controlled accordingly. But usually that is the framework within which everyone moves. And then we actually control, so to speak, what goes where and where operationally. But of course there is also an opinion from our CEO at some point, who somehow says that the trade fair is too expensive for him and then we discuss it and then we look or he doesn't think it's good or something. But I can't say that it's not directive. It is the objective competence and that is agreed upon. So this is not an autocratic structure. It's like saying x, x, x, that's the way it is or take a piece of the budget away or something. But of course, you heard that from [Participant 4-2]. Of course, he has the most points of contention, because he has a large budget and there are of course also, how shall I say it, one or the other, one or the other discussion frame, in which one asks "Does it really have to be so much for such a fair?" and do we do that and so on and so forth. And that, of course, can also be the one around the corner in the past. We have a new CEO, [name], who is still a bit new to the job. In this respect, um, I can't say that clearly yet, but in the past people have said, "Does it have to be so much? These are the rounds in which, in the previous year, we have been discussing with each other, honing and sometimes negotiating hard, what can really be left over from the EBIT target area. Discussed from the top lines. How much do we actually have available? Do we really have to spend so much? So we already have this discussion and it has been tough in the past, as it probably is in every company, where everyone fights about their budget. And then [Participant 4-2] fights very hard for his budget, because of course he wants to deliver quality. And there is

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		<p>dann auch schon in der Vergangenheit taff gewesen, wie wahrscheinlich in jedem Unternehmen, wo jeder um sein Budget streitet. Und da streitet dann der [Participant 4-2] sehr stark für sein Budget, weil er natürlich Qualität abliefern will. Und da gibt es ja auch durchaus mal das eine andere Sichtweise, wo wir im Vertrieb dann sagen: So viel brauchen wir auch gar nicht für die Messe. Die Messen hat einfach gar nicht die Bedeutung. Solche Diskussionen gibt es auch durchaus.</p>	<p>sometimes another point of view where we in sales say: we don't need that much for the trade fair. The trade fairs are simply not that important. There are also discussions like that.</p>
Researcher	19:23	<p>Verstehe.</p>	<p>I see.</p>
Researcher	19:28	<p>Das ist vielleicht auch wichtig zu verstehen. Wir haben jetzt nicht eine gemeinsame, also nicht mein Budget, wenn wir die Messen machen, sondern das plant [Participant 4-2] bei sich und unter Berücksichtigung des miteinander gemachten Plans des Jahres. Hier müssen wir rein. Dann wissen wir genau, welche Messen er beschicken kann. Die kleineren Messen beschickt er gar nicht mehr. Die sind bei uns drin. In den Ländern drin, im Vertrieb drin. Die planen wir lokal Weil immer das Prinzip ist: Wer den Vorteil bekommt, der zahlt auch. Sonst würde natürlich das - wenn das selbst kontrolliert wird. Also wenn Sie einfach, wenn Sie dann die Messen zahlen oder große Zuschüsse machen, das haben wir in der Vergangenheit bei bestimmten großen lokalen Messen getan, dann führt das natürlich dazu, dass da auch gerne Geld ausgegeben wird. Belastet mein Budget ja nicht. Nicht, dass ich das jetzt immer darstellen würde. Aber das heißt, wir haben da klare Verankerung. Wer den Vorteil hat oder wer auch den Impact in so einem Markt hat, der zahlt. Weil das dieselbe Tasche ist. Weil für mich ist es sowieso egal, ob das jetzt die Tochter zahlt oder wir zahlen, aber solche Prinzipien verfolgen wir.</p>	<p>That is perhaps also important to understand. We don't have a common budget now, so it's not my budget when we do the fairs, but [Participant 4-2] plans that with himself and taking into account the plan we made together for the year. This is where we have to go in. Then we know exactly which fairs he can attend. He doesn't do the smaller fairs any more. They are in with us. In the countries, in sales. We plan them locally because the principle is always: whoever gets the advantage pays. Otherwise, of course, the - if that is controlled by yourself. So if you simply, if you then pay for the fairs or make large subsidies, which we have done in the past for certain large local fairs, then of course that leads to money being gladly spent there. It's not a burden on my budget. Not that I would always present that now. But that means we have a clear anchoring. Whoever has the advantage or the impact in such a market pays. Because it's the same pocket. Because for me it doesn't matter anyway whether the daughter pays or we pay, but we follow such principles.</p>
Researcher	20:32	<p>Jetzt verstehe ich. Ist ja auch insofern spannend, als das man dann ja andersherum wieder sagen könnte, wenn das Budget in einer Landesgesellschaft oder Organisationseinheit liegt, dass die dann auch sich nicht reinreden lässt, wenn es um die Planung selber geht. Haben Sie da dann trotzdem noch die Möglichkeit Ihre Vertriebsziele, ich weiß nicht, vielleicht auch den Look der Messe und Ähnliches mitzubestimmen bestimmen? Oder liegt das dann wirklich in der Verantwortung der Entität selbst, weil der grundsätzliche Vertriebsrahmen und die Vertriebsziele mit Ihnen abgesteckt sind?</p>	<p>Now I understand. It's also exciting in that you could say the other way round that if the budget is in a national company or organisational unit, they don't let themselves be interfered with when it comes to the planning itself. Do you still have the possibility to determine your sales goals, I don't know, maybe also the look of the fair and the like? Or is that really the responsibility of the entity itself, because the basic sales framework and the sales goals are set with you?</p>
Participant 4-3	21:05	<p>Nee, das muss. Da greifen wir schon massiv ein, weil wir natürlich die Produktpolitik ja steuern. Die ist zentral. Also wir sagen die neue Maschine muss gelernt werden. Meistens ist es aber</p>	<p>No, it has to. We intervene massively here, because of course we control the product policy. That is central. So we say the new machine has to be learned. But most of the time it's the other way</p>

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		<p>umgekehrt. Die sagen "Gib mir die neue Maschine" und wir haben da nicht genug von denen. Es ist nicht so, dass ich nicht auf. Der Stress ist eigentlich eher zu sagen "Hey, warum kriegen wir die jetzt nicht?" Und sonst kaufen wir uns ein für uns hier Lokal, für unser Kompetenz Center. Wir brauchen. Also nein, das ist sozusagen, das wird gesteuert hier und da gibt es eigentlich keine zwei Meinungen. Da sind wir eigentlich international recht gut abgestimmt. Die Tochtergesellschaften folgte eigentlich dem. Das ist jetzt so. Es gibt ja immer verschiedene Art und Weise, wie Unternehmen ihre Tochtergesellschaften führen. Lange Kette, so Kettenhunde, die dann halt lokal extrem stark sind, aber dann machen, was sie wollen. Nee, das ist nicht unser Sicht. Wir sind nicht - also für die Größe sind wir noch in unserer Steuerung nicht gut genug, aber das ist nicht so, dass wir sagen "du, du". Es ist nicht so, dass wir dort unterschiedliche Strategien fahren. Die Strategie im Großen ist immer abgestimmt und wir haben an der Stelle, das muss ich sagen, das hat [Participant 4-2] sicherlich gesagt. Wir haben ein CI. [Participant 4-2] guckt darauf. Da wird keine Messe gemacht, die nicht unseren Qualitätsanforderung entspricht. Das guckt er sich dann schon an und das sind das auch, wenn die lokal gemacht werden und lokale Firmen das umsetzen, da macht nicht der lokale Geschäftsführer und sagt "nein, nein - manchmal ganz anders". Das gibt es nicht.</p>	<p>round. They say "Give me the new machine" and we don't have enough of them. It's not that I'm not up to. The stress is actually more about saying "Hey, why don't we get that one now?" And otherwise we buy one for us here locally, for our competence centre. We need. So no, that is, so to speak, controlled here and there are actually no two opinions. We are actually quite well coordinated internationally. The subsidiaries actually followed this. That's the way it is now. There are always different ways in which companies manage their subsidiaries. Long chains, chain dogs that are extremely strong locally, but then do what they want. No, that's not our view. We are not - well, we are not yet good enough in our management for this size, but it's not like we say "you, you". It's not like we're doing different strategies there. The strategy at large is always aligned and we have at that point, I have to say, [Participant 4-2] certainly said that. We have a CI. [Participant 4-2] looks at it. We don't do any trade fairs that don't meet our quality requirements. He looks at that and that's also the case when they are made locally and local companies implement them, it's not the local manager who says "no, no - sometimes it's quite different". That doesn't exist.</p>
Researcher	22:30	<p>Ja, aber es ist ja auch schön zu wissen, dass es da entsprechende Freigabe Prozesse dann gibt, die genau das mit koordinieren. Das hatte [Participant 4-2] tatsächlich noch nicht erwähnt, deswegen war ich da gerade so hinterher. Was anderes, was mich noch interessieren würde. Sie haben die Abstimmungsrunden gerade angesprochen. Gibt es da fest definierte Templates und Planungsrunden? Wie sieht das im Detail aus?</p>	<p>Yes, but it's also nice to know that there are corresponding approval processes that coordinate exactly that. Participant 4-2] hadn't actually mentioned that yet, which is why I was so behind. Something else that would interest me. You just mentioned the voting rounds. Are there fixed templates and planning rounds? What does that look like in detail?</p>
Participant 4-3	22:56	<p>Also wir haben ein Joure Fix natürlich für solche Sachen. Mit insbesondere Produktmanagement und Marketing und Service und OCR. Also das wo wir zusammensitzen und auch [über] die Schwerpunkte sprechen. Wir haben am Anfang des Jahres einmal die Messe-Planung und was ich mir immer noch wünsche. Wir haben auch eine grobe Übersicht, also einen rolierenden Marketing-Masterplan, aber da würde ich mir noch mehr Struktur wünschen. Da würde ich mir gerne mehr Struktur wünschen im Sinne eines Tools, das uns Transparenz bringt und auch</p>	<p>So we have a Joure Fix of course for things like that. With especially product management and marketing and service and OCR. So that's where we sit together and also [talk about] the focal points. At the beginning of the year we have the trade fair planning and what I still want. We also have a rough overview, a rolling marketing master plan, but I would like to see more structure there. I would like to see more structure in the sense of a tool that brings us transparency and also, in particular, the TGs, because they then know independently which machine</p>

insbesondere auch die TG's, weil die wissen dann selbstständig welche Maschine kriegen sie, ist die zur Verfügung? Das ist schon sehr komplex, weil wir tendenziell natürlicher unser raw capital niedrig zu halten und nicht beliebig viele Maschinen bauen dafür. Das heißt das ist immer so eine gewisse Shortage an verfügbaren Messe-Maschinen da. Da sind dann die Competence Center Maschinen. Dann haben wir einen Boom des Jahres, da gehen die Kunden Aufträge vor. Da gibt es Engpässe. Das so da mehr Transparenz reinzubringen von der Seite, aber auch von der Übersichtlichkeit kommunikativ. Also welche Stoßrichtung habe ich eigentlich? Auf welchen Kanälen blase ich das dann am besten raus? Ist das wirklich Print? Ist das nur digital? Ist das LinkedIn? Wie verschiebe ich meine Budgets? Das wäre, was wir schon machen, verstärkt auch. Vielleicht noch stärker als anderswo. Weg von den Printmedien. Da haben wir uns komplett weggeschnitten und haben eigentlich alles auf digital Medien gebracht und auch auf Search Engines und entsprechend Optimierung. Also Optimierung, etc.. Das ist sehr, da haben wir noch Raum, da haben wir noch Raum mit auf der Tool Seite und auch auf der kommunikativen Seite. Das will ich schon sehen. Also diese Runden finden relativ stark Headquarter getrieben statt und wir wollen stärker eigentlich auch die TG's mitnehmen. Wir wissen was wir tun, aber die Transparenz ist da nicht immer zu jedem Zeitpunkt gegeben, sagen wir es mal so.

Researcher 25:06

Verstehen. Hat sich der angesprochene Shift, den Sie gerade lanciert hatten, in puncto Print noch mal in irgendeiner Art und Weise weiter verschoben durch die Pandemie, die Sie jetzt die letzten zwei Jahre durchlebt haben?

Participant 4-3 25:21

Ja, mit Sicherheit, also mit Sicherheit. Das hat irgendwie, das verschiebt ja nicht alles. Also weil wir, durch die Reisetätigkeit massiv eingebrochen ist, wir natürlich auch riesen Budget-Einsparungen haben an der Stelle und die natürlich auch an solchen P&N bemerkbar machen. Das eben halt die OPEX massiv runtergehen. Gehen wir davon aus, man kommt dann nicht so schnell wieder von weg. Man wird ja nicht davon ausgehen, die alten Budgets wieder einfach freigeben müssen. Das würde ich jetzt auch nicht unbedingt für sinnvoll halten. Und das geht natürlich genauso Marketing-Bereich. Große Budgets, da würde ich eher noch mal, wie man das verschieben kann, weil wir ja auch insbesondere die Kunden noch mal stärker zu uns ran holen wollen. Das ist eine Trend, also noch mehr in die direkte

they get, is it available? That is already very complex, because we tend to keep our raw capital low and not build as many machines as we want. This means that there is always a certain shortage of available trade fair machines. That's where the Competence Centre machines are. Then we have a boom of the year, when customers place orders first. There are bottlenecks. That's how to bring in more transparency from the side, but also from the communicative clarity. So what is my actual direction? What are the best channels to get the message out? Is it really print? Is it only digital? Is it LinkedIn? How do I shift my budgets? That would be what we're already doing, amplified as well. Maybe even more so than elsewhere. Away from print media. We have completely cut away from that and have actually moved everything to digital media and also to search engines and optimisation accordingly. So optimisation, etc.. That's very, we still have room there, we still have room on the tool side and also on the communication side. I want to see that. So these rounds are relatively strongly headquarter-driven and we actually want to take the TG's with us more. We know what we are doing, but the transparency is not always there at all times, let's put it that way.

Understand. Has the shift you just mentioned shifted in any way in terms of print as a result of the pandemic that you have been experiencing for the last two years?

Yes, for sure, for sure. That has somehow, that doesn't postpone everything. Because we've had a massive slump in travel, we've also made huge budget savings in this area, which of course also make themselves felt in the P&Ns. That the OPEX are going down massively. Let's assume that we won't be able to get away from this so quickly. We won't have to simply release the old budgets again. I wouldn't necessarily consider that sensible either. And that goes for the marketing sector as well, of course. Large budgets, I would rather think about how we can shift that, because we want to get more customers in particular to come to us. That's a trend, so we want to go even more into direct interaction. And of course, acceleration

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		<p>Interaktion gehen wollen. Und natürlich sind ist Beschleunigung jetzt, wir reden jetzt ja mit Teams, das ist ja innerhalb von zwei Wochen war das unser neues Tool. Das hat ja nie einer geschult. Ich sage mal das heißt, die gesamte Kommunikation hat sich umgestellt. Wir machen, wir nutzen solche Systeme ja auch für unsere FAT's, also Factor Acceptance Tests. Nutzen sie damit für die Kunden-Kommunikation. Wir haben die Kameras unten ausgebaut. Wir haben also die Möglichkeit heute ein Online-Streaming zu machen. Wir zeigen unseren Kunden in [Country] nur als Beispiel, weil das so schön weit weg ist, heute online unsere gesamte Anlage, die sind mit mehreren Kameras dabei. Wir zoom da rein, wir wegen da rein. Das führt natürlich auch zu einer zu einer kompletten Verlagerung von bisher interaktiven Themen auf die digitale Ebene. Und das setzt sich auch um in Richtung von - wird sich weiter umsetzen in Richtung von Print in Richtung Digital. LinkedIn-Kanäle sind stärker beschickt worden. Das ist jetzt beim [Participant 4-2] auch. Social Media insgesamt sind als Plattformen stärker nach vorne gekommen. Interne Kommunikation haben wir auch völlig neue aufgesetzt. Intranet, Social Media, als auch zum Kunden hin einen stärkeren Fokus draufgegeben.</p>	<p>is now, we are now talking to teams, that is within two weeks, that was our new tool. No one has ever trained it. I would say that means that the entire communication has changed. We also use such systems for our FATs, factor acceptance tests. Use them for customer communication. We have expanded the cameras downstairs. So we have the possibility to do online streaming today. We show our customers in [country], just as an example, because it's so nice and far away, our entire plant online today, they're there with several cameras. We zoom in there, we zoom in because of there. Of course, this also leads to a complete shift from previously interactive topics to the digital level. And that is also converting towards - will continue to convert towards print towards digital. LinkedIn channels have become more popular. It's the same now with [Participant 4-2]. Social media as a whole have become more prominent as platforms. We have also set up completely new internal communication. Intranet, social media, as well as a stronger focus on the customer.</p>
Researcher	27:25	<p>Vielen Dank! Jetzt haben wir schon relativ ausführlich gesprochen über Veränderungen, Kommunikationskanäle, die wichtigsten Touchpoints. Da hatte ich jetzt mitgenommen Messen nach wie vor einen sehr hohen Stellenwert, weil insgesamt die direkte Kommunikation und der Austausch, das Wesentliche aus Ihrer Sicht sind?</p>	<p>Thank you very much! We have already talked in detail about changes, communication channels and the most important touchpoints. I had taken away that trade fairs are still very important, because overall direct communication and exchange are the most important things from your point of view?</p>
Participant 4-3	27:49	<p>Ja, stopp. Messen rückläufige Bedeutung.</p>	<p>Yes, stop. Measure declining importance.</p>
Researcher	27:52	<p>Rückläufiger, okay.</p>	<p>Retrograde, okay.</p>
Participant 4-3	27:53	<p>Rückläufige Bedeutung, eindeutig. Halt klar, das ist immer noch Image-Point, aber sehen wir jetzt mal die [Trade Fair], also eine riesen Messe, die ist jetzt schlecht positioniert dieses Jahr. Die wollen sie jetzt irgendwie im Sommer packen. Da sind die Südländer und die südeuropäischen Länder in den Ferien und auch die südlichen Bundesländer, glaube ich. Da gehen wir gar nicht mit Maschinen rauf. Das haben wir mit der gesamten Industrie zusammen boykottiert. Also im Sinne dessen zu sagen "Ja, wir gehen hier ein Meet and Greet". Aber wir stellen keine Maschine. Und das sind so Punkte, wo ich sage - Wir haben jetzt die [Trade Fair] dreimal verschoben und die [Trade Fair] verschoben. Also das heißt, diese großen Lead-Messen werden nie wieder die Bedeutung bekommen, die sie hatten. Weil</p>	<p>Declining importance, definitely. Sure, it's still an image point, but let's take a look at the [Trade Fair], a huge fair, which is badly positioned this year. They want to pack it somehow in the summer. That's when the southern countries and the southern European countries are on holiday and also the southern German states, I think. We don't go up there with machines at all. We have boycotted that together with the entire industry. So in the sense of saying "Yes, we'll go up here for a meet and greet". But we don't provide a machine. And those are the kind of points where I say - We've now postponed the [Trade Fair] three times and postponed the [Trade Fair]. So that means these big lead fairs will never get the importance they had. Because we</p>

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		wir regionale Messen haben. In [Country] haben wir tatsächlich auch Messen gehabt, wo wirklich ran war, nachdem dort der Corona anders behandelt wurde. Nachdem die Inzidenzen sehr niedrig waren, sind da wirklich die Leute auch wieder rauf gestürmt. Die wollten sich auch wieder treffen. Das ist schon auch spürbar gewesen, aber ich sehe die Messen eindeutig rückläufig an dem Punkt. Weil man heute natürlich über Ersatzangebote, ich kann mit einer Kundengruppe ich kann ja auch 40 Kunden von [Industry] einladen und streamen mit den und die sind überall in der Welt und ich zeige den eine Anlage und wir gehen zwei Stunden durch. Wir haben Zeit, wir können direkt sprechen. Das ist fast so wie Touch and Feel alles. Natürlich wird Messe wird weiter da eine Bedeutung haben, aber eine in meinen Augen rückläufige.	have regional fairs. In [Country] we actually had fairs where really ran after the Corona was treated differently there. After the incidences were very low, people really rushed up there again. They wanted to meet again. That has also been noticeable, but I see the fairs clearly declining at this point. Because today, of course, you can use substitute offers, I can invite 40 customers from [Industry] and stream with them and they are all over the world and I show them a system and we go through it for two hours. We have time, we can talk directly. It's almost like touch and feel everything. Of course, trade fairs will continue to have an importance, but a declining one in my eyes.
Researcher	29:21	Das heißt, diese direkte Interaktion Streaming ist dann ähnlich gleichzusetzen mit den Experience Centern, die Sie angesprochen haben? Das man halt sagt an sich bietet man für die Kundengruppen, die in dem Moment dann nicht physisch vor Ort sein können, genau diese Streamin-Option und Präsenz für die -	That means that this direct streaming interaction is similar to the experience centres you mentioned? You're saying that you offer precisely this streaming option and presence for the customer groups that can't be physically present at the moment -
Participant 4-3	29:42	Ganz genau. -	Exactly. -
Researcher	29:42	...die Möglichkeit haben?	...have the opportunity?
Participant 4-3	29:43	Ganz genau. Das heißt, natürlich wollen wir die Leute eigentlich da haben. Wir haben jetzt gerade wieder eine Kundengruppe da habt, bzw. sind mit den rüber geflogen zu unserem Competence Center nach [Country], weil wir denen etwas spezifisches zeigen wollten. Total begeistert. Das ein Unterschied, wenn du eine Anlage live sind. Sie anfassen und aufmachen kannst. Das ist schon noch der präferierte Weg. Aber das ist so hybrid selling, wie man so schön sagt als Überschrift. Also das ist nicht Hybrid Selling, aber es ist immer dieselbe Erfahrung, die wir hier auch haben. Das ist natürlich Präsenz immer noch toller ist, aber halt nicht immer sich lohnt, wenn man diese neuen Möglichkeiten der Medien nutzt. Und da sind die Competence Center im Zentrum absolut richtig.	Exactly. That means, of course, we actually want to have the people there. We just had another group of customers there, or we flew them over to our Competence Centre in [country], because we wanted to show them something specific. Totally thrilled. It makes a difference when you see a system live. You can touch it and open it up. That is still the preferred way. But this is hybrid selling, as they say, as a headline. So it's not hybrid selling, but it's always the same experience that we have here. Of course, presence is always even better, but it's not always worth it when you use these new media possibilities. And that's where the Competence Centres in the Centre are absolutely right.
Researcher	30:23	Bei all diesen Veränderungen, die Sie angesprochen haben, wo sehen Sie zukünftig Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen ein Kommunikationsbereich haben sollte oder aufbauen sollte?	With all these changes you have mentioned, where do you see skills and competences a communication sector should have or build in the future?
Participant 4-3	30:37	Sie meinen welche wir heute nicht haben, oder? Formulieren Sie bitte noch einmal neu. Ich bin mir unsicher, ob ich sie richtig verstanden habe. Die Kompetenz im Unternehmen?	You mean which ones we don't have today, don't you? Please rephrase. I am unsure if I have understood it correctly. The competence in the company?
Researcher	30:44	Genau, wir haben ja tatsächlich über die ganzen Veränderungen gesprochen, was Kommunikationskanäle und Touchpoints	Exactly, we actually talked about all the changes in terms of communication channels and touchpoints. How you

gerade angeht. Wie Sie den Vertrieb organisieren und dann entsprechend Hybrid Selling etc. betreiben. Und das bringt mich jetzt zu der Frage, ob es Fähigkeiten oder Kompetenzen gibt, die Sie in Zukunft entweder quasi verstärkt sehen, wo man sagt, die müssten wir noch weiter ausbauen oder die vielleicht neu aufkommen, weil sich halt eben die gesamte Kommunikation in Richtung Kunde verändert hat?

Participant 4-3 31:13

Ja, also zum einen haben wir natürlich unmittelbar reagieren müssen und so Leute schulen müssen. Auch zum Beispiel die AFT-Manager, wie sie plötzlich mit Leuten umgehen, die in irgendeinem Raum 5.000 Kilometer entfernt sitzen und teilweise nicht mal ihre Kamera einschalten. Das heißt Kamera-Präsenz, Umgang mit den Medien. Das gilt für alle. Auch für die Vertriebsleute. Also die Professionalität in dem wie tauche ich auf. Sie sehen jetzt ein Hintergrundbild hier. Eine vernünftige Beleuchtung und solche Themen. Damit fing das mal an. Und das ist sicherlich jetzt schon ein no-brainer, wie man so schön sagt, aber das geht ja weiter in der Richtung auch die Kommunikation tatsächlich auszubauen. Man muss anders kommunizieren in solchen Zusammenhang und das auch damit zu verschmelzen mit Produkten, die man vorführt und da das muss. Da müssen wir uns weiter stärken. Im Sinne der Kompetenzen gibt es natürlich andere Felder. Also die vertriebliche Seite haben wir angesprochen. Es gibt hier aber auch natürlich die Frage welche IT und strukturellen Know how Voraussetzungen brauche ich im Unternehmen, um das vernünftig abzubilden? Welche Leute brauche ich eigentlich, um vernünftige Plattform aufzustellen? Zum Beispiel wo man sich wiederfindet, wo ein Käufer vielleicht seine Anlagen wiederfindet, wo er vielleicht seine Experience Präsentation wiederfindet und Ähnliches. Wir sehen einfach an der Stelle, dass die Digitalisierung dann Sinn macht. Also vorne sicherlich, Suspects first, vorne, ganz vorne im Sales Funnel die Kompetenz, die Leute auch zu uns heranzuführen. Und da auch in einen direkten Kontakt zu bringen, aber dann eben halt auch mit modernen Tools den Kunden einen Mehrwert zu geben. Und da müssen wir sicherlich auch unsere IT-Kompetenz ausbauen und die Fähigkeiten, also sprich die strukturellen Voraussetzungen das zu betreuen, das auszubauen nach Möglichkeit vielleicht auch inhouse stärker aufzubauen. Ja, die müssen wir ausbauen, das sehe ich, ja? Also stellt sie sich vor, eine Customer

organise sales and then operate hybrid selling, etc. accordingly. And that brings me to the question of whether there are skills or competences that you see either being strengthened in the future, where you say we need to expand them further, or which are perhaps emerging because the entire communication has changed in the direction of the customer?

Yes, so on the one hand we had to react immediately and train people. Also, for example, the AFT managers, how they suddenly deal with people who are sitting in some room 5,000 kilometres away and sometimes don't even switch on their camera. That means camera presence, dealing with the media. That applies to everyone. Also for the sales people. So the professionalism in how do I show up. You see a background picture here now. Sensible lighting and issues like that. That's where it started. And that is certainly a no-brainer now, as they say, but it goes further in the direction of actually expanding communication. You have to communicate differently in such contexts and also merge that with products that you present and that's what you have to do. We have to strengthen ourselves further. In terms of competences, there are of course other fields. We have already addressed the sales side. But of course there is also the question of which IT and structural know-how requirements do I need in the company in order to map this sensibly? Which people do I actually need to set up a reasonable platform? For example, where you can find yourself, where a buyer can find his investments, where he can find his experience presentation and the like. We simply see at this point that digitalization makes sense. So at the front, certainly, suspects first, at the front, right at the front in the sales funnel, the competence to bring people to us. And to bring them into direct contact, but then also to give the customers added value with modern tools. And we certainly have to expand our IT competence and the skills, i.e. the structural prerequisites to take care of that, to expand that, if possible, perhaps also to build up more in-house. Yes, we have to expand these, I can see that, yes? So imagine a customer experience site where he can sit on it, where he can see his machines, where he can see his performance, where he can order his parts and the like as an

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		<p>Experience Site wo er draufsetzt, wo er seine Maschinen sieht, wo er seine Performance sieht, wo er seine Teile bestellen kann und Ähnliches als ein Beispiel. Das ist ja heute nicht als Existenz. Da arbeiten wir dran, da überlegen wir dran. Und um uns mit den Kunden stärker zu integrieren und die digitalen Plattformen Digital Twin, kennen Sie auch das Schlagwort, halt eben diese Dinge abzubilden.</p>	<p>example. That doesn't exist today. We are working on it, we are thinking about it. And in order to integrate ourselves more strongly with the customers and to map the digital platforms Digital Twin, you know the buzzword, just these things.</p>
Researcher	33:38	<p>Ja, das ist wirklich eine spannende Zeit und eine Entwicklung, die ja jedes Unternehmen in der Hinsicht gerade mit durchmacht. Letzte Frage vielleicht in puncto Kommunikations-Umfang, Kommunikations-Aktivitäten, über die wir jetzt die letzten Minuten gesprochen haben. Gibt es irgendetwas, was Ihnen an Kommunikations-Aktivitäten im Kommunikations-Mix bei Ihnen fehlt? Wo Sie sagen haben wir aufgrund von Ressourcen oder, oder vielleicht noch nicht gemacht, wäre aber extrem relevant, dass wir hier diesen Kanal in Richtung unserer Kunden bedienen.</p>	<p>Yes, this is really an exciting time and a development that every company is going through in this respect. Last question perhaps regarding the scope of communication, communication activities, which we have been talking about for the last few minutes. Is there anything that is missing in your communication activities in the communication mix? Where you say we haven't done it yet because of resources or, or maybe, but it would be extremely relevant that we serve this channel towards our customers here.</p>
Participant 4-3	34:22	<p>Also es fehlt immer was, aber jetzt sind wir also ganz oben auf der Meta-Ebene, würde ich sagen eigentlich nicht. Wir wollen natürlich überlegen einmal wie kann ich das Touch and Feel auch digital transformieren, indem ich eine Maschine drehen kann und Augmented Reality oder ähnliche Geschichten machen. Wir haben ja auch Virtual Reality für Maschinen drin, wo wir auch sagen das ist natürlich extrem teuer, die Maschinen da reinzubringen, das kann ich erfahren, das kann ich irgendwie, dafür muss ich die Maschine nicht dahaben. Extrem teuer, weil wir haben einen Maschinenpark, der muss da erst mal rein in die virtuelle Realität. Das ist nicht, da redet man schon größere Beträge. Das muss ich nicht erläutern, glaube ich. Da sind sicherlich noch Felder, wo wir noch gerne mehr machen würden. Und wir haben mit Sicherheit Schwächen im Bereich von Shops. Also von Anbindung, von digitaler Anbindung vom Kaufen, von Kaufen selber. Also der riesige Rebuy, also einfach sozusagen angebunden zu sein zum Kunden ist das vielleicht nicht kommunikativ. Da verlasse ich schon so ein bisschen den Punkt. Und (-) wir haben bestimmte Kunden-Segmente, in denen wir eigentlich aktiver sein wollen, aber das hat jetzt mit der Kommunikation sicherlich nichts zu tun. Klar wollen wir mehr in den LinkedIn-Channels und ähnlichen Social Media machen, wo halt auch Kunden unterwegs sind. Und wir sind schlecht noch in dem Bereich (--) des Employer Brandings. Da sind wir allerdings auch dran. Und das ist</p>	<p>So there is always something missing, but now we are at the very top of the meta-level, I would say not really. Of course we want to think about how I can digitally transform the touch and feel by turning a machine and doing augmented reality or similar stories. We also have virtual reality for machines, where we also say that it is of course extremely expensive to bring the machines into it, I can experience that, I can do that somehow, I don't have to have the machine there for that. Extremely expensive, because we have a machine park that first has to be brought into virtual reality. That's not, you're already talking about larger amounts. I don't think I need to explain that. There are certainly still fields where we would like to do more. And we certainly have weaknesses in the area of shops. That is, in terms of connectivity, digital connectivity of purchasing, of purchasing itself. So the huge rebuy, simply being connected to the customer, so to speak, is perhaps not communicative. That's where I leave the point a little bit. And (-) we have certain customer segments in which we actually want to be more active, but that certainly has nothing to do with communication. Of course we want to do more in the LinkedIn channels and similar social media, where customers are also on the move. And we are still badly in the area (--) of employer branding. But we are also working on that. And that is certainly</p>

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		sicherlich auch eine kommunikative Schiene, die der [Participant 4-2] erzählt halt, dass wir uns damit auseinandersetzen, wo wir aber noch nicht zufrieden sind, mit dem, was wir machen.	also a communicative track that [Participant 4-2] tells us that we are dealing with, but we are not yet satisfied with what we are doing.
Researcher	36:08	Jetzt haben wir schon ganz, ganz viel gesprochen darüber "Wie kommunizieren sie?", "Wie interagieren Sie?" und so weiter und so fort. Hatten eben noch das Feedback gegeben, dass Messen zum Beispiel eher von der tendenziell rückläufiger Bedeutung haben in dem Kommunikations-Mix, wie Sie mit den Kunden interagieren. Und das bringe ich jetzt ein bisschen zu der Frage: Was beziehen Sie dann aus Ihrer Perspektive in diese Diskussion mit [Participant 4-2] und ähnlichen mit ein, wenn es darum geht eine Entscheidung vielleicht auch zu treffen in puncto "Gehen wir jetzt auf diese Messe oder machen wir eine ganz andere Maßnahme, wie SEO, SEA? Was sind da die Parameter und KPIs, die Ihnen wichtig sind?"	We have already talked a lot about "How do you communicate?", "How do you interact?" and so on. We had just given the feedback that trade fairs, for example, tend to have a declining importance in the communication mix, how you interact with the customers. And that brings me to the question: What do you include from your perspective in this discussion with [Participant 4-2] and similar when it comes to making a decision regarding "Do we go to this trade fair or do we do a completely different measure, such as SEO, SEA? What are the parameters and KPIs that are important to you?"
Participant 4-3	36:51	Ähm, ja, vielleicht erstmal, um konkret zu antworten, wenn ich dann auch noch mal ein bisschen ein größeres Bild werfen, aber ich würde erst mal sagen: Für uns ist am Ende des Tages ein Treiben natürlich unser Geschäftserfolg. Also das heißt, wir schauen, wo sind die größten Hebel, um vielleicht neue Leads zu finden, die ich nicht kenne. Das ist sozusagen der eine Punkt. Also dafür sind die Messen natürlich jetzt vielleicht nicht unbedingt das richtige Segment. Man kennt uns schon so gut. Und natürlich gehen wir dann auch mal auf Messen, wo wir vielleicht sonst nicht waren, um zu sagen und da möchte man uns auch noch mal stärker positionieren. Also das ist schon das eine - Lead-Generation. -	Um, yes, maybe first of all, in order to answer specifically, if I then also throw a bit of a bigger picture, but I would first of all say: For us, at the end of the day, a driving force is of course our business success. So that means we look at where the biggest levers are to perhaps find new leads that I don't know. That is the one point, so to speak. Of course, trade fairs are not necessarily the right segment for this. People already know us so well. And of course we also go to trade fairs where we haven't been before to say that we would like to position ourselves more strongly there. So that's one thing - lead generation. -
Researcher	37:35	Ja. -	Yes. -
Participant 4-3	37:35	Also wirklich zu sagen wie komme ich irgendwie, wie kriege ich nun neue Suspects / Prospects irgendwie zu fassen, die ich sonst nicht habe? Wobei im Kern qualifizieren wir massiv immer Neukunden. Wir gehen also raus und gucken, wo wir neue Segmente? Kennen wir die alle und werfen, werfen das darauf. Das muss ich nicht unbedingt eine Messe haben. Also ein Zufall, wer da vorbeiläuft. Also das heißt deswegen auch die Messen sind für Lead-Generation eigentlich nicht der richtig ideale Platz. Da kommt nämlich eher die zweite Frage rein. Ich weiß nicht, ob Sie jetzt bei der Messe gekommen sind oder insgesamt? Ich glaube Sie hat Messen jetzt gesagt?	So really saying how do I somehow, how do I now somehow get hold of new suspects / prospects that I don't otherwise have? In essence, we always qualify new customers. So we go out and see where we can find new segments? Do we know them all and throw, throw that at them. I don't necessarily have to have a trade fair. So it's a coincidence who walks by there. So that means that trade fairs are not really the ideal place for lead generation. That's where the second question comes in. I don't know whether you came at the trade fair or all in all? I think she said trade fairs now?
Researcher	38:07	Also Messe war der Absprungpunkt, aber gerne insgesamt.	So trade fair was the jumping-off point, but gladly overall.
Participant 4-3	38:10	Okay, insgesamt. Wir wollen natürlich also unser Geschäft entwickeln und möglichst	Okay, overall. So of course we want to develop our business and win as many

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viele Projekte gewinnen und dafür müssen wir erst mal alle kennen und dann müssen wir nach Möglichkeit auch erfolgreich sein. Das ist der eine Treiber, der immer eine große Rolle spielt. Der zweite ist Image. Also wir haben an der Stelle ein sehr starkes Image aufgebaut in den letzten Jahren und auch da spielen Messen natürlich eine große Rolle. Weil da geht es auch darum, wie ist denn die Perzeption im Markt und wir sind, wie gesagt, das soll nicht arrogant klingen, aber wir sind nun mal einfach - das ist ja nicht üblich in einer Branche, dass jemand x-mal größer ist als der nächste - also wir sind relativ dominant, sozusagen. Und das führt dazu, man kennt uns und man hat bestimmte Sicht auf uns. Und diese Sicht, das ist eben halt dann ein tolles Unternehmen, total innovativ, total kundenorientiert, freundlich, nett, sympathisch. Also das ganze Image zu transportieren ist der weitere große Treiber, weil das - wir sind ja auch Preisführer, wir müssen preiswert sein. Ich glaube Sie sind glaube ich gut genug auszubildet, um zu wissen, was das bedeutet. Bedeutet nicht, dass wir, das heißt, dass wir diejenigen sein müssen, weil die müssen günstiger sein als wir quasi. Wir müssen also die Preise erhöhen, weil, wenn wir es nicht tun, kann das eigentlich keiner Keiner, weil die zu wenig Differenzierungsfaktor haben. Also wir sind technologisch ja auf weit. Also das heißt, wir müssen an dieser Stelle den Pase setzen. Und solche Themen kannst du natürlich auch nur, wenn du ein bestimmtes Image hast, ja? Wenn die Leute sagen wie ein iPhone, das will ich haben. [Company 4] das möchte ich haben. Sie haben unsere Maschinen gesehen, die sind designed, die sind hübsch. Das haben alle nachgemacht. Das gab es aber gar nicht. Wir sind die ersten gewesen vor [quantity] Jahren. Die diese diese [Product] gebaut haben, [colours]. Haben in der Zwischenzeit fast alle nachgemacht. Das heißt, wir sind diejenigen, die auch ein Image kreieren und die Industrie auch in bestimmte Richtung vorantreiben. Und dafür sind Messen sehr wichtig. Und andere Sachen natürlich auch. Also Image spielt für uns eine Rolle. Also die Perzeption unseres Unternehmens. Das sind die beiden Haupttreiber. Ich würde jetzt wahrscheinlich, wahrscheinlich vergesse ich gerade irgendwas Wichtiges, aber natürlich mich interessiert halt die Geschäftsentwicklung. Das kommt aus der Strategie, das Ganze. Also wir agieren hier im Vertrieb, nicht verkaufsorientiert. Wir sind hier keine Verkaufsorganisation, wir sind eine Vertriebsorganisation. Das heißt

projects as possible and for that we first have to know everyone and then we have to be successful if possible. That is the one driver that always plays a big role. The second is image. We have built up a very strong image in the last few years, and trade fairs naturally play a big role here too. Because it's also about how the market perceives us and, as I said, I don't want to sound arrogant, but we are simply - it's not usual in an industry for someone to be x times bigger than the next person - so we are relatively dominant, so to speak. And that means that people know us and have a certain view of us. And this view is that we are a great company, totally innovative, totally customer-oriented, friendly, nice, likeable. So transporting the whole image is the other big driver, because that - we are also the price leader, we have to be good value for money. I think you are well enough educated to know what that means. Doesn't mean that we, that means that we have to be the ones, because they have to be cheaper than us, so to speak. So we have to raise prices, because if we don't do it, nobody can actually do it, because they have too little differentiation factor. We are a long way ahead technologically. That means we have to set the pace at this point. And of course you can only do that if you have a certain image, right? When people say, like an iPhone, I want to have that. [Company 4] I want to have that. They've seen our machines, they're designed, they're pretty. Everybody imitated that. But there was no such thing. We were the first ones [quantity] years ago. Who built these [product], [colours]. In the meantime, almost everyone has copied it. That means we are the ones who create an image and push the industry in a certain direction. And for that, trade fairs are very important. And other things too, of course. So image plays a role for us. So the perception of our company. Those are the two main drivers. I would probably forget something important right now, but of course I'm interested in business development. That comes from the strategy, the whole thing. So we operate here in sales, not sales-oriented. We are not a sales organisation here, we are a sales organisation. So that means I am there. That's why I also have product management, but with my device and I'm always very strictly coordinated with [Participant 4-2], because we don't want to act in the short term. We

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also, ich bin da. Deswegen habe ich auch das Produkt Management, aber mit meinem Gerät und bin immer sehr streng mit dem [Participant 4-2] abgestimmt, weil wir wollen nicht kurzfristig agieren. Wir agieren eigentlich strategisch und gucken welche neuen Geschäftsfelder kommen und versuchen an der Stelle, also auch im Aufbauprozess zu machen oder eine Veränderung einer Branche frühzeitig zu antizipieren und dann die entsprechenden Produkte dahin zu bringen und gegebenenfalls die Kunden auch mitzunehmen. Also die Veränderung selber aktiv voranzutreiben, nicht zu warten, bis die Kunden kommen. Und insofern ist die Kommunikation an der Stelle auch immer (-) das Abbild unserer Strategie. Jetzt sind wir weit genug. Wir entscheiden uns, das auch noch aktiv nach außen zu bringen. Teilweise machen wir es auch nur bilateral. Also bestimmte Positionierung bringt wir nur bilateral raus, weil wir die für zu sensibel empfinden. Das müssen wir im Wettbewerb nicht erzählen, was wir machen, weil die kopieren ja sowieso irgendwann alles. Mehr auf Papier als real. Das können die nicht, weil die sind nicht groß genug, dass alles so eins zu eins immer dem zu folgen. Aber sie kriegen dann die Ideen und dann ist, wenn man drei Jahre später haben sie dann denselben Claim. Und also aus der Strategie folgend, ist es natürlich einfach der Vertriebsfolg und am Ende als weicher Faktor, das Image das trägt. Das sind die beiden Hauptbilder, die ich jetzt mal hatte.

Researcher 41:42

Verstehe, machen macht Sinn. Jetzt habe ich die Kollegen immer noch zusätzlich gefragt, wo das strategische Wissen durchaus mit herkommt. Man kann ja sagen Vertrieb-Know-how, Erfahrung und so weiter und so fort. -

Participant 4-3 41:59

Ich muss einmal noch unterbrechen. Jetzt wo ich nachdenke, fällt mir auf, dass was immer wichtiger wird, ist auch die Kundenbindung. Also das heißt, wir versuchen auch unsere Kommunikation in die Richtung zu bringen oder zu verändern. Unsere Kommunikationsstrategie, das ist ja ihr Thema, zu verändern. Also ich muss nicht irgendwie wild in einen Wald rufen. Ich kann auch den einzelnen Baum ansprechen. Und diese Kommunikation verändert sich also auch dahin, dass wir, deshab habe ich auch gesagt, wir gehen weg von dem Messen, weil da spreche ich irgendwie, was ich ausspreche, spreche ich zum Wettbewerb. Das ist ja auch ein Tummelplatz des Wettbewerbs. Jeder sieht, was der andere macht. Wir gehen also immer stärker auch in die bilaterale Beziehung oder

actually act strategically and look at which new business areas are coming and try to do that at that point, i.e. also in the development process, or to anticipate a change in an industry at an early stage and then bring the corresponding products there and, if necessary, also take the customers with us. In other words, to actively promote the change itself, not to wait until the customers come. And in this respect, communication at this point is also always (-) the reflection of our strategy. Now we are far enough. We decide to actively communicate this to the outside world. In part, we only do it bilaterally. We only put certain positions out bilaterally because we feel they are too sensitive. We don't have to tell the competition what we do, because they copy everything anyway. More on paper than in reality. They can't do that because they're not big enough to follow everything one-to-one. But then they get the ideas and three years later they have the same claim. And so, following from the strategy, it is of course simply the sales success and in the end, as a soft factor, the image that carries. Those are the two main images that I had.

I see, making sense. Now I have always asked my colleagues where the strategic knowledge comes from. You could say sales know-how, experience and so on and so forth. -

I have to interrupt once more. Now that I'm thinking about it, it occurs to me that what is becoming increasingly important is customer loyalty. So that means we are also trying to bring our communication in that direction or to change it. To change our communication strategy, that's your topic. So I don't have to call out wildly into a forest. I can also address the individual tree. And this communication is also changing in the direction that we, that's why I also said, we are moving away from trade fairs, because there I somehow speak, what I say, I say to the competition. That is also a playground for competition. Everyone sees what the others are doing. So we are also going more and more into the bilateral relationship or multilateral relationship

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		<p>multilaterale Beziehung und versuchen dann multilateral. Wir machen ein Event hier und laden unsere Kunden ein. Ganz gezielt. Mit dem [Industry] Circle sagen, wir sprechen über die Zukunft der [Industry]-Industrie mit exklusiven Kunden, ausgesuchten Kunden, mit denen wir auch in Workshops gehen und so weiter. Das ist multilateral oder bilateral. Wir laden weltweit [Customer] ein für ein Streaming Event und dann nur für euch. Also das sind die, das sind die Trends, die ich sehe. Die dann natürlich auch die Kommunikation verändern und die auch dann Kundenbindung und Intensivierung der Kundenbindung ist und auch ein Marketing-Ziel, ein Kommunikations-Ziel.</p>	<p>and then trying multilateral. We do an event here and invite our customers. Very specifically. With the [Industry] Circle saying we talk about the future of the [Industry] industry with exclusive customers, selected customers, with whom we also go to workshops and so on. That's multilateral or bilateral. We invite [customers] worldwide for a streaming event and then just for you. So these are the, these are the trends that I see. These are the trends that I see, which of course also change communication and which are also customer loyalty and intensification of customer loyalty and also a marketing goal, a communication goal.</p>
Researcher	43:18	<p>Ja, vielen Dank für die Ergänzung. Dann schließe ich da direkt noch einmal eine Frage an. Sie sagen, das sind die Trends, die Sie sehen. Haben Sie ein konkretes Beispiel, an dem Sie, wie soll ich sagen, für mich als Außenstehenden vielleicht konkreter beschreiben könnten, wie Sie da Stepp by Stepp vorgehen und sich in Richtung Zielbild entwickeln? Wir hatten übers Streamings gesprochen, die Experience Center. Wie kann ich mir das vorstellen? Wie beabsichtigen Sie da vielleicht auch über die nächsten zwei, drei Jahre dann voranzuschreiten?</p>	<p>Yes, thank you very much for the addition. Then I will directly follow up with another question. You say that these are the trends that you see. Do you have a concrete example that you could, how shall I put it, for me as an outsider, perhaps describe more concretely how you are proceeding step by step and developing in the direction of the target image? We talked about streaming, the Experience Centre. How can I imagine that? How do you intend to move forward over the next two or three years?</p>
Participant 4-3	43:54	<p>Ich denke mal, das ist im Grunde eine dauerhafte Diskussion über den richtigen Weg in der Kommunikation. Wenn wir zum Beispiel, wenn jetzt das Jahr ansteht und wir sagen, wir haben einen Lauf und wir haben eine Messe, dann überlegen wir an der Stelle und wir haben eine organisatorische Weiterentwicklung, dass wir halt jetzt auch im Sinne der Kundenbindung stärker uns kommunikativ auch bewegen. Dann überlegen wir, mit welchem Vehicle kommen wir denn jetzt eigentlich von A nach B und das entwickelt sich dann weiter. Und das geht dann vielleicht dahin zu sagen: Wir machen lieber ein In-house Event. Oder wir machen statt einer großen Messe jetzt mit viel Geld rauszugehen, weil das eben halt - das kommt dann aus dem Zielbild. Zu sagen "Was wollen wir eigentlich?". Wenn ich ein bestimmtes Produkt verkaufe, dann könnte es theoretisch dann sein, wo ich sage Das betrifft die gesamte [Industry], ich muss die alle erreichen ganze breit. Dann würde ich anders, als zu sagen das ist jetzt eigentlich etwas, was für ein relativ kleiner [Industry]-Circle überhaupt nur sich jetzt schon zu diesem Zeitpunkt auf seine Budget-Planung schreiben kann, weil das halt teuer ist, speziell ist oder wie auch immer. Dann agiere ich auch anders. Das heißt, ich komme aus den Zielen des Jahres, aber auch der Strategie sozu</p>	<p>I think this is basically a permanent discussion about the right way to communicate. For example, when the year is coming up and we say we have a run and we have a trade fair, then we consider at that point and we have a further organisational development that we now also move more strongly in terms of communication in the sense of customer loyalty. Then we think about which vehicle we actually use to get from A to B, and that develops further. And then we might say: we'd rather do an in-house event. Or we go out with a lot of money instead of a big trade fair, because that's just - that comes out of the target picture. To say "What do we really want? If I sell a certain product, then theoretically it could be that I say, "This concerns the entire [industry], I have to reach all of them broadly. Then I would act differently than saying this is actually something that a relatively small [industry] circle can only write down on its budget planning at this point, because it is expensive, special or whatever. Then I also act differently. That means I come from the goals of the year, but also from the strategy, so to speak. So from the appropriate strategy, from the annual goal, comes the individual product categories that I have in it, the positioning that I have,</p>

sagen. Also aus der passenden Strategie, aus dem Jahresziel, kommt dann eben die einzelnen Produktkategorien, die ich drin habe, die Positionierung, die ich habe, übersetze ich das dann runter. In die Richtung zu sagen, mit welchem Methoden, mit welcher Kommunikation komme ich da hin? Kann also, da wird [Participant 4-2] einen Vorschlag machen und sagt dann irgendwie "Da lass uns auf alle Fälle der Kampagne nochmal in Printmedien, weil wir haben eine gute Beziehungen zum Verlag und mit denen machen wir dann auch noch mal einen tollen Event und unterstützen das auch". Und die haben auch eine Online-Plattform und die laden wir dann auch wieder ein. Also, dass das dann eben sozusagen trägt. Das ich dann tatsächlich auch bei Printmedien dann bin, bleibe in gewisser Weise, weil die haben natürlich auch ihre digitalen Seiten, weil die eben halt auch einen Multiplikator-Effekt haben. Oder aber wir sagen, wir machen was anderes. Also was wird aus dem Ziel heraus definiert? Also das ist keine unabhängige Geschichte, sondern eigentlich immer ein Derivat aus unseren Zielen. Also Absatz und strategischen Positionierungsthemen für das Jahr. Und das Jahr ist immer so - wir haben eine fünf Jahre Strategie, [eine] drei Jahresplanung und das Jahr hat da eigentlich immer eine Stoßrichtung. So weißt man also schon, was danach kommt.

Researcher 46:19

Ja, verstehe. Jetzt haben Sie zwei Aspekte angesprochen, die mich zu der Frage bringen. Als Sie dann noch mal den dritten Aspekt hinterher geschoben hatten. Nämlich [Participant 4-2], den Sie jetzt angesprochen hatten, der bringt diese Impulse rein in puncto "Lass uns doch vielleicht noch mal Print machen oder ähnliches"? Oder antizipieren Sie vielleicht auch bestimmte Kommunikations-, Marketing-Trends aus, ich weiß nicht, wissenschaftlicher Theorie, Marketing-Theorie, externe Quellen, Beratungs-Agenturen, mit denen Sie zusammenarbeiten oder, oder?

and then I translate that down. In the direction of saying, with which methods, with which communication can I get there? So [Participant 4-2] can make a suggestion and then somehow says, "Let's definitely run the campaign again in print media, because we have good relations with the publishing house and we'll do another great event with them and support that too". And they also have an online platform and we invite them again. So that this then carries the day, so to speak. I actually stay with the print media in a certain way, because of course they also have their digital pages, because they also have a multiplier effect. Or we say we'll do something else. So what is defined by the goal? Well, that's not an independent story, but actually always a derivative of our goals. So sales and strategic positioning themes for the year. And the year is always like this - we have a five-year strategy, [a] three-year plan and the year always has a thrust. So you already know what's coming after that.

Yes, I see. Now you have mentioned two aspects that bring me to the question. When you then added the third aspect. Namely [Participant 4-2], whom you had now addressed, who brings in these impulses in terms of "Let's maybe do print again or something similar"? Or do you perhaps also anticipate certain communication and marketing trends from, I don't know, scientific theory, marketing theory, external sources, consulting agencies that you work with or, or?

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Participant 4-3 46:58

Jeder bringt sich da ein. Das sind sicherlich immer verschiedenste Quellen. Also (–) ja, wie soll ich das sagen? Natürlich kommen auch Vorschläge aus dem Vertrieb zu sagen "Ich möchte zu dieser Messe", weil wir ein Business Development haben. Das kommt ja von uns zu sagen, "ja, dann lasst uns auf diese Messe". Immer ganz primitiv das zu sagen. Oder wir sagen wir wollen jetzt diese Messe nicht mehr so groß. Wir wollen das Geld dafür gar nicht ausgeben, weil wir glauben, dass das Ziel an der Stelle, das zu viel Geld pro Lead da investiert wir das Image-Thema wir auch mit weniger Geld erreichen. Und dann gibt es natürlich solche Themen wie das wird dann von verschiedenen vorangetrieben, die affiner sind. Also das kommt aus allen Mitarbeiterinnen, die LinkedIn-affiner sind und die dann da sich tummeln und dann plötzlich dann kommt da quasi etwas, wo das Marketing quasi noch hinterhergeeilt ist, am Anfang, weil in irgendeiner bestimmten Region wird etwas getan. Region hat ein tolles Format entwickelt oder so was. Und das sind, dass wir dann auch noch mal noch mal setzen wollen. Meistens ist es immer sehr Headquarter-zentrisch, aber wir haben auch teilweise gute Ideen in den Ländern und natürlich haben wir auch alle unsere Ohren und Augen offen und wir lesen mal, machen wir Fortbildung oder ähnliches. In dem Sinne, dass was - ich konnte mal, was die Amerikaner jetzt massiv gemacht, wie schon gesagt, die kommen eben halt auch über neue Tools. Die gehen auch über die Google-Suche noch mal raus und versuchen irgendwie den Funnel zu öffnen und noch mehr Leads zu generieren und das zu automatisieren und das zu integrieren. Und das dann halt auch automatisch in die Website zu bundle und dann halt auch ins CRM rein. Diese Themen. Wir haben jetzt gerade. Ich gebe Ihnen ein Beispiel, wenn Sie sagen. Ich haben gerade einen kurze Kontakt zu [Software vendor] gehabt, die haben wir uns mal angeschaut, was die eigentlich bieten im Sinne von Kundenzufriedenheit. Die Touchpoints aufzunehmen, die verschiedenen Geschichten. Das das kam jetzt über - gleichzeitig hatte ich das auf dem Tablet mit unseres Präsidenten [Region], auch einen Kontakt hatte. [Weiß gar nicht], wer zuerst und haben dann eben all das zusammengebracht und überlegen, wie wir das in die Tool-Landschaft einbauen. Das läuft über verschiedenste Quellen. Also ist das nicht einseitig und da ist auch die - wenn jemand eine tolle Idee habe, dann kommt die auf den Tisch, egal woher die kommt.

Everyone gets involved. There are certainly always different sources. So (-) yes, how should I put it? Of course, there are also suggestions from the sales department to say "I would like to go to this fair" because we have a business development department. That comes from us saying, "yes, then let's go to this fair". It's always a very primitive thing to say. Or we say we don't want this fair to be so big anymore. We don't want to spend the money on it at all, because we believe that the goal at that point, which is too much money per lead invested there, we can also achieve the image theme with less money. And then, of course, there are topics like this that are driven forward by different people who have a greater affinity. So that comes from all the employees who are more affine to LinkedIn and who then cavort there and then suddenly something comes along where marketing is still lagging behind, so to speak, at the beginning, because something is being done in some particular region. The region has developed a great format or something. And these are things that we then want to set again. Most of the time it's always very headquarters-centric, but we also have some good ideas in the countries and of course we all have our ears and eyes open and we read, we do training or something like that. In the sense that what - I could say what the Americans have now done massively, as I said, they also come via new tools. They also go out again via Google search and somehow try to open the funnel and generate even more leads and to automate and integrate that. And then to automatically bundle that into the website and then also into the CRM. These topics. We have right now. I'll give you an example if you say. I just had a short contact with [software vendor], we took a look at what they actually offer in terms of customer satisfaction. Taking in the touchpoints, the different stories. That came over now - at the same time I had that on the tablet with our president [region], also had a contact. [Don't know] who first and then just brought all of that together and are thinking about how we incorporate that into the tool landscape. This is done through various sources. So it's not one-sided and there's also the - if someone has a great idea, it comes to the table, no matter where it comes from.

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Researcher	49:36	Hätte ja sein können, dass so was immer formulierter oder strukturierter abläuft im Sinne von es gibt regelmäßig was nicht Innovations-Meetings oder Austausch-Meetings, um halt mal genau diesen externen Blick, neue Tools, neue Möglichkeiten vorgestellt zu bekommen.	It could have been that such things would have been more and more formulated or structured, in the sense that there would have been regular non-innovation meetings or exchange meetings in order to get precisely this external view, new tools, new possibilities.
Participant 4-3	49:53	Nein, das haben wir nicht. Also wir haben diese Runden miteinander, aber wir haben keine Marketing- oder Kommunikation-Innovation-Runde oder so etwas. Das gibt es bei uns nicht.	No, we don't have that. So we have these rounds with each other, but we don't have a marketing or communication innovation round or anything like that. We don't have that.
Researcher	50:09	Gut, ich habe im Wesentlichen tatsächlich damit jetzt alle Fragen gestellt gehabt, die ich sonst auch in dem Interview Guide mal so runter geschrieben habe. Wie gesagt das ist ja auch immer nur eine Struktur gewesen, um sich an bestimmten Fragestellungen lang zu hangeln. Wir haben jetzt gesprochen zum einen über den Prozess. Also wie gehen Sie daran? Wie nehmen Sie die Planung vor? Wie ergeben sich auch Ansätze zur Weiterentwicklung? Wir haben gesprochen über welche Informationen beziehen Sie ein? Wie gehen Sie dort ins Detail? Und in diesem Zusammenhang ist spontan jetzt noch eine letzte Frage. Sie haben eben das Thema Kosten pro Lead angesprochen. Ist das eine Steuerungsgröße, auf die Sie auch zwischendurch mal schauen, wenn Sie mal Optionen A mit B vergleichen?	Well, essentially I have now asked all the questions that I would otherwise have written down in the interview guide. As I said, this has always been just a structure to get to grips with certain questions. We have now talked about the process. So how do you go about it? How do you plan? How do you also develop approaches for further development? We have talked about what information do you include? How do you go into detail? And in this context, I have one last question. You just mentioned the topic of costs per lead. Is that a control parameter that you also look at now and then when you compare options A with B?
Participant 4-3	50:53	Ja schon, aber mit Vorsicht und mit Bedacht, weil die meisten, also das System, das kann also mit Sicherheit kann es keine einzige Steuerungsgröße sein. Das kann ja nicht zählen. Da kann du keine Messe mehr machen. Also das kriege ich billiger hin. Deswegen sage ich auch Image. Aber absolut, das guckt man dann schon noch mal an. Wie viele Leute haben dann - also wir messen immer auf unseren Messen, wie viel neue Projekte, wie viel neue Kunden, etc., etc.. Wie viele Projekte insgesamt dazu diskutiert werden. Auf so viele Leads kommen da auch gar nicht auf so einer Messe, weil wir ein sehr fokussiertes Portfolio haben. Also die kennen uns alle. Also da gibt es viele Unternehmen, die haben ein breiteres Portfolio und die haben viel mehr Leads, weil sie viel breitere Schichten der [Industry] einstecken. Da kommt einer aus der [Field of activity] und einer aus [Field of activity] und einer aus [Field of activity]. Das ist bei uns im Hause relativ klar. Insofern sind es so viele nicht. Und das ist eine Größe, die wir anschauen, aber mit Sicherheit nicht die einzige. Und es ist auch nicht so formalisiert, dass wir jetzt sozusagen das könnte man als Schwäche sind. Wir sagen ja, dann, dann und dann,	Yes, but with care and caution, because most of them, that is, the system, cannot be a single control variable. That can't count. You can't do a trade fair there. So I can do it cheaper. That's why I say image. But absolutely, you have to look at that again. How many people have - well, we always measure at our fairs how many new projects, how many new customers, etc., etc.? How many projects are discussed in total. We don't get that many leads at a trade fair because we have a very focused portfolio. So they all know us. There are many companies that have a broader portfolio and have many more leads, because they have much broader layers of the [industry]. There's one from the [Field of activity] and one from [Field of activity] and one from [Field of activity]. That is relatively clear in our house. So there are not that many. And that's one variable we look at, but it's certainly not the only one. And it's not so formalised that we could say that it's a weakness. We say yes, then, then, then, then and then. There are people who are more marketing people. Our president [region] is also a marketing man. I come from that as well. I know

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		<p>dann, dann und dann. Es gibt Leute, die sind mehr Marketing-Mann. Unser Präsident [Region] ist auch ein Marketing-Mann. Ich komme ja auch aus dem. Ich kenne das auch. Habe es früher immer gerechnet - Kosten pro Lead. Und ich weiß auch, wie die ungefähr liegen. Aber dafür sind wir auch als Unternehmen zu klein, als dass wir das zu sehr formalisieren. Aber [Company] muss das natürlich ganz anders machen, weil sonst hast du gar keinen Überblick mehr in einem großen Konzern und oder in einer Sparte des Konzerns oder bei [Company] ist es vielleicht ähnlich. Wir sind ja hier in einer Größenordnung eines, man würde sagen großer Mittelständler, aber manche Mittelständler haben ja 15.000 Leute und sind Mittelständler. Muss man nicht glauben, dass es mittelständlerisch ist. Wir sind tatsächlich Mittelständler, wir haben [quantity] Mitarbeiter. Also insofern darf man nicht vergessen. Das ist ungefähr so unsere Größe. Das ist noch ein Unterschied und da kann man, da muss man nicht alles so sehr formulieren. Ich will noch eine Idee noch mitgeben. Weiß nicht, ob es relevant ist für Ihre Arbeit. Aber unsere unser Live-Events im Jahr sind auch meistens die, an denen wir unsere Kommunikationsstrategie schärfen, also weiterentwickeln. Weil da kommt immer eine Deadline, da kommt irgendwie eine große Messe, ein Event, was auch immer und dann noch mal hin und schärfen noch mal unsere Kommunikations-Aussagen. Also als Pyramide, als Kernaussage, als Positionierung. Das passiert immer anhand der wichtigsten Events im Jahr. -</p>	<p>that as well. Used to calculate it - cost per lead. And I also know what they are approximately. But we are too small a company to formalise that too much. But [Company] has to do it differently, of course, because otherwise you wouldn't have an overview in a large group or in a division of the group, or maybe it's similar at [Company]. We are on the scale of what you would call a large medium-sized company, but some medium-sized companies have 15,000 people and are medium-sized companies. You don't have to believe that it's medium-sized. We are in fact a medium-sized company, we have [a large number of] employees. So in that respect you mustn't forget. That is roughly our size. That's another difference and you can't, you don't have to formulate everything so much. I want to add one more idea. I don't know if it's relevant to your work. But our live events in the year are usually the ones where we sharpen our communication strategy, that is, where we develop it further. Because there's always a deadline, there's always a big trade fair, an event, whatever, and then we go back and sharpen our communication statements again. As a pyramid, as a core statement, as a positioning. This always happens on the basis of the most important events of the year. -</p>
Researcher	53:25	Okay. -	Okay. -
Participant 4-3	53:25	Weil das sozusagen auch leitet. Das ist dann der Leitstern, an dem dann auch die nächste Stufe der Kommunikation, die Weiterentwicklung, meistens stattfindet.	Because that also guides us, so to speak. That is then the guiding star against which the next stage of communication, the further development, usually takes place.
Researcher	53:37	Ja, vielen Dank für die Insights! Mir hat es sehr viel Freude bereitet und ich freue mich wirklich, dass ich jetzt hier dann mit einem vollständigen Bild in die Analyse gehen kann und hoffe, dass im Nachgang dann vielleicht noch zwei, drei hilfreiche Tipps auch für Sie rausfallen, wenn ich die Unterlagen dann mit [Participant 4-2] geteilt habe.	Yes, thank you very much for the insights! I enjoyed it very much and I am really happy that I can now go into the analysis here with a complete picture and hope that maybe two or three helpful tips will also fall out for you afterwards when I have shared the documents with [Participant 4-2].
Participant 4-3	54:01	Super.	Super.
Researcher	54:02	Viel Erfolg fürs kommende Geschäftsjahr.	Good luck for the coming business year.
Participant 4-3	54:03	Ja, danke. Für Sie auch. Ich wünsche, ich drücke die Daumen. Sie haben, glaube ich ja gesagt, Ende es Halbjahr sollten Sie fertig sein. Das Sie die Zeit finden, ist ja nicht ganz einfach. Die Doppelbelastung zu haben. -	Yes, thank you. For you too. I wish, I keep my fingers crossed. I think you said that you should be finished by the end of the semester. It's not easy for you to find the time. Having the double
Researcher	54:16	Das stimmt schon.	burden. - That's true.

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Participant 4-3	54:16	Ist schon nicht easy, aber irgendwann haben Sie das Ding dann vom Tisch und dann muss man natürlich auch was für sich persönlich einen Schritt weiter und hat mal wieder irgendeine Stufe gemacht. In dem Sinne viel Erfolg dabei. Genau, und wenn noch was auftaucht, dann melden sich einfach und ansonsten freue ich mich dann auf Ihre Feedbacks.	It's not easy, but at some point you'll have taken the thing off the table and then, of course, you'll have to take a step forward for yourself and you'll have taken another step. In that sense, good luck with it. Exactly, and if something else comes up, then just get in touch and otherwise I look forward to your feedback.
Researcher	54:33	Ja, sehr gerne. Einen schönen Tag und auf Wiederhören.	Yes, with pleasure. Have a nice day and goodbye.
Participant 4-3	54:37	Ja, schöne Woche. Tschüss.	Yes, have a nice week. Bye.
Researcher	54:38	Tschüss.	Bye.

Appendix 16 – Participants interest in results

Appendix 16 – Participants interest in results

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
Company 1	Participant 1-3	46:27	"Namely, I would actually be interested to know if there would be something in the area of strategic marketing communication channels that you would recommend. As input, so to speak, for that. You don't always have to reinvent everything. But are there companies that are best in class in this respect? Or are there companies that have the right processes for this? That I would say is always being looked at, how to develop it further, so to speak?"
Company 2	Participant 2-2	01:07:47	"I can also only offer that if there are any unanswered questions or if there is still a topic that needs to be looked at in more detail, please get in touch. We can certainly squeeze in more than half an hour or so."
Company 2	Participant 2-3	01:01:53	"I'm curious to see what he comes up with in the end. I hope you share your final results with us."
Company 2	Participant 2-4	22:40	"All good. I'll keep my fingers crossed for you. When it's finished, please send me your thesis. I'd like to take a look at it."
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:23:43	"I'm already looking forward to it. Thank you very much!"
Company 3	Participant 3-2	01:02:29	"No. I think we were already quite detailed. Of course, I am curious about the results. What comes out of it, because as I said, I always like to look left and right and I'm always grateful when somehow what I also say is illuminated in more detail and then broken down, including derivations. I'm always a real fan of that. And then, of course, to see to what extent we can use this for our organisations or beyond. It's an exciting topic. That's why I'm always happy to answer questions."
Company 3	Participant 3-3	59:20	"All right. When you're practically through, you could present the results to us, couldn't you?"
Company 4	Participant 4-3	54:16	"In that sense, good luck with it. Exactly, and if anything else comes up, just get in touch and otherwise I look forward to your feedback."
Company 4	Participant 4-4	01:04:36	"Many thanks from our side, of course, and we are looking forward to the results."
Company 5	Participant 5-2	01:12:44	"Thanks, I'm looking forward to it and then have fun with it."
Company 5	Participant 5-3	51:03	"Very nice. Good theme in any case."
Company 6	Participant 6-1	01:02:55	"I'd love to. I'd be very interested. All the best. A good course."
Company 6	Participant 6-3	01:13:25	"I'm glad to hear from you and wish you every success and that we all apply the things you find out. That things go even better."

Appendix 17 – Organisational structure – Statement references

Appendix 17 – Organisational structure – Statement references

Main reference: Interview Guide question 4

Company	Participant	Time code
Company 1	Participant 1-1	07:17
Company 1	Participant 1-3	03:48
Company 1	Participant 1-3	04:31
Company 1	Participant 1-3	06:09
Company 1	Participant 1-4	02:13
Company 1	Participant 1-4	03:20
Company 2	Participant 2-1	04:08
Company 2	Participant 2-2	00:47
Company 2	Participant 2-2	10:45
Company 2	Participant 2-3	11:00
Company 2	Participant 2-3	11:23
Company 2	Participant 2-3	12:21
Company 2	Participant 2-4	01:32
Company 3	Participant 3-1	00:36
Company 3	Participant 3-1	05:15
Company 3	Participant 3-1	07:50
Company 3	Participant 3-2	07:09
Company 3	Participant 3-2	17:25
Company 3	Participant 3-2	17:59
Company 3	Participant 3-3	03:40
Company 3	Participant 3-4	00:18
Company 3	Participant 3-4	02:43
Company 3	Participant 3-4	13:15
Company 4	Participant 4-1	00:18
Company 4	Participant 4-1	02:47
Company 4	Participant 4-2	04:36
Company 4	Participant 4-2	05:15
Company 4	Participant 4-3	00:19
Company 4	Participant 4-3	02:37

Company	Participant	Time code
Company 4	Participant 4-3	09:31
Company 4	Participant 4-4	00:18
Company 4	Participant 4-4	04:46
Company 5	Participant 5-1	07:46
Company 5	Participant 5-1	08:31
Company 5	Participant 5-1	11:50
Company 5	Participant 5-2	01:23
Company 5	Participant 5-2	46:33
Company 5	Participant 5-2	58:02
Company 5	Participant 5-2	58:15
Company 5	Participant 5-2	01:07:30
Company 5	Participant 5-3	08:52
Company 6	Participant 6-1	04:38
Company 6	Participant 6-1	01:01:06
Company 6	Participant 6-2	05:31
Company 6	Participant 6-2	19:09
Company 6	Participant 6-2	39:43
Company 6	Participant 6-2	45:44
Company 6	Participant 6-2	48:33
Company 6	Participant 6-3	04:08
Company 6	Participant 6-3	04:36
Company 6	Participant 6-3	06:18
Company 6	Participant 6-3	07:09
Company 6	Participant 6-3	08:43
Company 6	Participant 6-3	11:16

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Main reference: Interview Guide question 1-3 + Online (documentary) search

By company

Company 1

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 1-1	Head of Coporate- and Marketing Communications	06/2006-today: Head of Corporate- and Marketing Communications	16 years, 0 month	16 years, 0 month	16 years, 0 month	- Leibniz University Hannover - Universidad de Alcala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All interviewees to have a technical background - All interviewees are 9 years+ with the company
Participant 1-2	Marketing Manager	01/2021-today: Marketing Manager 10/2016-12/2020: Service Sales Manager 04/2016-09/2016: Account-Manager 08/2012-03/2016: Dual Studies (Industrial Engineering)	9 years, 4 month	1 year, 5 month	1 year, 5 month	04/2019-06/2021: Nordakademie (M. Sc.) - Marketing & Sales Management 08/2012-03/2016: Nordakademie (B. Sc.) - Industrial Engineering 09/2014-12/2014: University of California, Riverside (Semester abroad)	
Participant 1-3	Executive Vice President Sales	06/2015-today: Executive Vice President Sales 05/2009-05/2015: Head of Global Key Account Team 05/2007-04/2009: General Manager Sales (Japan) 10/2004-04/2007: Sales Manager Global Key Account	17 years, 8 month	6 years, 8 month	17 years, 8 month	2000-2004: Nordakademie - Industrial Engineering	
Participant 1-4	Head of Stratetic Marketing and Corporate Communications	12/2019-today: Head of Strategic Marketing and Corporate Communications 11/2011-12/2019: Group Manager Strategic Marketing 12/2005-10/2011: Product Manager	10 years, 7 month	2 years, 6 month	10 years, 7 month	2019-2019: IMD - Digital Transformation Program 2005: TU Hamburg-Harburg - Dipl.-Ing. oec.	
Participant 1-5	Member of Executive Board	01/2014-today: Member of Executive Board 04/2007-12/2013: Executive Vice President Sales 10/2004-03/2007: Managing Director 04/2002-09/2004 Executive Vice President Engineering	17 years, 8 month	8 years, 5 month	8 years, 5 month	1981-1987: University Stuttgart - Dipl. Ing. Mechanical Engineering 1985-1986: Northwestern University - Mechanical Engineering	
Average:			14 years, 3 month	7 years, 0 month	10 years, 10 month		
Standard deviation:			4 years, 0 month	5 years, 10 month	6 years, 6 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Company 2

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 2-1	Market Intelligence	02/2022-today: Business Improvement Analyst 04/2018-02/2022: Market Intelligence 09/2014-03/2018: Dual Studies (Industrial Engineering)	7 years, 6 month	3 years, 10 month	4 years, 2 month	2018-2020: Nordakademie - Marketing and Sales Management 2014-2018: Nordakademie - Industrial Engineering 2016-2016: University of California, Riverside (Semester abroad)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All interviewees to have a technical background - All interviewees are 7 years+ with the company
Participant 2-2	Head of Marketing Communications	02/2006-today: Head of Marketing Communications	16 years, 4 month	16 years, 4 month	16 years, 4 month	2001-2005: FH Braunschweig Wolfenbüttel - Business Graduate (Technical Business administration)	
Participant 2-3	Digital Marketing Manager	03-2017-today: Digital marketing 03-2008-2017: Product management* (*continuously changing core responsibilities)	14 years, 3 month	5 years, 5 month*	10 years, 0 month*	/	
Participant 2-4	Managing Director	01/2018-today: Managing Director 06/2013-today: Member of the Supervisory Board 02/2001-07/2016: Managing Director 07/1992-01/2001: Sales Manager 04/1989-06/1992: Process Engineer	13 years, 0 month	4 years, 5 month	21 years, 3 month	1985-1989: University of applied sciences, Bingen - Process Engineering	
Average:			12 years, 9 month	7 years, 5 month	12 years, 11 month		
Standard deviation:			3 years, 9 month	5 years, 11 month	7 years, 5 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Company 3

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 3-1	Head of Communications	10/2017-today: Head of Communications 10/2015-today: Senior Consultant and Project Manager Market Communications 10/2013-today: Communication Manager 02/2006-10/2013: Communication Consultant and Project Management 02/2000-08/2000: Supply Logistics	16 years, 11 month	4 years, 8 month	16 years, 4 month	2001-2005: University of Amberg-Weiden - Diploma - Business Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two groups of interviewees when comparing their study background: - Technical - Business administration
Participant 3-2	Innovation & Communication Manager	01/2022-today: Innovation & Communication Manager 08/2011-today: Senior Marketing Communications Manager	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	2004-2008: Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm - Diploma Medien design 2002-2004: FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg - Business Administration	
Participant 3-3	Communication Consultant	04/2010-today: Communication Consultant	12 years, 2 month	3 years, 4 month	12 years, 2 month	Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm - Economic Sciences	
Participant 3-4	Head of Marketing	10/2021-today: Head of Marketing (Product Marketing) 10/2014-10/2021: Head of Marketing (Vertical Marketing) 10/2011-09/2014: Senior Business Development Manger 01/2007-09/2011: Head of Business Consulting 10/2004-12/2006: Business Development Manager 09/1999-09/2004: Sales Promoter	22 years, 9 month	0 years, 8 month	7 years, 8 month	Hochschule Fulda - Dipl.-Ing. Electrical engineering	
Average:			18 years, 8 month	4 years, 11 month	11 years, 9 month		
Standard deviation:			5 years, 5 month	3 years, 4 month	3 years, 7 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Company 4

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 4-1	Director Product Management	09/2015-today: Director Product Management 05/2010-08/2015: Team Leader Product Management 09/2008-10/2010: Head of Product Management 09/2003-09/2008: International Product and Market Manager 12/1998-09/2003: International Product Manager 03/1994-12/1998: R&D Project Leader	6 years, 9 month	6 years, 9 month	23 years, 6 month	1990-1993: Technical University Berlin - Dipl.-Ing. Electronics Engineering xx: Certified Marketing Manager B2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two groups of interviewees when comparing their study background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical (→ Stakeholder, Management) - Business administration (→ Marketing communication)
Participant 4-2	Director Corporate Marketing & Communication	07/2016-today: Director Corporate Marketing & Communication 01/2008-06/2016: Head of Marketing 07/2016-12/2017: Director Marketing & Communication 01/2008-06/2016: Head of Marketing	14 years, 5 month	5 years, 11 month	14 years, 5 month	/	
Participant 4-3	Global Director Sales	08/2011-today: Global Director Sales 08/2012-12/2018: Member Group Executive Committee 05/2010-07/2011: Director Sales & Marketing 11/2001-04/2010: Vice President Sales & Marketing 08/1992-03/1999: Vice President Sales and Marketing	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	29 years, 10 month	1978-1992: Technical University Braunschweig	
Participant 4-4	Senior Manager Corporate Communication	04/2020-today: Senior Manager Corporate Communication 2019-03/2020: Section Manager Corporate Communications 2014-2019: Team Lead Corporate Communications 11/2012-2014: Corporate Communications Manager	2 years, 2 month	2 years, 2 month	9 years, 7 month	2011-2012: University of St. Andrews - Master of Letters, Marketing 2010-2011: Leuphana University Lüneburg, Master of Arts - Arts and Media 2007-2010: EMBA - Bachelor of Arts, Applied Media Business	
Average:			8 years, 7 month	6 years, 5 month	17 years, 6 month		
Standard deviation:			5 years, 3 month	3 years, 7 month	12 years, 1 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Company 5

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 5-1	Director Marketing Industry & Live Marketing	04/2022-today: Head of Engineering & Solutions 02/2020-04/2022: Director Marketing Industry & Live Marketing 08/2014-01/2020: Head of Live Marketing 02/2013-12/2013: Head of Design, Exhibition & Production 02/2007-02/2013: United Director Exhibitions 03/2004-01/2007: Project Manager (International exhibition stands)	7 years, 9 month	2 yeras, 3 month	22 years, 3 month	2002-2004: RWTH Aachen University - Economic Sciences 1994-2002: Dipl.-Ing. Construction Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two groups of interviewees when comparing their study background: - Technical (→ Stakeholder, Management) - Business administration (→ Marketing communication) - Average duration in current position as well as in the company smaller compared to other cases
Participant 5-2	Executive Vice President Marketing	09/2020-today: Executive Vice President Marketing 09/2017-today: Board Member (registered society) 06/2003-today: Owner and Managing Partner (freelance) 01/2017-09/2019: Head of Strategy & Brand 05/2014-12/2016: Strategy & Planning Director 02/2011-04/2014: Head of Strategy & Planning 09/2009-01/2011: Head of Social Media 04/2008-03/2009: Interactive Consultant 03/2002-09/2005: Freelancing Analyst 02/2002-05/2003: Freelancing Project Lead 09/2001-04/2003: Freelance Tutor and lecturer 10/2001-07/2002: Sales Director (Campus Magazine)	1 year, 9 month	1 year, 9 month	13 years, 4 month	2010-2014: University of Bayreuth - Dr. Business Administration - Marketing, Brand Management 2000-2006: University of Bayreuth - Diploma in Multimedia 2000-2006: University of Bayreuth - MBA Marketing, Strategic Management and Information Systems	
Participant 5-3	Project Manager Digital Channel	01/2022-today: Project Manager Digital Channel 05/2019-01/2022: Digital Marketing & E-Commerce 11/2018-12/2018: Volunteer 01/2017-11/2018: Hostess 02/2017-04/2017: International Marketing Intern 08/2015-10/2015: Investment / Eventmarketing Intern	3 years, 4 month	5 month	3 years, 0 month	2016-2017: University of Sunderland - Marketing Management (Semester Aborad) 2014-2018: University Siegen - Bachelor of Science - Finance & Marketing	
Participant 5-4	Head of Business Unit	11/2019-today: Head of Business Unit 04/2017-10/2019: Speaker of the Board 01/2009-12/2016: CEO 05/2005-12/2008: Vice President Business Excellence 05/2003-04/2005: Vice President Learning Campus 01/2002-04/2003: Vice President Qualification & Training 01/2001-12/2001: Head of Operations Management 04/2000-12/2000: Head IT Service Academy 04/1999-03/2000: Senior Consultant 10/1997-12/1999: Lecturer 02/1997-09/1998: Senior Management Consultant 09/1994-10/1996: Project Leader	2 years, 7 month	2 years, 7 month	2 years, 7 month	1996-2000: University of Paderborn (Dr.) 1989-1994: University of Paderborn - Dipl.-Ing. Industrial Engineering / Electronics Engineering	
Average:			3 years, 10 month	1 year, 9 month	10 years, 4 month		
Standard deviation:			2 years, 8 month	0 years, 11 month	9 years, 5 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Company 6

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 6-1	Head of Corporate Communications	01/2020-today: Head of Corporate Communications 05/2018-12/2019: Head of Media Relations & Corporate Messaging 08/2013-05/2018: Head of Communications & PR 09/2010-07/2013: Project lead Contractual management 09/2010-09/2011: Management Trainee 06/2007-06/2010: Assistent of the Managing Director	7 years, 3 month	2 years, 5 month	8 years, 10 month	05/2009-08/2009: Suffolk University - Sawyer Business School - EMBA Student 2008-2010: Euro-FH Hamburg - MBA, International Management 2003-2006: Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg - Bachelor of Arts Media Economies and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two groups of interviewees when comparing their study background: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical (→ Stakeholder, Management) - Business administration (→ Marketing communication) - Mixed group in terms of average duration in current position as well as in the company smaller compared to other cases
Participant 6-2	Head of Digital Marketing	09/2018-today: Head of Digital Marketing 10/2015-today: Head of Web Office 02/2014-09/2015: Marketing Manager Online & Social Media 02/2014-12/2014: Manager Marketing & Social Media 03/2009-01/2014: Media Department Co-ordinator 06/2008-02/2009: Junior Manager CRM Projects	9 years, 1 month	3 years, 9 month	13 years, 3 month	2002-2007: Diploma in Sport Economics	
Participant 6-3	Chief Marketing Officer	07/2015-today: Chief Marketing Officer 05/2008-today: Member of the Supervisory Board 04/1986-04/2020: Diverse positions in Sales & Marketing 04/1984-04/1986: Production planning	36 years, 2 month	6 years, 11 month	11 years, 5 month	University of Stuttgart - Dipl.-Ing. Mechanical Engineering	
Average:			17 years, 6 month	4 years, 4 month	11 years, 2 month		
Standard deviation:			16 years, 2 month	2 years, 4 month	2 years, 3 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

By role in decision-making process

Note: All blue marked titles and figures highlight the individual's development in the company conducted

Marketing Communication department head

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 1-1	Head of Corporate- and Marketing Communications	06/2006-today: Head of Corporate- and Marketing Communications	16 years, 0 month	16 years, 0 month	16 years, 0 month	- Leibniz University Hannover - Universidad de Alcala	<p>Experience:</p> <p>- Experience in marketing communication very strong with 13 years and 4 month up to 36 years → almost the complete professional live in marketing communication roles - except 2 out of 6, who do have a strategy, sales (partially production) background</p> <p>- 5 out of 6 participants in this role almost spend their whole professional carrier in the same company → function requires to understand the business specifics</p> <p>Mixed study background:</p> <p>1) Engineering 2) (Technical) Business Administration 3) Marketing</p>
Participant 2-2	Head of Marketing Communications	02/2006-today: Head of Marketing Communications	16 years, 4 month	16 years, 4 month	16 years, 4 month	2001-2005: FH Braunschweig Wolfenbüttel - Business Graduate (Technical Business administration)	
Participant 3-1	Head of Communications	10/2017-today: Head of Communications 10/2015-today: Senior Consultant and Project Manager Market Communication 10/2013-today: Communication Manager 02/2006-10/2013: Communication Consultant and Project Management 02/2000-08/2000: Supply Logistics	16 years, 11 month	4 years, 8 month	16 years, 4 month	2001-2005: University of Amberg-Weiden - Diploma - Business Administration	
Participant 4-2	Director Corporate Marketing & Communication	07/2016-today: Director Corporate Marketing & Communication 01/2008-06/2016: Head of Marketing 07/2016-12/2017: Director Marketing & Communication 01/2008-06/2016: Head of Marketing	14 years, 5 month	5 years, 11 month	14 years, 5 month	/	
Participant 5-2	Executive Vice President Marketing	09/2020-today: Executive Vice President Marketing 09/2017-today: Board Member (registered society) 06/2003-today: Owner and Managing Partner (freelance) 01/2017-09/2019: Head of Strategy & Brand 05/2014-12/2016: Strategy & Planning Director 02/2011-04/2014: Head of Strategy & Planning 09/2009-01/2011: Head of Social Media 04/2008-03/2009: Interactive Consultant 03/2002-09/2005: Freelancing Analyst 02/2002-05/2003: Freelancing Project Lead 09/2001-04/2003: Freelance Tutor and lecturer 10/2001-07/2002: Sales Director (Campus Magazine)	1 year, 9 month	1 year, 9 month	13 years, 4 month	2010-2014: University of Bayreuth - Dr. Business Administration - Marketing, Brand Management 2000-2006: University of Bayreuth - Diploma in Multimedia 2000-2006: University of Bayreuth - MBA Marketing, Strategic Management and Information Systems	
Participant 6-3	Chief Marketing Officer	07/2015-today: Chief Marketing Officer 05/2008-today: Member of the Supervisory Board 04/1986-04/2020: Diverse positions in Sales & Marketing 04/1984-04/1986: Production planning	36 years, 2 month	6 years, 11 month	11 years, 5 month	University of Stuttgart - Dipl.-Ing. Mechanical Engineering	
Average:			16 years, 11 month	8 years, 7 month	14 years, 8 month		
Standard deviation:			11 years, 0 month	6 years, 1 month	2 years, 0 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Communication expert out of marketing communication department

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 1-2	Marketing Manager	01/2021-today: Marketing Manager 10/2016-12/2020: Service Sales Manager 04/2016-09/2016: Account-Manager 08/2012-03/2016: Dual Studies (Industrial Engineering)	9 years, 4 month	1 year, 5 month	1 year, 5 month	04/2019-06/2021: Nordakademie (M. Sc.) - Marketing & Sales Management 08/2012-03/2016: Nordakademie (B. Sc.) - Industrial Engineering 09/2014-12/2014: University of California, Riverside (Semester abroad)	<p>Experience:</p> <p>- Experience in marketing communication depends on the professional life of interviewees, but is mostly stringent from the professional orientation. Almost all previous roles were in the marketing communications field. (Exceptions: are rare - 1x time CRM function; 1x account management; 1x product management) → <i>most actively started in Marketing Communication and decided to stay in this context</i> → <i>most also change the role within the company and department as carrier development, but do not change the company with every role change</i></p> <p>- Experience in current position also dependent on professional life (3x approx. 2 years; 2x approx. 4-5 years; 3x >10 years)</p> <p>- approx. 2-14 years in current company (average: 8 years, 7 month)</p> <p>More concentrated study background:</p> <p>1) Marketing & Communication 2) Engineering</p>
Participant 2-3	Digital Marketing Manager	03-2017-today: Digital marketing 03-2008-2017: Product management* (*continuously changing core responsibilities)	14 years, 3 month	5 years, 5 month*	10 years, 0 month*	/	
Participant 3-3	Communication Consultant	04/2010-today: Communication Consultant	12 years, 2 month	3 years, 4 month	12 years, 2 month	Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm - Economic Sciences	
Participant 3-2	Innovation & Communication Manager	01/2022-today: Innovation & Communication Manager 08/2011-today: Senior Marketing Communications Manager	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	2004-2008: Technical University Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm - Diploma Medien design 2002-2004: FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg - Business Administration	
Participant 4-4	Senior Manager Corporate Communication	04/2020-today: Senior Manager Corporate Communication 2019-03/2020: Section Manager Corporate Communications 2014-2019: Team Lead Corporate Communications 11/2012-2014: Corporate Communications Manager	2 years, 2 month	2 years, 2 month	9 years, 7 month	2011-2012: University of St. Andrews - Master of Letters, Marketing 2010-2011: Leuphana University Lüneburg, Master of Arts - Arts and Media 2007-2010: EMBA - Bachelor of Arts, Applied Media Business	
Participant 5-1	Director Marketing Industry & Live Marketing	04/2022-today: Head of Engineering & Solutions 02/2020-04/2022: Director Marketing Industry & Live Marketing 08/2014-01/2020: Head of Live Marketing 02/2013-12/2013: Head of Design, Exhibition & Production 02/2007-02/2013: United Director Exhibitions 03/2004-01/2007: Project Manager (International exhibition stands)	7 years, 9 month	2 years, 3 month	22 years, 3 month	2002-2004: RWTH Aachen University - Economic Sciences 1994-2002: Dipl.-Ing. Construction Engineering	
Participant 5-3	Project Manager Digital Channel	01/2022-today: Project Manager Digital Channel 05/2019-01/2022: Digital Marketing & E-Commerce 11/2018-12/2018: Volunteer 01/2017-11/2018: Hostess 02/2017-04/2017: International Marketing Intern 08/2015-10/2015: Investment / Eventmarketing Intern	3 years, 4 month	5 month	3 years, 0 month	2016-2017: University of Sunderland - Marketing Management (Semester Abroad) 2014-2018: University Siegen - Bachelor of Science - Finance & Marketing	
Participant 6-2	Head of Digital Marketing	09/2018-today: Head of Digital Marketing 10/2015-today: Head of Web Office 02/2014-09/2015: Marketing Manager Online & Social Media 02/2014-12/2014: Manager Marketing & Social Media 03/2009-01/2014: Media Department Co-ordinator 06/2008-02/2009: Junior Manager CRM Projects	9 years, 1 month	3 years, 9 month	13 years, 3 month	2002-2007: Diploma in Sport Economics	
Average:			8 years, 7 month	3 years, 8 month	9 years, 5 month		
Standard deviation:			4 years, 2 month	3 years, 3 month	7 years, 1 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Final instance of planning and budget approval

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 1-4	Head of Strategic Marketing and Corporate Communications	12/2019-today: Head of Strategic Marketing and Corporate Communications 11/2011-12/2019: Group Manager Strategic Marketing 12/2005-10/2011: Product Manager	10 years, 7 month	2 years, 6 month	10 years, 7 month	2019-2019: IMD - Digital Transformation Program 2005: TU Hamburg-Harburg - Dipl.-Ing. oec.	Experience: - more than 10,5 years in current company (average: 13 years, 9 month) - approx. 2,5-8,5 years in current position (average: 5 years, 1 month) - more than 8,5 year's experience in role / function (average: 13 years, 5 month) Unified study background: 1) Engineering
Participant 1-5	Member of Executive Board	01/2014-today: Member of Executive Board 04/2007-12/2013: Executive Vice President Sales 10/2004-03/2007: Managing Director 04/2002-09/2004 Executive Vice President Engineering	17 years, 8 month	8 years, 5 month	8 years, 5 month	1981-1987: University Stuttgart - Dipl. Ing. Mechanical Engineering 1985-1986: Northwestern University - Mechanical Engineering	
Participant 2-4	Managing Director	01/2018-today: Managing Director 06/2013-today: Member of the Supervisory Board 02/2001-07/2016: Managing Director 07/1992-01/2001: Sales Manager 04/1989-06/1992: Process Engineer	13 years, 0 month	4 years, 5 month	21 years, 3 month	1985-1989: University of applied sciences, Bingen - Process Engineering	
Average:			13 years, 9 month	5 years, 1 month	13 years, 5 month		
Standard deviation:			3 years, 7 month	3 years, 0 month	6 years, 10 month		

Appendix 18 – Participant composition by company and role

Internal stakeholder outside of the marketing communication department

Participant	Current job title	Resumé	Duration in Company (status 5/22)	Duration in current job (status 5/22)	Experience in the sub-area	Academic Background	Commonalities
Participant 1-3	Executive Vice President Sales	06/2015-today: Executive Vice President Sales 05/2009-05/2015: Head of Global Key Account Team 05/2007-04/2009: General Manager Sales (Japan) 10/2004-04/2007: Sales Manager Global Key Account	17 years, 8 month	6 years, 8 month	17 years, 8 month	2000-2004: Nordakademie - Industrial Engineering	<p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mixed duration in current function - especially sales & product management functions - business unit lead / corporate function <p>Business oriented study background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Engineering / Industrial Engineering 2) Business Administration / Media Economics
Participant 2-1	Market Intelligence	02/2022-today: Business Improvement Analyst 04/2018-02/2022: Market Intelligence 09/2014-03/2018: Dual Studies (Industrial Engineering)	7 years, 6 month	3 years, 10 month	4 years, 2 month	2018-2020: Nordakademie - Marketing and Sales Management 2014-2018: Nordakademie - Industrial Engineering 2016-2016: University of California, Riverside	
Participant 3-4	Head of Marketing	10/2021-today: Head of Marketing (Product Marketing) 10/2014-10/2021: Head of Marketing (Vertical Marketing) 10/2011-09/2014: Senior Business Development Manger 01/2007-09/2011: Head of Business Consulting 10/2004-12/2006: Business Development Manager 09/1999-09/2004: Sales Promoter	22 years, 9 month	0 years, 8 month	7 years, 8 month	Hochschule Fulda - Dipl.-Ing. Electrical engineering	
Participant 4-1	Director Product Management	09/2015-today: Director ProdcT Management 05/2010-08/2015: Team Leader Product Management 09/2008-10/2010: Head of Product Management 09/2003-09/2008: International Product & Market Manager 12/1998-09/2003: International Product Manager 03/1994-12/1998: R&D Project Leader	6 years, 9 month	6 years, 9 month	23 years, 6 month	1990-1993: Technical University Berlin - Dipl.-Ing. Electronics Engineering xx: Certified Marketing Manager B2B	
Participant 4-3	Global Director Sales	08/2011-today: Global Director Sales 08/2012-12/2018: Member Group Executive Committee 05/2010-07/2011: Director Sales & Marketing 11/2001-04/2010: Vice President Sales & Marketing 08/1992-03/1999: Vice President Sales and Marketing	10 years, 10 month	10 years, 10 month	29 years, 10 month	1978-1992: Technical University Braunschweig	
Participant 5-4	Head of Business Unit	11/2019-today: Head of Business Unit 04/2017-10/2019: Speaker of the Board 01/2009-12/2016: CEO 05/2005-12/2008: Vice President Business Excellence 05/2003-04/2005: Vice President Learning Campus 01/2002-04/2003: Vice President Qualification & Training 01/2001-12/2001: Head of Operations Management 04/2000-12/2000: Head IT Service Academy 04/1999-03/2000: Senior Consultant 10/1997-12/1999: Lecturer 02/1997-09/1998: Senior Management Consultant 09/1994-10/1996: Project Leader	2 years, 7 month	2 years, 7 month	2 years, 7 month	1996-2000: University of Paderborn (Dr.) 1989-1994: University of Paderborn - Dipl.-Ing. Industrial Engineering / Electronics Engineering	
Participant 6-1	Head of Corporate Communications	01/2020-today: Head of Corporate Communications 05/2018-12/2019: Head of Media Relations & Corporate Messaging 08/2013-05/2018: Head of Communications & PR 09/2010-07/2013: Project lead Contractual management 09/2010-09/2011: Management Trainee 06/2007-06/2010: Assistent of the Managing Director	7 years, 3 month	2 years, 5 month	8 years, 10 month	05/2009-08/2009: Suffolk University - Sawyer Business School - EMBA Student 2008-2010: Euro-FH Hamburg - MBA, International Management 2003-2006: Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg - Bachelor of Arts Media Economies and Communications	
Average:			10 years, 9 month	4 years, 10 month	13 years, 6 month		
Standard deviation:			7 years, 0 month	3 years, 1 month	10 years, 5 month		

Appendix 19 – Organisational culture

Main reference: Interview Guide question 5

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	08:27	- Marketing Communication head does always have the possibility to contact the management board directly, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Marketing department in whole (incl. marketing communication) follows a cross-functional approach → therefore by structure in the responsibility to break down silos - Long traditions and history - Organisational transformation started to empower teams more than in the past → this transformation also does have implications on authority and processes e.g. budget process - Management board's opinion and the opinion of operational teams on organisational silos differ
	Participant 1-1	08:57	- Trust in Marketing Communication head to take the right decisions or adjust, if necessary - Part of the development itself - But culture of failure is not a generally lived in company	
	Participant 1-2	14:09	- Teamwork and interdisciplinary teams do work well	
	Participant 1-3	11:32	- Organisation is currently in a transition: from a conservative company to a company without silos and holistically viewed processes with flat hierarchies - Teams should be more empowered than in the past	
	Participant 1-3	13:13	- Organisational transition / change will also affect the budget planning process, as teams should be more empowered than in the past	
	Participant 1-4	06:41	- Job of strategic marketing department (incl. marketing communication department) is to break down silos - "Fast fail" is not lived – project issues should be solved instead of directly readjusting the target. - In general: no consequences if somebody makes a mistake.	
	Participant 1-5	05:21	- Holistic customer thinking is established in the company and silos do not exist.	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	12:34	- Culture is currently changing: Whereas in the past, no corporate strategy has been shared within the organisation, the strategy process now involves all teams, and the strategy is communicated to everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture is currently changing to towards empowerment of teams - In general, more transparent communication is foreseen - Corporate strategy approach has changed - Long traditions and history - Management board's opinion and the opinion of operational teams on organisational silos differ - Changing and organisational culture is a long-lasting project
	Participant 2-1	12:34	- Culture for failure is establishing. In the past: no changes tolerated. If a project has started, it had to be executed. No changes tolerated. Nowadays, changes during the project are okay.	
	Participant 2-2	12:47	- Traditional company with over [quantity] years - Owner-managed company that also invests in the future - Generational change influences the culture - Often outdated opinions still prevail (teams of different opinion than "older" management board) - Since new strategy process in 2018, a change in the organisational culture is recognisable - but it takes times.	

Appendix 19 – Organisational culture

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	12:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New leadership guidelines defined, giving the teams more autonomy - Empathic leadership and more personal responsibility 	
	Participant 2-3	14:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Silo structure still there, but marketing departments tries to break the silos (also due to close connection to other departments) 	
	Participant 2-4	02:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board member perceive organisational cultures as good - Company structure should support "a controlled collaboration" 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	09:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young CEO in business unit who stands for more transparency and open communication - Changed approached in comparison to former (and older) CEO of business unit - Change happens over time - not completely established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in transparency initiated by the current business unit CEO - Established close connection to management function by "you" culture - Transparent and early strategy alignment between business unit functions - Learning culture established → test new things, (fail), share experiences so that everybody can learn from it - Empowerment of teams - Breaking down silos is a target
	Participant 3-1	11:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Break down silos by a more open communication culture - Value framework anchored in the business unit strategy 	
	Participant 3-2	04:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established learning-culture, to improve continuously in team 	
	Participant 3-2	13:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early communication to align jointly on strategy - Culture of failure is lived - Culture is something that evolves over time - Attempt to break down power distances through "you" culture 	
	Participant 3-2	33:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic process of sharing experiences within team and across marketing communication teams in company - Also, failures are shared and discussed to avoid the same mistakes in future 	
	Participant 3-3	07:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative and supporting environment is already established in Marketing Communication team - Culture differs in organization - Wish of flat hierarchies and diversity of strength 	
	Participant 3-3	38:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trustful environment and relationship between marketing and marketing communication department 	
	Participant 3-3	51:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The team is also encouraged to test new things and report on them. 	
	Participant 3-4	09:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unit created to support transformation of organization - More agile working methods - Introduction of job rotation → Every measure with the target of breaking down silos + develop employee competencies 	
	Participant 3-4	09:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformulation of targets - "how" instead of "what" to allow thinking creatively and to test new approaches - Process of implementation has started, but still room for improvement 	

Appendix 19 – Organisational culture

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-4	43:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empowerment on operational level - making mistakes though learning process is okay - Team leads do see themselves as coach 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	07:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close relationship and communication between product management, sales, and marketing communication - International teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long traditions and history and masculine - Owner-managed → focus on mid-/long term perspective - Collaborative across functions - Marketing communication is freer in the decisions to test new things
	Participant 4-2	07:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long tradition - Owner-managed → mid-/long-term orientation based on facts - Decisions are made carefully 	
	Participant 4-2	07:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales, Product Management and Marketing Communication do not always have the same opinion, but the discussions take place in a factual manner - Marketing communication is contributing with new ideas 	
	Participant 4-3	12:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions are based on a joint consensus 	
	Participant 4-4	06:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions are based on a joint consensus 	
	Participant 4-4	06:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservative and traditional company in the machinery industry - A very masculine culture - A bit conservative regarding culture of failure - Not the flattest hierarchies 	
	Participant 4-4	31:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change of a generation is happening - Tension between "old" and "new" generation 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	50:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural problems are seen differently in the organisation. Especially the owner does have a different opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long traditions and history - Owner-managed - No failure culture and fear of making mistakes, even though it is not consciously managed this way - Strong hierarchical organised - Opinion of owner and in teams differ with regard to culture - Marketing communication is free in the decisions to test new things
	Participant 5-2	09:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start hierarchical company by the owner - No mistakes are allowed (although the culture is probably not consciously lived this way) - Marketing communication also tries to test things 	
	Participant 5-3	11:23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong hierarchical, but it is getting better - Better do something than nothing → overload of work and everyone feels happy, if somebody else supports to deal with the number of tasks 	
	Participant 5-4	03:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High identification with company - Fear of making mistakes - Silos do exist - depended on department and the department leader 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	00:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company is changing a lot, so a lot of internal communication is going on at the moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate culture is shaped by acquisitions and the main investor

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 6-1	01:41	- The main shareholder of the company is a foreign company - this requires a change, even if the company remains a German one in principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture transformation program started in the end of 2021 a that allows for mistakes in order to promote innovation as well as to communicate more transparent - Long history and engineering driven accuracy - Marketing communication is freer in the decisions to test new things - Cross-functional collaboration (due to matrix organisation) - Silos allowed to some extend to ensure decision speed
	Participant 6-1	14:20	- Room for improvement, but a company culture program has started at the end of 2021 - Silo thinking does also exist due to company acquisitions	
	Participant 6-1	14:20	- Cultural change is a long-lasting topic - Management board is pushing the organisation towards the change and the organisation has already changed compared to 10 years prior where power relations and a top-down approach were dominating the management style	
	Participant 6-2	08:40	- CMO is supporting a failure culture - Organisation has developed positively over the last few years in terms of power distances - Open error culture must be further established. Due to the history of mechanical engineering, there is a tendency towards correctness here.	
	Participant 6-2	10:04	- Silos are allowed to some extent due to different business segments within organisation. - Silos allow a kind of decision speed so some extend within a business segment	
	Participant 6-3	04:08	- Organisational structure includes "dotted-lines" - not everything is hierarchical organised	
	Participant 6-3	05:21	- Transition towards a "doing" instead of "you must do" mentality - Current aim is to further break down silos	
	Participant 6-3	06:18	- Ownership structure influences culture	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Main reference: Interview Guide question 15

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
Company 1	Participant 1-1	07:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Engineering - Product management → Marketing Communication supports especially these apartments with communication measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board - Strategic marketing - Corporate communication - Sales division - Service division - Digital division - Engineering (incl. product owner, technical departments) - Product management - Subsidiaries
	Participant 1-1	29:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Division manager Sales - Division manager Service - Division manager Digital → Exchange on frequent basis → Understand what they need to serve their customers on the best way 	
	Participant 1-1	29:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Internal survey in sales teams to get opinion what kind of marketing communication measures are needed 	
	Participant 1-2	14:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board - Strategic Marketing → Give input and set priorities - Product owners → Content provision 	
	Participant 1-2	14:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product owner (sales and service) → Concept idea will be discussed with product owners and departments - Mother company / corporate function “[Holding name] Digital” → Specialist department for digital marketing that supports in content creation 	
	Participant 1-2	19:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Marketing → Knows the strategy, strategic planning and corporate targets - Product responsible and technical department → Do have the best expertise and insights about machine 	
	Participant 1-2	46:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board - Business unit head - Management of subsidiaries / branches → Main interface of Marketing Communication head 	
	Participant 1-2	46:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales Manager 	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervisors of sales and engineering departments → Frequent update / information meetings about what marketing communication is currently doing 	
	Participant 1-3	00:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Takes care about everything that has to do with customer interaction 	
	Participant 1-3	25:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales head (Participant 1-3) → Involved in budget approval process - especially as support function for Marketing / Marketing communication 	
	Participant 1-3	26:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Involved in budget and approval process to support, but not involved in operational planning 	
	Participant 1-3	26:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Involved in determining trade fair planning, webinar and trade fair contents, campaign topics 	
	Participant 1-4	00:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Marketing - Corporate Communication 	
	Participant 1-4	35:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core team: Marketing lead, strategy head, marketing communication head → Alignment and approval meeting with sales → Communication to sales departments to inform teams about planning as well as to incorporate their feedback 	
	Participant 1-5	38:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unit head / board member → Budget approval → Approval of general direction / approval of overall communication topics - Sales and strategic marketing team → Defines contents 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	41:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Product Management - After Market → Part of planning process to derive customer relevant topics and contents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company owner - Management board - Sales - Product management - After market - IT - Customer relations - Subsidiaries / regional management teams
	Participant 2-1	48:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT → Must incorporate marketing tool costs in their budget and have to justify it 	
	Participant 2-1	50:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT - Management board → Both are critical to be convinced to invest in tools 	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 2-1	50:08	- Department Customer Relations → Key strategic topics have to fit to marketing targets / Interlocking is necessary	
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Sales → Mentioning needs and requirements	
	Participant 2-2	01:01:18	- Sales - Sales teams - Subsidiaries - Management Board	
	Participant 2-3	14:37	- Sales - IT → Intensify cooperation is planned also due to digitalization	
	Participant 2-3	16:26	- Subsidiaries / regional management teams → Regional meetings on quarterly basis → Alignment / planning meetings with sales	
	Participant 2-4	11:06	- Management board - Company owner (partially) - (Marketing itself)	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) - Product management - Business Development - (Marketing Communication itself)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Communication - Business unit head and management functions - Sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales Marketing Promotion - Sales Strategy Innovation - Business Development / Sales - Product management - Other Business Unit Marketing Communication Teams
	Participant 3-1	57:07	- Product management sometimes to creative	
	Participant 3-1	01:16:48	- Management functions / business unit heads - Sales - Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Project responsibility; determine themes and content - Communication team heads + teams - Marketing team heads + teams (located in sales department) → Create campaigns and execute them jointly	
	Participant 3-3	36:44	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Strong and close relationship and workarounds	
	Participant 3-3	39:22	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Closely connected with marketing communication → Received information from product management and sales	
	Participant 3-3	39:22	- Corporate communication function (as part of mother company) → Addresses corporate wide topics to ensure that specific topics are communicated across all business units	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 3-3	43:27	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Approves contents created from product manager and ensures a customer-oriented communication based on customer benefits instead of technical features	
	Participant 3-4	02:43	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) - Product management	
	Participant 3-4	03:36	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Determines product launches including product roadmap, features, USPs (all technical information) → Support of communication team to set up campaigns and measures in the right way	
	Participant 3-4	04:37	- Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) → Creates sales argumentation, trains sales and holds workshops to inform internally	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	- Sales Strategy Innovation	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	- Sales - Sales Marketing Promotion (Marketing / Marketing manager) - Sales Strategy Innovation	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	03:36	- Product Manager → Responsible for managing the produced along its lifecycle. This included sales argumentation, product launch preparations as well as the "content ownership" for communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board / CEO - Sales / Director Sales - Product management / Head of Product Management (incl. project owner) - R&D
	Participant 4-1	07:31	- Sales, Product management, Project owner and marketing communication → Form product launch committee consisting → Product management and committee decides on content and support launch preparations	
	Participant 4-1	10:15	- Product management → Close relationship between product management and marketing communication → Responsibilities are clear and defined	
	Participant 4-1	18:56	- Sales → Responsible to invite customers / invitation management - Product management → Determines content and main messages (+ R&D partially as well)	
	Participant 4-1	20:42	- Management board → Is not involved in smaller topics, but decisions with a higher budget impact	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 4-1	22:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management → For market insights, competitor comparisons, determine USP's - Sales → To defined whom to address in which reason (with what kind of success) 	
	Participant 4-2	07:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales, product management and marketing communication → Discussions take place in a factual manner → Marketing communication is contributing with new ideas 	
	Participant 4-2	14:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO → Project initiation jointly with marketing communication head for strategic relevant topics e.g. redesign of products → Former CEO was marketing addicted and has support such ideas 	
	Participant 4-2	48:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - Sales → Frequently exchange meeting with marketing communication 	
	Participant 4-3	09:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Determines direction for marketing communication and does see itself as host of events 	
	Participant 4-3	12:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Determines trade fairs contents for and where to go 	
	Participant 4-3	15:34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO → Involvement of CEO differs between former CEO and current CEO → Former CEO was marketing-addicted → Close relationship without big frictions between sales and CEO → CEO's are generally involved in marketing communication decision with a higher invest e.g., big trade shows 	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales → Brings up ideas what to do and why 	
	Participant 4-4	09:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales / Director sales - Product management / Head of product management 	
	Participant 4-4	21:49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management Board → Determines strategy and priorities and ad hoc topics - Sales → Ad hoc initiatives to fill sales funnel → Similar position to management board - Product Management → Briefing / contents 	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication agency 	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
			à Involved to determine top ten media budget split between top 10 publishers	
	Participant 4-4	33:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Product management - Management board → Trust in expertise plays a role (marketing theory can support) 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	15:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - R&D → Involvement is dependent on relevance and size of campaign → For bigger campaigns: R&D, Product Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company owner - CEO - Management board - Business unit - Sales - Product management - R&D - Corporate communication - Corporate strategy
	Participant 5-1	21:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board / CEO → Involved in annual planning to determine extend / prioritisation of topics 	
	Participant 5-1	22:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - Business unit lead - Sales 	
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management → Defines the contents / texts 	
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business unit heads - Management board / CEO 	
	Participant 5-2	28:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management and Sales 1) Joint briefing session between strategic marketing unit and main stakeholders 2) Conception phase, in which strategic marketing units responsible is concepting jointly with the operative marketing the plan 3) Approval of concept by business unit, marketing communication head and management board 4) Execution by operative marketing units 	
	Participant 5-2	42:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board → Dependent on the topic, highly business relevant topics are discussed with the whole → Involvement of management board is dependent on their own backgrounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board member for Business units and marketing does have a background in the production and is interested in discussion product communication; but also, bigger investments e.g. website development, trade fairs are discussed 	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board member for sales regions is more involved in campaign adoptions to regional markets - CEO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Does have a marketing affinity and is involved in brand related topics 	
	Participant 5-2	46:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Communication department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Separate department since the new CEO joined the company → Has the responsibility for general press communication (no trade press), customer magazines, employee magazines, intranet and annual reports + involvement in social media 	
	Participant 5-2	56:23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company owner - CEO 	
	Participant 5-3	15:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management 	
	Participant 5-3	15:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management / Product manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Know the product well, but does not always have experience in marketing / marketing communication 	
	Participant 5-3	35:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate strategy - Business Unit (Sales and Product management) - Corporate communications 	
	Participant 5-3	42:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales teams (incl. sales regions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Give feedback about online shop and its features 	
	Participant 5-4	14:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business unit manager (also responsible for sales) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Involved in determining the channel approach for a product 	
	Participant 5-4	15:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business unit manager (also responsible for sales) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Involved in trade show planning - determining the general story, trade show touchpoints, how to illustrate topics and selection of products 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	58:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales manager - CSO - Kreative marketing communication manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSO - Business unit - Marketing team - Sales manager - Product management - Portfolio management - Finance / Controlling - Corporate Communication - IT
	Participant 6-1	59:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board approves concepts 	
		20:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Close relation, also because sales is responsible for opportunity management and all data are stored in CRM → Interface necessary to ensure the right quality of data for marketing communication campaigns 	
	Participant 6-2	20:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT (Centre of Excellence Digital Marketing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → “Sister team”; works closely together with digital marketing team in an agile framework to develop and execute digital marketing projects 	

Appendix 20 – Main Stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 6-2	24:08	- Marketing departments of business units are the main stakeholders for the corporate marketing department	
	Participant 6-2	30:49	- Sales	
	Participant 6-2	47:08	- Business unit marketing team → Determines SEO, SEA, Social Ads spends	
	Participant 6-3	34:31	- Managing director of business unit - Sales head of business unit - Finance manager or head of controlling	
	Participant 6-3	35:01	- Sales and / or finance board member + marketing head of business segment → Corporate marketing and sales are acting together to ensure that content and budget are fitting	
	Participant 6-3	35:52	- Product manager, sales manager and portfolio manager → Involved in process to evaluate market approach before the budget round	
	Participant 6-3	01:03:40	- Sales - Portfolio Manager - Management - Management board	
	Participant 6-3	01:06:02	- Sales is the main stakeholder	

Appendix 21 – Additional stakeholder

Main reference: Interview Guide question 16

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-2	14:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept idea will be discussed with product owners and departments (e.g., sales, service) - Content creation support from corporate function / digital team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales/Key account - Service - Media agencies - Central holding organisation - Controlling - Corporate holding digital team
	Participant 1-2	19:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups of interest for creating content: - Product owner from engineering department (delivering content; expert on product + also in customer contact → technical sales) - Strategic Marketing (Defining strategy, Planning, Targets) - Sales 	
	Participant 1-2	46:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Service - Media agencies - Corporate function for digital marketing - Product responsible - Management board - Engineering - Construction - Subsidiary managements 	
	Participant 1-2	50:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product owner → Supports content creation 	
	Participant 1-2	58:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central holding organisation → Purchases external studies 	
	Participant 1-2	01:01:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External agency → Responsible for implementation of communication measures 	
	Participant 1-3	27:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlling → Approves budget in context of overall company budgeting process 	
	Participant 1-4	46:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outsourced design agency → Provides designs based on concept created by Company 1 	
	Participant 1-5	24:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate holding team "[Name] Digital" for digital marketing → Supports on operational level especially social media activities and can claim not to publish a content 	
	Participant 1-5	25:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support from Account Management and sales → Provide customer insights and help in defining content requirements 	

Appendix 21 – Additional stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 2	Participant 2-1	50:08	- Marketing responsible in subsidiaries → Responsible for regional marketing roadmap - planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies - Sales organisation - Specialist department to drive digitalization of company - Journalists - IT
	Participant 2-3	07:30	- Sales organisation, sales and service partner → Target group to inform	
	Participant 2-3	46:48	- 1x SEO agency - 1x SEA agency → Responsible for implementation of measures	
	Participant 2-3	49:52	- Internal networking with production or department responsible for digitalization to ensure that tool landscape of marketing / marketing communication remains embedded into corporate IT landscape	
	Participant 2-4	03:25	- Product management	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	17:44	- Journalists → Publication of new highlights / topics of company in specialist magazines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journalists - Corporate Communication team containing a "Communication tool team", a "brand team" - Corporate wide communities - Communication teams per business segment - Product management - Sales
	Participant 3-1	17:44	- Sales division → Get trainings for social selling - Management board → Get support to position them as opinion leader in social media	
	Participant 3-1	46:35	- Corporate "Tool team" within corporate communication (holding level) → Located in corporate function, reporting to the CEO → Responsible for selecting and developing communication tools and platforms within whole organisation	
	Participant 3-1	47:14	- Corporate "Tool team" within corporate communication (holding level) → Responsible for selection of tools and platforms the marketing communication department should work with	
	Participant 3-1	50:00	- Corporate "Tool team" within corporate communication (holding level) → Pilot projects to test new tools are set up jointly - corporate function and marketing communication team → Sometimes these projects are pursued with different objectives, which can lead to tensions	
	Participant 3-1	55:35	- Corporate Branding Team (holding level) - Corporate team for Tools / Platform (holding level)	
	Participant 3-2	08:47	- Communities within BU's for cross functional topics → Inter-organisational communication exchange meetings - sharing of best practices, new initiative learnings, etc. - Marketing Manager - R&D	

Appendix 21 – Additional stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Marketing Manager exchange meetings (within business unit & across)	
	Participant 3-2	08:47	- Product management - Competitor Intelligence team → Provide competitor and market insights	
	Participant 3-2		- Ways to steer communication: - via Marketing team - via Innovation management - via Corporate Communications - direct to Customer	
	Participant 3-2	17:59	- Multiple communication teams within business unit → Exchange between communication departments as well to be synchronized by sharing best practice examples or new initiative learnings	
	Participant 3-2	19:32	- Product manager → Usage as communication ambassadors	
	Participant 3-2	53:27	- Sales → Provides input for customer profiles	
	Participant 3-3	06:13	- Business unit communication teams → Exchange with other communication departments about best practices, etc. → Level of exchange depends on the personal relationship of the people	
	Participant 3-3	44:24	- Corporate communication specialists (holding level) → e.g. expert for google advertising acts as sparing partner for the business units and shares / supports with his expertise	
	Participant 3-4	27:32	- Corporate communication department (holding level) → Gives guidance on the channel mix / recommendations	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	14:12	- Dependent on projects: Technical department → Technical input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical department - R&D - Human resource - Agencies and freelancer - Regional sales responsible
	Participant 4-2	17:35	- Human resource → Advice HR to promote the company via social media even before it is necessary due to labour shortage	
	Participant 4-2	48:08	- Technical department - R&D → To ensure the availability of new machines for communication measures	
	Participant 4-2	51:44	- External freelancer and agencies → Exchange about what are the trends, what to consider, etc. besides	

Appendix 21 – Additional stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			project related work → Editorial meetings and project calls	
	Participant 4-3	46:48	- Regional sales responsible / managing directors → Share their ideas / give input	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	- Communication agency → Involved to determin top ten media budget split between top 10 publishers	
Company 5	Participant 5-2	23:24	- Agencies → Involved in content creation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies - Key account/sales department - IT - Product management
	Participant 5-2	30:43	- Agencies → Harmonization of processes between agencies and quality improvements are currently a topic	
	Participant 5-2	44:24	- Key Account → Support to create customer use cases / coordinate access to customers	
	Participant 5-3	04:04	- Communication department as mediator between IT, Business and Marketing	
	Participant 5-3	15:31	- Product management → Used for input / creation of contents	
	Participant 5-3	16:58	- Agencies → Used for contents creation	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	21:40	- IT department → Marketing communication IT budget is allocated in IT department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human resource - Sales department - Corporate Communication - Communication teams per business segment - Innovation Team - IT - Online shop team - Agencies
	Participant 6-2	24:18	- Human resource → for HR marketing - Sales departments → for projects like social selling - Corporate communications → For communication channel developments e.g., corporate blog developments - Innovation team → Interdisciplinary team across all departments to generate synergies	
	Participant 6-2	37:11	- IT department	
	Participant 6-2	20:55	- IT department → Agile process between marketing & it to develop digital channels → Marketing team is the product owner → steering of project teams	
	Participant 6-2	34:29	- Agencies	

Appendix 21 – Additional stakeholder

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Software vendors → Sharing their insights and pushing for tools / topics 	
	Participant 6-2	36:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital team - Shop team - Digital sales department - IT 	
	Participant 6-3	33:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlling → Reflecting budgets in overall business context 	
	Participant 6-3	01:03:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External stakeholders - Agencies 	
	Participant 6-3	01:06:02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R&D and IT → Also important areas to pick up each person in terms of content 	

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Main reference: Interview Guide question 14

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
Company 1	Participant 1-1	26:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product portfolio strategy will be announced on an annual base → which product has which market potentials and where - Product strategy is determined by strategy department - Strategy at least gives an indication of what to come – but postponements are also possible - Marketing communication planning is mainly based on this strategy
	Participant 1-1	28:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication planning is dependent on which of the products have to be promoted - as the brand and product awareness is given in the "classic business segments" compared to new business segments, in which the main target is to create awareness - Set of communication channels is defined/fix
	Participant 1-1	53:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication planning is to a large extent lapsed, due to product launch postponements, etc. - Most of the communication measures are created more ad-hoc
	Participant 1-1	55:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget planning compared to actual usage is as dynamic as the topics are changing - Special campaigns are possible, but are requested and approved separately
	Participant 1-1	58:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget is generally based on previous year budget
	Participant 1-1	58:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most budget items are carried over from previous years - Biggest items (mainly trade fairs) are determining the budget development due to their impact and the decision on how many trade fairs the company want to attend - Budget status reporting on quarterly base
	Participant 1-2	11:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of independency from mother company also depended on the business / product segment - New segments → quite independent from mother company / corporate functions
	Participant 1-2	14:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communications team determines the marketing communication focus and measures (resources + priority) - Additional input does come from management board and strategic marketing department → If no additional input does come from them: decision by marketing communication department alone - Content does come from product owners - Main decision made by Marketing Communication head
	Participant 1-2	17:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the context of social media: → a content planning is given (based on an editorial board) to have an overview which topics to come → mostly, additional topics have to handled ad-hoc
	Participant 1-2	19:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contents to create communication measures are especially coming from the product owners/engineering department
Participant 1-2	41:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main tool for (social media) executing communication measures is the editorial board - General planning of topics to be communicated does exist (→ product strategy planning) - General planning is made by marketing communication head and strategic marketing head - 3 days a week short alignment calls to coordinate contents to be published jointly with the supporting department of the holding company (which takes care of the publications in social media) 	

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 1-2	52:18	- Differentiation between ad-hoc news and more comprehensively planned campaigns
	Participant 1-3	00:54	- Monthly jour fix between sales head and marketing communication head
	Participant 1-3	25:26	- Planning of marketing communication mix is mainly made within marketing department itself. - Internal planning also mainly to budget - Target setting and implementation kind of decoupled from other departments e.g., sales - Sales head / participant 1-3 involved in budget approval process
	Participant 1-3	26:18	- Sales targets/corporate strategy and marketing communication budget planning are not synchronized
	Participant 1-3	26:59	- Alignment on which trade fairs to attend or how many webinars should be hosted between sales and marketing communication given before the budget planning
	Participant 1-3	30:08	- Market data and developments not directly impact marketing communication budgets
	Participant 1-4	03:20	- Strategic planning coordinated by "Strategic Marketing" department - Collecting requirements from sales to understand which topics needs to be highlighted from a sales perspective → inputs as used for the campaign planning
	Participant 1-4	28:07	- Annual planning process - Determination of concrete measures is a subsequent task
	Participant 1-4	29:05	- Marketing communication mix, selection of channels and formats is in the responsibility of the marketing communication department as downstream task
	Participant 1-4	29:59	- Annual Planning determines annual budget - Special budgets can be approved in the course of the year dependent on the situation
	Participant 1-4	32:37	- IT budgets for CRM systems or online tools are also budgeted within marketing/marketing communication department - Budget planning for these longer lasting projects are planned independent from annual marketing communication planning → One planning process for department and contents and one separate planning process for tools/tool developments
	Participant 1-4	35:15	- Core team: Marketing lead, strategy head, marketing communication head - Alignment and approval meeting with sales - Communication to sales departments to inform teams about planning including feedback
	Participant 1-5	22:15	- Main topics, contents, main messages are aligned between strategic marketing, marketing communication, sales and the CSO
	Participant 1-5	38:25	- Budget approval by board member - Contents in detail are not of interest, also to increase speed in execution - Trust in responsible from marketing communication department
	Company 2	Participant 2-1	12:34
Participant 2-1		41:51	- Topic to be communicated defines the tool used for communication - 9 steps to plan communication measures 1) Analysis of the market 2) Derive strategics 3) Define topics to be addressed

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
			4) Create a communication program (incl. targets) 5) Work out action plan 6) Prepare actions 7) Create contents 8) Execute communication measures 9) Evaluate measures - Tools like a communication calendar as used for the 18 month planning - Involved in the coordination process are the sales and after-market (service) department, as well as the product management - Besides these campaigns, recurring topics like Christmas cards are generally on the tasks list to be executed
	Participant 2-1	45:32	- 18 month planning → so called marketing roadmap - Marketing roadmap contains campaigns / main topics to be highlighted - Communication plan is derived out of campaign planning and contains also the planning of communication channel mix
	Participant 2-1	50:08	- IT und Management Board are critical to be convinced to invest in tools - Alignment meeting upfront to budget process with both to ensure budget approval (meetings proactively steered by Marketing department)
	Participant 2-1	50:08	- Key strategic topics have to fit to marketing targets / Interlocking is necessary
	Participant 2-2	00:47	- Marketing roadmap planning (for upcoming 18 month) - Strong alignment of marketing roadmap with sales and local subsidiaries
	Participant 2-2	27:45	- Self-research or attending to seminars and congresses to detect trends are also an integral part of the development process to evaluate where to improve --> incorporated in planning/marketing roadmap adjustment process
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- Usage of "Objectives and Key Result" planning and review process – monthly or quarterly review of achievements
	Participant 2-2	56:30	- Central planning of marketing roadmap containing campaigns - Execution of these campaigns made for the core market (Germany) and the usage and adoption of these campaigns has to be defined by local subsidiaries
	Participant 2-2	01:01:14	1) "Quarterly Market Community Call" - to collect requirements from subsidiaries 2) Alignment with sales 3) Translation into key figures 4) Translation of key figures into marketing roadmap to operationalize targets
	Participant 2-3	15:41	- Break down from corporate strategy to department strategies - Diverse alignment meetings with regional teams and departments to ensure that the department targets do support each other
	Participant 2-3	17:53	- Communication strategy is always in relation with the overall corporate strategy - Dynamic adoption of plan in the course of the year typical
	Participant 2-3	19:22	- 18-month planning cycle to determine topics and derive actions plans that will be used for budget planning
	Participant 2-3	20:23	- Budget planning process is based on corporate and revenue targets - Harmonization between all departments made before final budget is approved
	Participant 2-3	51:00	- Consideration of complexity of systems is also affecting the planning, as a lot of tasks must be executed manually and interfaces between systems are not given comprehensively

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 2-4	13:14	- If a decision between two measures must be made, the board member selects the option which is most comprehensive to him
Company 3	Participant 3-1	29:51	- Usage of Customer Journey concept to develop communication campaigns and individual communication strategies
	Participant 3-1	36:58	- Implementation of campaigns is always based on customer journey and personal profiles - Identification of customer journey stage per target group is therefore required - Based on these insights, a communication measure planning is made and the communication channel mix to reach the target groups will be defined - Finally, execution of communication measures
	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Target group oriented approach (based on topics)
	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Campaign and target group oriented planning approach - Involved parties in campaign creation process are marketing and marketing communication - Dependent on the topic, product management and business development are involved additionally - Buying centre insights and market situation are basic inputs for the planning - Based on these insights, the communication channel mix is defined - Corporate guidance's have to be considered while creating communication measures
	Participant 3-1	58:31	- An annual planning is created, but with a certain flexibility
	Participant 3-1	01:00:39	- Budget is planned on the basis of previous experiences - Budget amount is more fix than the allocation of budgets on single measures
	Participant 3-1	01:16:48	- Management functions / business unit heads - Sales - Marketing teams (project responsibility) → Determine themes and content - Communication team heads - Marketing team heads → Moderate process to determine - Communication team - Marketing team → Create campaigns and execute them
	Participant 3-2	08:47	- Close coordination between marketing and marketing communication departments - General derivation of topics and measures from the strategy - Deriving communication measures from strategic topics is made jointly - Planning incorporates cross-cutting topics that apply to all business units - A specialist department for competition or product management are also involved in the conceptual phase
	Participant 3-2	13:54	- New tools and approaches are also tested and part of the planning
	Participant 3-2	17:59	- Frequent exchange with other communication departments of business unit to ensure cross-functional understanding of topics
	Participant 3-2	35:07	- Continuous optimization and if needed adjustments

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 3-2	35:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding communication target - Understanding target group - Understanding the market environment → What, to whom, how, at what time
	Participant 3-2	38:35	- Ad-hoc topics also part of the daily business - approached in the same way but with a reduced amount of planning
	Participant 3-2	39:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual roadmap planning to define targets etc. is scheduled for the beginning of the year - Annual planning outlines the general direction, but it does not contain already all details - Harmonization of main topics between business units is also one part of the planning process
	Participant 3-2	41:08	- Rough plan (Min 39:50 above) basis for resource and budget definition
	Participant 3-2	17:25	- Communication/campaign measures are derived out of the general (sales)targets
	Participant 3-3	33:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual planning cycle - Planning based on (strategic) topics and how to address them along the customer journey at certain touch points. - Touchpoint optimization
	Participant 3-3	34:36	- Plans are changing over the course of the annual period due to change in the relevance
	Participant 3-3	35:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and execution process always follows the premise of budget efficiency - Budget reallocations in the course of the year possible
	Participant 3-3	36:44	- Coordination with marketing department essential, as the budget belongs to marketing or sales and not to marketing communication
	Participant 3-3	40:56	- Planning based on corporate and business unit targets / target setting
	Participant 3-3	42:17	- Evaluations of measures help to optimes upcoming communication measures continuously
	Participant 3-4	13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience has shown that the more strategic you plan and measure, the more successful communication measures are - Instruments to measure the success sometimes are still missing
	Participant 3-4	16:09	- Customer journey is divided into “real touchpoints” e.g. trade fairs and “digital touchpoints” - both are part the planning process
	Participant 3-4	32:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defined process for communicating new products / topics 1) Kick off 2) Creation of 4C documents (approx. 2 month for preparation) 3) Review of 4C in different gremiums 4) Pre information internally 5) Adoption to local needs including concrete budget planning and decision on budget 6) Match between bottom up and top down - adoption of necessary 7) Execution
	Participant 3-4	34:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4C Principle for "Customer focus" instead of product focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer - Country - Costs - Channel

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 3-4	34:40	- 4C Principle mechanics (no similar concepts founds in literature - 4C concepts exists, but not with this view - e.g. https://geraldrichter.at/marketing-der-zukunft-ist-kommunikation/)
	Participant 3-4	41:44	- Marketing manager ensures the right quality of contents - Marketing manager acts in a mediator role
	Participant 3-4	43:27	- Implementation without additional approval from supervisor on marketing manager and communication expert level
Company 4	Participant 4-1	07:31	- Communication is still based on ad-hoc requirements from product management/sales - Product launch committee, consisting of marketing communication, product management and sales, defines launch activities and thereby communication measures - Jour fix ensures frequent exchange - Start to plan launch communication is approximately half a year before
	Participant 4-1	10:15	- Monthly meeting structure to align on operational topics - Clear responsibilities between marketing communication and product management
	Participant 4-1	11:37	- Marketing communication department is in the project lead for executing communication measures and therefore responsible to involve stakeholders depending on project timelines (e.g., trade fairs)
	Participant 4-1	18:56	- Annual roadmap planning - Monthly coordination meeting about updates, determination of channels and messages, review of roadmap planning for the next 3-6 month - Product launches scheduled based on trade fair calendar to increase awareness
	Participant 4-1	20:42	- Best argument wins - Open discussion culture - Decision-process runs smoothly - If a decision is taken, it will be executed with the full support - If there are different opinions and it does not come to a decision between sales, marketing and product management, the board will be ask - Alignment between sales, product management and marketing communication before final approval from Chief Officer
	Participant 4-1	22:33	- Joint approach of sales, product management and marketing: - Product management: benchmarking with competitors I also related to communication strategy and focus - Sales: Customer insights & what is requested by the customers - Marketing: ideas how to execute / promote
	Participant 4-1	26:15	- Budget alignment between Marketing communication head and CEO - Product manager does not question for instance the space at a trade show, as the alignment of the invest is discussed between marketing communication head and CEO
	Participant 4-2	20:12	- One element of planning is as well to ensure uniqueness of whatever is created
	Participant 4-2	21:51	- Continuous investment in equipment to ensure high quality of contents
	Participant 4-2	39:52	- Corporate strategy defines the general direction - Update frequency every 5-7 years

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate strategy process contains all departments who have to contribute to it - Sub-targets are derived out of corporate strategy and operational targets as the subsequence in addition - Strategy process and derived operational targets also critically question the current marketing communication channel mix - General communication trends are considered during this process in addition
	Participant 4-2	45:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget is planned based on experiences and previous years - Campaign budgets are planned with estimations - the content of the campaign will be defined with a certain flexibility later
	Participant 4-2	48:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequently exchange meeting with sales and product management
	Participant 4-2	51:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent update / alignment meetings with agencies to implement communication measures - Editorial meetings, project meetings
	Participant 4-3	12:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotating marketing plan who is determined jointly between sales, product management and marketing communication - Sales is determining where to go with regard to trade fairs - Contents are also defined / proposed by sales and product management - Joint decision between all three departments on relevance of topic, strategic positioning and budget
	Participant 4-3	12:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-perception: Everything is discussed and decided together, even if there is not so much critical discussion, because it is "self-evident"
	Participant 4-3	16:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO is involved in discussing a worked-out concept to also insert his thoughts and directions (if necessary), but the CEO is not deeply involved in operational topics
	Participant 4-3	16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales forecast can have implications on marketing communication activities - CEO is also involved in certain topics - for instance to approve budgets (especially larger budgets for trade fairs)
	Participant 4-3	22:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly jour fix - Trade show planning for upcoming year in the beginning of each year - Marketing roadmap does exist, but effects are not integrated (→ wish to integrate the results) - Involvement of subsidiaries exists, but can be improved
	Participant 4-3	19:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who benefits from the communication measure, pays the bill → subsidiaries have to spend the money for local trade fairs
	Participant 4-3	22:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jour fix between sales, product management, service and marketing communication to frequently align on planning
	Participant 4-3	38:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive management of market potentials is the target of sales. That is why sales and marketing are closely linked and both are related the overall corporate strategy - Active decision what to be communicated and what should not be communicated publicly - some topics are only communicated bi-lateral to ensure the competition is not aware of it
	Participant 4-3	43:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally, the communication channel mix is discussed frequently to ensure customer loyalty and relationship building - Split of communication channel mix is discussed based on actual needs (esp. from sales perspective) - Proposal to reach defined targets does especially come from the marketing communication department - Revenue and strategic direction of company for the upcoming year define the general direction of communication measures
	Participant 4-4	17:46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to limited number of customers and competitors of this market, the set of marketing communication channels and tools is restricted - Annual planning process starts during summer - As a result product management is creating a document with requirements on marketing communication

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Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
			- Budget and priorities are planned based on the requirements
	Participant 4-4	20:54	- Individual planning on communication expert level to select the right editorials etc. as the last step and contents are proactively collected
	Participant 4-4	25:00	- Setup of media partners is not always challenged in planning process, but a benchmarking to prioritise is available
Company 5	Participant 5-1	12:53	- Annual planning of business segments defines the basis for the annual communication planning - Iterative process to evaluate what kind of communication measures / campaigns are needed - Frequent update process to ensure that postponements are directly considered - Content creation process by with the extent of communication measures is also categorized into “S”, “M” and “L” packages, which also determine who is involved in the planning and execution process - Content creation process also determines contents and targets
	Participant 5-1	15:20	- Defined sizes for campaigns and decision process / involvement of stakeholder is dependent on campaign size - Stakeholders are especially involved during content creation process
	Participant 5-1	16:54	- Selection of channels dependent on the campaign size what contents are needed in specific and communication channels are selected in according with target group
	Participant 5-1	18:08	- Content creation process covers the alignment with all stakeholders about the extent and assets of campaigns
	Participant 5-1	19:35	- Creation of a message house contains main targets + main storyline and messages - Frequent exchange with operative marketing units to check implementation - Frequent exchange with business units to approve and detail message house - Approval of concept by Head of marketing or management board dependent on the size
	Participant 5-1	20:23	- Core messages are defined in Message House - Further details are than worked out in operative marketing streams - After approval, handover to operative from strategic marketing unit to operative marketing streams (live, digital, services)
	Participant 5-1	20:58	- Message house concepts ensures integrated marketing communication approach / consistency of messages across communication channels - Message House concept should ensure a consistent communication and tonality of messages across communication channels
	Participant 5-1	21:56	- Creation of annual marketing plan based on input from management board - Budgets are planned based on experiences and due to evaluation of campaign packages defined
	Participant 5-1	22:50	- Early knowledge about what topics will come and the planning process are required to be capable to handle the implementation with the limited number of resources available - Planning process enables to define priorities and lead to the discussion of what requests must be field
	Participant 5-1	56:09	- Sales organisation in region determines the communication channel strategy
	Participant 5-2	23:24	- Orientation on marketing communication heads vision considered in planning process - In the past, product management was determining the tasks for the marketing communication department - Product management defines the contents / texts - Breaking up old structures by being more transparent in discussing topics, concepts, timings jointly with business unit heads and management board

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Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 5-2	28:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In former times, decisions were especially based on who shouted the loudest → now, transformation towards an economically plausible argumentation is establishing - Strategic units are getting the inputs from business segments and initiate the conceptual design phase jointly with the operational teams (service, live, digital) - Approval of concept by marketing communication head and/or management board before implementation
	Participant 5-2	32:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational setup within marketing team as matrix organisation allows suitable processes to ensure efficiency of executing communication measures as well as to ensure the most appropriate resource allocation - Creation and implementation of measures is supported by agencies
	Participant 5-2	34:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content creation process defined and established with in total 12 process steps - Briefing phase with stakeholder - Conception phase and detailed measure planning marketing internal - Connecting message houses + budling communication messages from different message houses to packages
	Participant 5-2	36:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication internal evaluation how to combine different requests from different business segments to ensure campaign and communication efficiency
	Participant 5-2	37:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acting based on individual communication and target group targets - Campaign package size also indicates what kind of communication measures are possible and which communication channels should be used - Planning process of upcoming year starts during summertime in the previous year → based on product roadmap and general topics to be highlighted
	Participant 5-3	31:02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational setup with matrix organisation within marketing communication department helps to plan and implement communication measures much more structures and fact based rather that uncoordinated as before
	Participant 5-3	33:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of multiple communication measures in parallel also considers to address the right topic to the right target group rather than addressing multiple messages at the same time to all target groups
	Participant 5-3	35:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Message house to be defined in a joint approach with all relevant stakeholders - Message house contains communication target, main messages, communication channel set for content distribution
	Participant 5-4	14:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selection on communication channels based on topic / content itself and is discussed with stakeholders
	Participant 5-4	17:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication department must incorporate business unit during planning processes to elaborate on topics
Company 6	Participant 6-1	32:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales strategy determines marketing planning - Determination which products and topics needs to be supported and based on that, marketing communication must elaborate how to awareness for the product/topic
	Participant 6-1	36:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgets from previous years and allocation is generally used as basis for the upcoming planning discussion
	Participant 6-1	58:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between communicating the future for story telling reasons and promote sellable products - Decision-making process includes stakeholder management to convince all by creating a benefit for all parties (e.g., combining sellable products + future topics)
	Participant 6-1	59:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong self-competence in corporate communication and marketing communication team - Concepts will be worked out in corporate communication and marketing communication team (also jointly) before obtaining the approval from the management board

Appendix 22 – Decision-making processes

Company	Participant	Time code	Decision-making process, elements and involved stakeholders
	Participant 6-2	11:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80/20 approach to increase synergies between business segments in decisions. - Individual business unit requirements cannot always be considering to 100%, if the aim is to lift up synergies across the business units
	Participant 6-2	22:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agile development process for digital communication channels (especially website) - Most improvements are considered as "continuous improvement" and wished are taken up in backlog - External support is only requested in bigger projects
	Participant 6-2	26:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual roadmap will be determined at the beginning of a year - Scrum process every 3 weeks to determine priorities - Not everything decision is made based on a business case, but steered by priorities (e.g., which business unit has requested it and how relevant is the business unit in the overall context)
	Participant 6-3	30:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning session during summer for upcoming year on top management level to determine budgets and generally contents
	Participant 6-3	30:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second planning round takes place on business unit level - Contents of business unit are mainly determined by themselves and in the given budget
	Participant 6-3	31:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General frame of topics is generally defined on corporate level - Corporate identity is defined on corporate level and have to be used by business units
	Participant 6-3	32:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of budget from business units by CMO on corporate level - Product launches with high business relevance are handled as separate topic, linked to relevance of business unit - Planning period between summer and autumn is on operational level, but. not on strategical level
	Participant 6-3	33:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actual/target comparison on quarterly base
	Participant 6-3	35:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product manager, sales manager and portfolio manager are involved in process to evaluate market approach before the budget round - It will be determined which product has to be launched, how it should be positioned and what other products should be advertised
	Participant 6-3	36:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General target positioning of company also affects communication planning and the selection of media, as the most appropriate way to support positioning should be selected

Appendix 23 – Strategic marketing communication development

Main reference: Interview Guide question 24

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	52:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous evaluation process based on experiences and learnings - No concrete vision, more practical oriented and developments are based on incoming needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete vision or mid-term / long-term strategy to develop communication channels - Developments are based on incoming needs - No concrete development plan for social media - Tool investments are budgeted within overall marketing department
	Participant 1-1	01:03:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No mid-term planning and strategy - Planning and development based on available resources and therefore determined by actual resources 	
	Participant 1-1	01:04:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driver for developments is basically the "lead" and the need to optimise lead management 	
	Participant 1-2	43:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No development plan for social media and topics does not have a high priority on management level out of communication expert perspective - Communication expert is more asked to support project work instead of investing time to develop social media channels 	
	Participant 1-2	01:08:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of strategic topics from communication experts is quite rare - If needed, support in new topics, e.g., building up a communication strategy for service 	
	Participant 1-3	37:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic marketing communication roadmap does not exist - Communication plan of topics including a channel distribution plan does exist 	
	Participant 1-4	32:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It can be the case that investments into tools / expanded use of tools is planned and therefore budgeted (from Marketing side) 	
	Participant 1-4	42:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project currently in implementation: SEO based on key word list 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	01:02:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tool development follows operational needs - Marketing (communication) strategy derived and aligned based on corporate strategy - Direction of next steps is defined (e.g., topic-based steering instead of channel-based) - Implemented improvement process based on KPIs - Communication channel mix is always challenged - Roll-out of new tools and features started in most relevant country before global roll-out
	Participant 2-1	01:05:48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tool development follows operational needs - Level of regional development also dependent of regional status and tool usage as well 	
	Participant 2-1	01:08:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing / Marketing Communication strategy is determined in line with corporate strategy 	
	Participant 2-2	00:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformation from "channel responsible" to "topic responsible" is currently running - Topics should be based on customer journey analysis in the future 	
	Participant 2-2	18:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim is to make measures measurable in order to be able to demonstrate success. 	

Appendix 23 – Strategic marketing communication development

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	25:26	- Understand the mechanics of communication (channels) first as a team and elaborate on it and then get external support to scale	
	Participant 2-2	29:46	- New ideas from students, etc. are also considered and worked out more in detail by final papers etc. of the students	
	Participant 2-2	34:27	- Approach to derive learnings based on KPIs from projects to further improve channels and campaign effectiveness is installed and mindset change towards a more data driven argumentation is currently being built	
	Participant 2-2	54:59	- Communication channel mix is continuously under discussion to ensure that needs of the markets and subsidiaries are well reflected - News initiatives like a blog a developed for the German market first and then will be rolled out / adopted to countries	
	Participant 2-2	01:05:28	- Key topics defined by Marketing Communication head - Responsibility to develop channels is responsibility of the channel owner itself especially	
	Participant 2-3	15:41	- Communication measures and department strategy are derived and aligned with corporate strategy	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	47:14	- Tool and communication landscape development is steered by the corporate holding communication tool team - No communication tool / channel development on business unit level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate team within company holding is taking care about landscape and tool development - Established KPI dashboards help to evaluate success of measures and campaigns for steering communication activities - New tools are tested based on communication targets - Lessons learned are shared frequently within organisation across marketing communication teams - Monitoring and benchmarking with other competitors
	Participant 3-1	50:00	- New tools are introduced by pilot tests and projects - Targets of pilot projects can differ so that a discussion of deliverables as well as requirements from multiple stakeholders can arise	
	Participant 3-2	32:41	- KPI dashboards for different channels established and used to define direction within conception phases	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	- Benchmarking (with main competitors) - Testing and evaluation for success	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	- Lessons learned sharing trough pilots in other business segments.	
	Participant 3-3	16:09	- Digital touchpoints easier to optimise because more analytics are possible	
	Participant 3-3	27:16	- Testing of new tools possible	
	Participant 3-4	13:15	- Target group analysis - Tracking of campaign success - Strategic development based on digital customer journey knowledge and step by step further improved information about the customer behaviour along	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	- "Sales Strategy Innovation" teams to test channels etc.	

Appendix 23 – Strategic marketing communication development

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbouring department to "Sales Marketing Promotion" department - One person in "Marketing Promotion" department 	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	07:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No ad-hoc decisions - a long-term oriented business development is targeted due to owner structure (family owned) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideas to develop marketing communication landscape do exist, but are not formally structured or defined in a development roadmap - Stronger involvement of marketing communication within company strategy and processes currently discussed
	Participant 4-2	24:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider trends and anticipate them by staying informed 	
	Participant 4-2	28:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall target: Communicate that Company 4 is a trustworthy company and partner - Tool development that supports this target, e.g., direct appointment scheduling, are developed step by step and based on needs 	
	Participant 4-2	56:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideas what to build up exists, but are not structured or written down in a roadmap or plan 	
	Participant 4-3	43:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General five-year strategy and a three-year planning to outline general direction of company - Communication can anticipate from it (especially regarding contents) - Development of communication channels is a general and continuous discussion to evaluate how to intensify customer loyalty 	
	Participant 4-3	50:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over-formalisation of optimisation and KPI tracking not considered relevant due to the size of the company - Driver to develop communication, sharpen key messages, etc. are live events, as there is a defined deadline to accomplish topics 	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transformation from print to online (jointly with publishers) is a topic that is driven by communication head and experts - Long lasting process also because current target group is still favour print 	
	Participant 4-4	40:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boost from paid to earned in online media - Strategy contains both, but target picture is clear: address own contents via owned social media channels e.g., LinkedIn or Twitter 	
	Participant 4-4	51:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New strategy process created and under construction - New strategy process also contains a work stream about marketing communication - Continuous discussion on communication channel development but no concrete roadmap so far 	
	Participant 4-4	54:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-term plan should be derived out of new strategy process for marketing communication 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	45:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking is a topic considered to evaluate communication channel mix and communication measures - Usability study conducted last year the first time to optimise online channels and develop channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking with competitors and B2C - Vision of marketing communication department head is driving the current development

Appendix 23 – Strategic marketing communication development

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every 2-3 years, a customer insight study is conducted to generate new insights about customer behaviour - Generally, marketing communication department has development positively in the last 4-5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall annual target(s) are defined to implement this vision
	Participant 5-2	11:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing of new things e.g., social selling in conducted - Benchmarking with main competitors and B2C to detect new trends 	
	Participant 5-2	14:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General strategy for digitalization also drives growing attention of digital communication channels and marketing team 	
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development based on marketing communication heads vision - Vision of marketing communication head since start in beginning of 2020: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Being more digital / think more digital → website as core medium, from which everything else will be derived 2) Being more strategic → instead of executing tasks all the time ad-hoc by proactively discussing topics upfront, aligning on annual marketing plan, concepts and timelines 3) Being more international → to ensure a more consistent and stronger brand experience around the globe 	
	Participant 5-2	29:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of matrix organisation within marketing department supported to streamline processes and has empowered operating marketing communication functions in the first step (→ to break up endless correction loops) - As second step, process streamlining is defined as target for the upcoming year 	
	Participant 5-2	30:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies - Harmonization of processes and quality improvements are currently a topic 	
	Participant 5-3	33:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete communication roadmap for the upcoming years 	
	Participant 5-3	43:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No proactive suggestions from freelancer / agency for channel development - Most ideas are internally developed 	
	Participant 5-4	19:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topics like sales configurators are long-lasting projects which always needs to be adjusted and are ongoing 	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	11:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80/20 solution that applies to all regions and business segments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In frequent intervals, the company's strategy is adjusted and thereby harmonized with marketing communication strategy and tool developments
	Participant 6-2	32:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy workshops to evaluate current communication channel approach and possible gaps - Consequences are derived and measures taken to tackle identified gaps (e.g., a more data driven based decision-making should be built) 	

Appendix 23 – Strategic marketing communication development

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 6-2	34:29	- Diverse departments - Sales departments, Digital Team, e-commerce shop team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agile framework methods to develop online marketing landscape - Benchmarking with competitors - Pull and push strategy to develop marketing communication landscape and approach (pull = involvement of organisation and specialist departments e.g., sales; push = mid-term strategy of company) - Strategy development is first of all a separate process in parallel to budget planning
	Participant 6-2	37:11	- Agile framework to develop digital tools jointly with the IT department	
	Participant 6-2	41:14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing of new initiatives and creation of business case - Taking development decisions based on created business case 	
	Participant 6-2	50:17	- Building and testing minimum valuable products to proof value and afterwards to the roll-out	
	Participant 6-2	52:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of digital channels always based on pull- and push initiatives - Push: Strategic decisions that determine mid-term strategy - Pull: Ideas out of organisation that develop to a general "push" initiative 	
	Participant 6-2	59:26	- General approach / tactics how to approach customers along customer journey are critically discussed throughout strategy workshops	
	Participant 6-3	26:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optimization of marketing mix always have to be in accordance with general market and economic situation - Every crisis leads to different customer behaviour - adoption of communication strategy is especially than required 	
	Participant 6-3	38:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic development is a separate process besides the annual budget process - Strategic process contains evaluation of current setup, benchmarking and analysis of customer behaviour among other things - Strategic definition of future marketing communication setup is defined first internally before discussing the thoughts with the business units - Strategic evaluation supposed to be executed every second / third year 	
	Participant 6-3	40:34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic process contains in concrete the evaluation of communication channels and the communication channel mix - Clarification of interfaces and priorities 	
	Participant 6-3	41:14	- Timing of strategic evaluation also dependent on economic situation of company (e.g., such an evaluation will not take place during a recession)	
Participant 6-3	44:00	- Continuous improvements and developments of digital media necessary and critical for success		

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	22:08	- Measuring the success and effectiveness of marketing communication is especially possible in digital marketing, but not that much in offline media / print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measuring success appropriately - Monitoring of success / lead tracking - Implementation of “modern” CRM and usage of CRM data within marketing - Lack of interfaces between tools in use - Lack of resources - Decisions primary based on experiences and individual knowledge
	Participant 1-1	45:56	- Implementation of new CRM system - Manual work to combine sales and marketing communication knowledge - Political driven behaviour not to share information, because of employee control	
	Participant 1-2	08:33	- Lack of resources to handle all communication channels properly - also compared to mother company, which does have more resources	
	Participant 1-2	01:04:57	- Strong silo knowledge - Missing transfer of knowledge	
	Participant 1-3	06:09	- Lack of resources	
	Participant 1-3	07:24	- A bunch of good ideas how to develop, but due to lack of resources a strong focus is needed	
	Participant 1-3	9:54	- Lack of direct measures (revenue is normally generated 12-18 month after the potential initial measure)	
	Participant 1-3	10:09	- Tracking / monitoring of measures is tricky as tools are missing and system landscape in lacking interfaces - Major pain point is an outdated CRM system	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- Decisions are only built on experiences and individual knowledge	
	Participant 1-3	34:28	- "Gate keeper" sales - Point of direct contact has the knowledge	
	Participant 1-4	09:10	- Market environment (oligopoly market) has led to the consequence that significance of marketing communication or in specific the success is not recognized with the organisation	
	Participant 1-4	13:16	- Brand awareness is especially in new business segments (e.g., digital offerings) not given to the extent the business segment would need it	
	Participant 1-4	15:27	- Organisational minds change from a technical product-oriented argumentation towards a value-based approach is currently happening and a challenge	
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- Lead monitoring is currently only limited possible	

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- New CRM system should also bridge currently missing interfaces between systems, which currently not allow to use the data for marketing purposes	
	Participant 1-5	29:44	- To many tools in use & due to missing interfaces a lack of transparency and the risk of losing information	
	Participant 1-5	29:44	- Missing interfaces lead to loosen of information and knowledge - Maybe also losing leads	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	37:53	- Interfaces between measures / communication channels not given / no possibility to track the user journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interfaces between tools / platforms are currently not given comprehensively - Data silos and exchange of data - Lack of analytic skills (within marketing communication department) - Organisational marketing communication skills are limited - Involvement of stakeholders in the right way - Mindset change towards customer value
	Participant 2-1	59:26	- Uncertainty as to whether the right data is being collected - Analysis possibilities of the tools limited - Too few skills in the team to make complex analyses	
	Participant 2-2	00:47	- Organisational silos do exist	
	Participant 2-2	05:06	- Unclear who is driving an online sales channel - marketing communication or sales	
	Participant 2-2	12:47	- Alternation of generations is impacting the organisational perception, as the management functions are partially do have a different perception of the organisation and organisational needs than the following generation on operational level	
	Participant 2-2	18:12	- Involving sales in the right way	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- (Regional) implementation and expansion of functionalities of CRM currently running - So far, huge manual effort to analyse the data - Limited access to data or in general data	
	Participant 2-2	36:15	- Measuring the success of marketing communication measures (Return on Marketing invest) along the customer journey is currently not easy and possible as information silos do exist	
	Participant 2-2	42:15	- Thinking in silos	
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- Other "incentives" are required to get support from sales teams to "maintain" customer data - otherwise a target group related marketing communication measure cannot be created - Other KPI system / Score card / mindset needed to put customer value in the centre of organisational thinking	
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- Other KPI system / Score card / mindset needed to put customer value in the centre of organisational thinking	
	Participant 2-3	44:21	- Online shop is not rolled out also due to internal hurdles and arguments against from sales	

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 3	Participant 3-1	29:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational capabilities limited about understanding concepts like customer journey in all relevant stakeholder groups besides marketing communication - Especially regarding the implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing complexity in marketing communication landscape - Organisational marketing communication capabilities are limited - Target group specific communication (along customer journey) - Social media capabilities of management - Rigid budget planning - Data security and access (DSGVO)
	Participant 3-1	01:00:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rigid budget planning - Currently flexibility to react to market conditions is quite limited, but a change is recognizable 	
	Participant 3-1	01:16:48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Inventory-based" budget planning is too rigid 	
	Participant 3-2	04:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing complexity and disruptive technologies leading to a high dynamic which challenges the ability to keep the organisational capabilities on a high level 	
	Participant 3-2	27:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing Communication is receiving too few insights from customers to be able to address communication in the best way. 	
	Participant 3-2	07:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complexity of products is high → challenge to transfer it to comprehensive communication messages 	
	Participant 3-2	19:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple platforms and communication channels are available - Challenge is to select the right once as well as the approach to address a specific target group 	
	Participant 3-2	30:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central platform that combines tracking, reporting and optimization is missing - Fragmented tracking 	
	Participant 3-2	51:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of effort to evaluate and select the required customer data to set up marketing measures 	
	Participant 3-2	54:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target group-oriented communication can be improved - requires access to data, etc. 	
	Participant 3-2	54:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future challenge: target group specific targeting 	
	Participant 3-3	19:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data security (DSGVO) is limiting the tracking possibilities 	
	Participant 3-3	26:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the right marketing information to the right salesperson at the right time can be a challenge in bigger organisations 	
Participant 3-4	28:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media capabilities of organisational stakeholders could be improved / lack of capabilities 		
Company 4	Participant 4-1	29:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small organisation with limited resources - Selecting the right channels is therefore a challenge as well and a higher risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM data access and quality - Trust in marketing communications department expertise is not given completely - Organisational marketing communication skills are limited
	Participant 4-1	17:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convincing sales to also use social media and gain experience / building capabilities is a topic 	

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 4-2	38:18	- Macro-economic factors and their influence on business is hard to predict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of feedback from sales and product management - Lack of IT capabilities - Workload in contradiction with identifying marketing trends comprehensively
	Participant 4-2	50:41	- CRM data base is available but data for communication purposes is not available	
	Participant 4-2	53:34	- Detecting all trends / reading all latest information to develop marketing communication is not feasible due to the amount of information	
	Participant 4-3	31:13	- Lack of IT capabilities	
	Participant 4-4	09:31	- Hard to improve organisational capabilities - Willingness to learn is limited as all the time similar "basic" questions about marketing communication must be answered	
	Participant 4-4	13:08	- Improvements of internal communication to be more transparent about processes and efforts of marketing communication department	
	Participant 4-4	15:20	- Often information is not necessarily shared upon request of marketing communication (justification for requesting information needed).	
	Participant 4-4	33:57	- Trust in competencies of marketing communication department is not all the time given	
	Participant 4-4	56:45	- Lack of feedback from sales and product management - Useful data in CRM system would be helpful to further improve / is currently a challenge	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	22:50	- Lack of resources to handle incoming requests from business units, product management or sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources to cover all required tasks comprehensively - Skill enhancement (within organisation and marketing communication team) - Defining the right benchmark criteria - Good (CRM) data quality
	Participant 5-1	34:09	- Usage of comprehensive benchmark data is challenging	
	Participant 5-1	28:34	- Lack of resources (personal as well as budget) lead to a reduced quality and quantity)	
	Participant 5-1	34:09	- Challenge to find appropriate benchmark data for a suitable comparison of its own performance	
	Participant 5-1	52:55	- Lack of organisational marketing communication capabilities is teams, also due to alternation of generations	
	Participant 5-1	52:55	- Skilled and smart people in marketing communication team, but sometimes lack of experience	
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- Bad marketing controlling lead to challenges for requesting higher budgets	
	Participant 5-2	51:34	- To specific expertise of marketing communication colleagues in department so that a training program to wider capabilities (e.g., project management capabilities) was established	
	Participant 5-3	11:53	- Generally, impression that a lot of employees do have to workload that does not allow to handle everything	

Appendix 24 – Current challenges of marketing communication departments

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Situation leads to partially less quality or lack of support	
	Participant 5-3	15:44	- Channel unspecific contents are used currently	
	Participant 5-3	45:05	- Clear customer profile is missing as well as lack of customer insights	
	Participant 5-4	24:10	- CRM system is constantly developing in all companies and there is no status quo where everything globally is comprehensible filled - Data maintenance always differs per country and per group of people who maintain it	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	01:41	- Amount of internal change communication is high due to several organisational changes - internally and externally driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic market environment vs. agility of company - Lack of authority to drive (holistically) CRM initiatives as marketing communication department - Lead quality - Budget limitations - Digital transformation of company
	Participant 6-1	09:44	- Changing target group and entering new customer segments is a current challenge	
	Participant 6-1	17:28	- Agility, especially related to digital communication tools and the capability to react quick - Upcoming competitor / start-ups are challenging the status quo and changing the environment - Organisational minds change from "live events" to digital first thinking	
	Participant 6-1	20:29	- Lack in speed and agility in purchase funnel process	
	Participant 6-1	22:42	- Disruption of market though start-ups	
	Participant 6-1	58:06	- Political behaviour due to different target settings	
	Participant 6-2	30:49	- Lead quality is frequently an issue	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	- Sales does not take over generated leads from social communication channels	
	Participant 6-2	41:14	- Sometimes lack of authority to drive CRM initiatives / lead processes	
	Participant 6-2	56:08	- Increasing complexity, but not the resources to handle it all and built capabilities in parallel	
	Participant 6-2	57:00	- Internal politics - With the digital transformation of a company, also marketing communication can strategically position themselves for different topics	
	Participant 6-3	27:33	- Quality of agencies due to lack of product and use case understanding (as complex products have to be explained)	
	Participant 6-3	43:14	- Limited marketing communication budget below average → change necessary and currently a challenge to build image and increase awareness	
	Participant 6-3	45:47	- Digital transformation of company	

Appendix 25 – Room for improvement

Appendix 25 – Room for improvement

Additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-2	39:04	- If resources would be available, testing and usage of additional features and functionalities in social media (as currently are only basics are used)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced usage of social media (in addition to the basics) - Education of sales teams / Improve sales departments social media capabilities - Expand share of digital media in marketing communication mix - Create interfaces between tools / platforms - Extension of CRM functionalities - Detail and update persona profiles
	Participant 1-3	34:28	- Education of sales teams about mechanics of digital communication tools - Persuasion work	
	Participant 1-4	25:43	- Due to oligopoly, company is known and the usage of additional would be therefore less relevant - Possibly a bit more digital media instead of print	
	Participant 1-5	18:40	- Room for improvement regarding joint promotions with customers - Reference and user stories promoted by [Company 1] customers / partners - The customer and / or partners as a multiplier of a communication message	
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- Interfaces between platforms required - Update of CRM to integrate marketing communication insights - Lead management is currently missing due to an inhomogeneous landscape of systems without interfaces	
	Participant 1-5	21:22	- Positioning of brands as well as updating persona profiles can always be improved	
	Participant 1-5	42:31	- Deeper integration into customer eco system by creating more interactive digital touchpoints can be improved	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	18:30	- Far away from calculating a reliable Return on Marketing Invest value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve reliability of return on marketing communication invest KPI - Expand KPI oriented target steering - Intensify interaction and involvement of foreign countries / subsidiaries in planning - Improve international brand appearance - Create interfaces between tools / platforms - Extension of CRM functionalities
	Participant 2-1	37:53	- Lack of interfaces hinders the development and improvements of marketing communication measures	
	Participant 2-1	59:26	- Improvements of data evaluation possibilities and capabilities needs - Tools in use must be updated in addition	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- (Regional) implementation and expansion of functionalities of CRM currently running - So far, huge manual effort to analyse the data - Limited access to data or in general data	
	Participant 2-2	34:27	- Approach to work based on KPI's and defined targets is defined, but it is currently in development rather than already established	

Appendix 25 – Room for improvement

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Lack of data basis and analytic capabilities within company	
	Participant 2-2	42:15	- Break down silos by working together with the relevant stakeholder e.g., sales - Be more empathetic and see yourself as a conflict resolver	
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- Successful development of marketing communication requires to rethink the KPI's used in the organisation - Change necessary towards customer benefits because not everything can be measured based on a figure	
	Participant 2-3	47:50	- More KPI driven discussions are requested	
	Participant 2-3	58:18	- Exchange / interaction with subsidiaries in foreign countries can be further improved	
	Participant 2-4	09:20	- A stronger international cooperation and by this a stronger brand appearance	
	Participant 2-4	21:41	- Unification of topics international could be improved	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	29:51	- Customer Journey concept well established as tool to develop a campaign or communication strategy, but for the implementation itself, room for improvement is seen - Mostly, expertise and experience of stakeholders is limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve Customer Journey implementation / Customer Journey driven thinking - Improve data transparency (along the Customers' Journey) - Merging monitoring tools to produce more comprehensive and holistic assessments - Improve sales departments social media capabilities
	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Value based communication approach - Theme or campaign-oriented approach	
	Participant 3-2	30:43	- Interfaces between different platforms to push communication but also tracking, reporting and optimisation are needed - One central tool to coordinate all communication channels as well as for monitoring, as everything currently is dispersed in different tools	
	Participant 3-2	28:50	- Train and involve sales departments more actively to improve effectiveness of digital interaction	
	Participant 3-3	19:54	- Transparency in tracking / monitoring (which is challenged by data security regulations)	
	Participant 3-4	25:47	- Transparency in data and sharing of data coming from direct sales - Gaining more transparency along the digital customer journey	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	17:35	- Convincing sales to also use social media and gain experience / building capabilities is a topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve sales departments social media capabilities - Improve metrics and KPI measurement - Improve customer group targeting - Systematic usage of YouTube - Access and usage of (right quality) CRM data for marketing communication purposes
	Participant 4-2	21:51	- There is always a possibility to develop yourself	
	Participant 4-3	22:56	- Gaining more transparency in communication channel split and evaluation of measures - Involving subsidiaries more than until now on a more frequent basis	
	Participant 4-3	31:13	- Lack of IT capabilities	

Appendix 25 – Room for improvement

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 4-3	34:22	- "Digital touch and feel" - work more with augmented reality - Online shop and self-shopping, interfaces for digital purchases	
	Participant 4-3	34:22	- Targeting of specific customer groups online can be improved - More HR marketing / employee branding needed	
	Participant 4-4	47:41	- Image and brand could be strengthened to be also attractive as employer brand	
	Participant 4-4	49:22	- YouTube is used as a channel, but not systematically - Topic about voice e.g., podcasts, could be a new and potential channel	
	Participant 4-4	54:59	- Missing CRM, access, and transparency of available customer data - Currently missing tools lead to "untargeted" execution of communication measures	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	45:12	- Recently started to continuously improve knowledge about market and customers via a dedicated "customer excellence" team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve / expand SEO activities - Reduce website contents to main messages - Reinforce customer and market knowledge exchange
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- Channel usage improvements for Google Adds, YouTube Marketing	
	Participant 5-3	16:27	- More resources needed for SEO and tools	
	Participant 5-4	06:11	- It is not enough to increase number of website visitors. Additional conversions and offerings needed	
	Participant 5-4	06:32	- Too much content on website and USP's are product benefits are less recognisable due to the mass of information	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	17:45	- Ability to be quick and agile - A more digital mindset is needed - Even though personal exchange with customers remains the most relevant touch points, a digital first mindset needs to be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve agility to execute measures - Establish digital mindset - Improve CRM lead management process (esp. all incoming leads from social media) - Intensify usage of online advertising - Increase social media usage and frequency
	Participant 6-1	20:29	- Process from awareness to purchase is far too long, also in comparison to competitors	
	Participant 6-1	31:18	- A stronger focus / more attention on digital communication, even though the extend of the marketing mix is perceived as good	
	Participant 6-2	15:04	- Deeply integrated and diverse marketing team instead of agency coordination	
	Participant 6-2	41:14	- Sometimes lack of authority to drive CRM initiatives/lead processes	
	Participant 6-2	46:35	- Online adverting is represented rarely	
	Participant 6-2	47:08	- Less usage of online advertisements	
	Participant 6-3	24:18	- Additional possibilities are always there - Last years were determined by budget cuts, not only because of covid	
	Participant 6-3	28:27	- More social media usage required - with appropriate contents and on a higher frequency	

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Main reference: Interview Guide question 28

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	01:03:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nearly no marketing responsible in region - Coordination of events is done in a joint approach with HQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Majority of people is located in headquarter - Headquarter supports local activities e.g. event support - Local adaptation especially in Asia Pacific area needed due to language and cultural barriers - Local activities are not always approved and aligned with the headquarter - Headquarter sets the frame
	Participant 1-2	01:13:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No differentiation between headquarter and branch offices, as majority of people responsible for marketing communication are located in the headquarter - Subsidiaries are more independent, also due to different cultural / mentality backgrounds 	
	Participant 1-2	01:16:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate design is defined by headquarter but not consequently used by subsidiaries - Approval process of locally created marketing communication measures is not always adhered (and a local communication measure maybe not approved) 	
	Participant 1-3	45:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local marketing communication needs to exist - In specific, marketing communication responsible are installed in the Asia Pacific area - also due to cultural and language barriers - Most of the time, bigger projects like trade shows, are organized jointly between region and headquarter 	
	Participant 1-5	39:14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic marketing is responsible for everything external - Everything that is relevant to the customer - Local needs like WeChat, what is not customer relevant, is handled by sister company locally 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	08:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each region does have its part time marketing responsible who does have an interface to the central marketing department - Role of regional marketing responsible can be multiple - sometimes not only responsible for marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headquarter sets the frame - Headquarter does not have a direct influence on budgeting → possibly different priorities - Roll out centrally defined marketing mix activities is generally the aim - Ensure uniform representation is seen as important, but at the same time a challenge - Quarterly exchange with regions - Local campaign creation for topics with local impact
	Participant 2-1	50:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subsidiaries / local entities do have their own budget process. - General roadmap from head quarter is aligned, but local topics are added based on the needs - Head quarter functions can support, but not part of the budget process / discussions → No direct influence from marketing communication on budget planning of regional entities 	

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	54:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headquarter sets the frame (e.g., website design), but local entities do have the possibility to adapt to their needs - Roll out of centrally defined marketing mix is a current target (e.g., roll out of a blog) 	
	Participant 2-2	56:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing roadmap will be aligned with regions including 2-3 main campaigns that will be created by headquarter and should also be used regionally - Local campaigns, that only have a regional impact, also do exist and are created locally - Corporate design defines the frame for local activities 	
	Participant 2-2	59:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring a uniform representation is important On the example of social media: one corporate and mandatory post per month, rest of posts are local topics 	
	Participant 2-3	58:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly exchange meeting with regions - Headquarter topics and local topics are communicated in regions - Not all regions do have marketing teams or the same capabilities (dependent on the market situation) - In general, wide scope for action - Exchange / interaction can be further improved 	
	Participant 2-4	21:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General high influence from management board into regions, but ideally additional guidelines should not be required 	
	Participant 2-4	21:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unification of topics international could be improved 	
Company 3	Participant 3-2	58:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence depended on country and business unit - Direct influence given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence dependent on the country - Headquarter currently intensifies exchange with regions - Headquarter sets the frame and countries can request topics - Normally 1:1 usage of provided materials from headquarter - Main effort of foreign countries consists of translation
	Participant 3-2	59:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence on corporate holding topics is limited from business unit side - More indirect influence 	
	Participant 3-2	01:00:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign organisation / subsidiaries and headquarter continue to intensify interface - Cooperation also depended on topics e.g., regional focus roll outs, etc. 	
	Participant 3-2	01:00:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange circles and events for best practice sharing between headquarter and regions 	
	Participant 3-3	52:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources and capacities in regions are limited - Most of the regions are thankful to receive materials or get support from headquarter instead of doing everything by their own 	
	Participant 3-4	45:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normally, region uses material 1:1 provided by headquarter - Regular exchange meetings to communication and onboard regions what they can expect to receive 	

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Adoption in region (if necessary) depends on regional capacities / capabilities, but normally only additional materials will be produced	
	Participant 3-4	46:13	- Regions can request topics, but headquarter evaluates if this just of regional interest or something to be used in a more global context - Headquarter provides material in German and English - region takes care about further regional adoption / translation	
	Participant 3-4	47:14	- 90-95% of regional effort consists of translation of materials - Regional created materials and communication measures have to follow corporate design guidelines	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	18:56	- Monthly exchange meeting to also determine product launch timings and sales + marketing communication activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly exchange between headquarter and regions - Headquarter sets the frame - Main materials are created by headquarter functions – region has to add additional measures, if required - Most ideas are created within the headquarter, but regions can also address wished/topics - Local campaign creation for topics with local impact
	Participant 4-1	22:33	- Region has to define what they want to promote	
	Participant 4-2	32:40	- Created contents are shared with regions for further usage and distribution towards customers (e.g., editorials) to ensure multiple usage and most effective usage of budget	
	Participant 4-2	33:58	- Headquarter ensures CI and uniform brand image → headquarter defines contents / topics and selects what is communicated to ensure communication message consistency - As region is in profit and loss responsibility, the channel selection is in the responsibility of a subsidiary	
	Participant 4-3	19:28	- The one who owns the benefit, pays for it → regional trade shows are budgeted locally	
	Participant 4-3	21:05	- Strong central coordination, also due to the fact that new machines mean a high investment and often the number is limited - International coordination highly required and relevant	
	Participant 4-3	21:05	- Corporate Identity is defined, and regional marketing communication invests like trade shows always needs to be approved by headquarter responsible for marketing communication	
	Participant 4-3	22:56	- Stronger Involvement of branches in monthly update calls and roadmap plannings	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- Most of the ideas currently do come from headquarter, but also regional ideas will be taken up	
	Participant 4-4	59:18	- Strong headquarter oriented and top-down distribution - 95% of planning are dedicated towards main / headquarter country - Regions become a "marketing starter package" to implement measures regionally - Resources are limited regionally, that is why most of the centrally created contents are used	

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 4-4	01:01:14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nevertheless, regional campaigns are created in addition - Internal communication about upcoming topics is a joint communication from product management and marketing communication - Product management creates sales information and "sales toolbox" - Marketing communication creates "marketing communication box" with communication materials - Currently, both is distributed via separate channels 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	01:01:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headquarter prepares contents for international distribution - Provides contents normally in English with a few exceptions e.g. the product catalogue (provide all three years in 20 languages) - Region / country can decide what they are using out of all contents provides - International exchange of best practices in addition to be informed about local activities and evaluate regional ideas for international distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headquarter provides main contents for regions - Materials are provided in English and translations have to be handled locally - Lack of resources in headquarter to support local entities more - No appropriate feedback loops - Central customer understanding decreases with increasing distance
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing teams in countries do vary from 0,5 to 9 FTE - Some countries act completely independent from headquarter activities, other push out what will be provided 	
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approx. 150 employees in foreign countries are working in a marketing communication function - 1,5 FTE are responsible for coordinating country requirements and offer support. The rest of the headquarter functions is not comprehensively aware of regional customer demands 	
	Participant 5-2	42:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board member responsible for the sales entities in foreign countries is involving himself in marketing communication planning and provides insights 	
	Participant 5-2	59:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Missing resource in headquarter to steer foreign countries closer - Three kinds of foreign countries in terms of marketing communication measure adoption do exist: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Received contents, translate them, publish them 2) Localization of received materials / campaigns (and headquarter is not always aware of) 3) Receive campaign, but does not use it, because products are not available in country, etc. - Marketing communication head is functional supervisor - No appropriate feedback loop 	
	Participant 5-2	01:02:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is organized decentral 	

Appendix 26 – Decentralisation of decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Campaigns are provided in German and English and will be provided to regions / countries - usage and degree of adoption is different (see statement above)	
	Participant 5-3	38:30	- Ideas about online shop functionalities will be taken up and mapped with overall developments to ensure efficient integration	
	Participant 5-4	22:29	- Relevance and frequency of exchange with subsidiaries also dependent on size - Sometimes exchange only on operational level, as the size of the local entity is limited to operational labour - Customer understanding decreases with increasing distance	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	40:23	- Subsidiaries do have profit and loss responsibility, that why they must plan regional budgets - Sometimes, regional execution of marketing measures does not happen due to lack of budget (but the subsidiary also did not indicate that they do have a lack of budget) - Centrally provided corporate communication materials e.g., press releases are provided and are easy to adopt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80:20 rule to roll-out new features that support all rather than a 100% solution for 1 entity - Strict IT process forces regions to most of the time ask and incorporate headquarter functions for support - Steering by trust - Headquarter sets the frame - Budgets are planned locally and do have a different focus than headquarter would foresee it - Regional implementation sometimes not given due to budget reasons
	Participant 6-1	41:53	- Regional marketing communication manager, but no corporate communication manager - Budgets are planned locally and sometimes lack of marketing communication capabilities in local management and focus on serving regional customers rather than on building and strengthening brand image	
	Participant 6-2	11:35	- 80:20 rule to increase efficiency in when developing new digital solutions - Sometimes some hurdles because not all requests are served completely	
	Participant 6-2	53:37	- Most of the digital landscape developments are kicked off centrally, but sometimes also regional ideas are coming up - Strict IT process ensures that single regional solutions are rare	
	Participant 6-3	58:02	- Regional decision speed is key of success	
	Participant 6-3	59:49	- Steering by trust into local competencies - Defining the frame e.g., corporate image and design is key to success	
	Participant 6-3	01:01:41	- Sometimes different perspectives, regional cultures that lead to different opinions, but generally the target is to act cost efficient	

Appendix 27 – KPI’s considered

Appendix 27 – KPI’s considered

Main reference: Interview guide question 19

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	17:23	- Opening rates of e-mail newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newsletter opening rate - Generated revenue - Leads / Lead tracking - Qualitative Customer Feedback - New contacts - Follower - Customer satisfaction
	Participant 1-1	21:49	- Only digital channels are tracked - Also lead process is tracked	
	Participant 1-1	34:06	- Most relevant KPI is revenue, as it contributes to the company’s success	
	Participant 1-1	34:33	- Awareness is a secondary target	
	Participant 1-1	01:05:18	- Main driver of activities is the lead - Marketing communication head is working on this topic to improve the lead tracking	
	Participant 1-3	08:44	- Most relevant KPI is generated leads and quantity of contacts	
	Participant 1-3	17:07	- E-Mail / mailing opening rates - Response rate - Participation rate for webinars	
	Participant 1-3	29:35	- Quantity of contacts and prospects - Revenue	
	Participant 1-3	08:44	- Revenue - Sales Qualified Leads - Qualitative Customer Feedback - New contacts	
	Participant 1-4	10:48	- Sales qualified leads (especially prospects in new business segments)	
	Participant 1-4	19:12	- Quantity of followers on social media platforms e.g., LinkedIn	
	Participant 1-4	38:05	- Quantity of follower (for social media); annual target is also defined - Digital enabled leads / Sales qualified leads (and generated revenue from these leads) - Customer satisfaction (but not specifically for communication purposes as the Net Promoter Score is currently not actively communicated externally)	
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- Lead generation and lead monitoring	
	Participant 1-5	30:52	- Generated revenue (resulting out of leads coming from digital communication channels) - Quantity of follower in social media	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	16:17	- Reach in social media	

Appendix 27 – KPI’s considered

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-1	18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For social media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Click rates - Engagement - Qualitative Feedback - Return on marketing (ideally, but hard to calculate currently) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Click rates - Engagement - Qualitative feedback - Website visits - Contact requests in online channels - Leads - Newsletter opening rate - Webinar registrations
	Participant 2-2	36:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return on marketing invest 	
	Participant 2-3	31:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales Qualified Leads 	
	Participant 2-3	32:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar KPI’s e.g., webinar participants 	
	Participant 2-3	47:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website visits - Online generated leads / contact requests 	
	Participant 2-4	12:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening rate of e-mail newsletter - Leads 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:07:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brand / image is a KPI for the mother company communication team, but not for the business segment itself - Business segment KPI’s are defined along the Customer Journey e.g. Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image - Awareness in different stages of customer journey - Website KPIs - Website visits - Target group analytics - Campaign specific KPI’s - E-mailing opening rates - Video streams - Document downloads - Webinar registrations - Costs per click / lead
	Participant 3-2	32:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KPI dashboards for different channels established - Tracking of website data 	
	Participant 3-3	17:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales qualified leads (with different stages of interest) as campaign target 	
	Participant 3-4	13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target group analysis - Tracking of campaign success - Strategic development based on digital customer journey knowledge and step by step further improved information about the customer behaviour 	
	Participant 3-3	19:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign specific KPI’s - E-Mailing opening rates - Video streams - Downloads 	
	Participant 3-3	48:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs per click (in social media) 	
	Participant 3-4	13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign related KPI’s - KPI’s along customer journey 	
	Participant 3-4	18:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website visits - Web statistics - Campaign leads - Qualified leads / Hot leads (different levels of leads) - Tracking over time 	

Appendix 27 – KPI’s considered

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar registrations - Registrations by communication channel 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	23:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revenue target for products are defined before launch and communication measures should support to reach them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media: - Follower - Likes - Click rates - Costs per lead - Leads
	Participant 4-2	35:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital KPI’s easier to monitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Click rate - Costs per click - User journey (origin by channel) 	
	Participant 4-2	37:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likes - Follower 	
	Participant 4-2	38:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KPI matrix and concrete measures are hard to get + interconnections are to complex 	
	Participant 4-3	36:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main KPI’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales leads - Generated revenue 	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs per lead 	
	Participant 4-4	36:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product awareness - Lead generation 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	31:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image - Reach - Leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach - Leads - Digital events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registrations - No-show rates
	Participant 5-1	32:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No-show rates at webinars 	
	Participant 5-1	57:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registrations for (online) events - Analysis of channel origin for event registration 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	43:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media equivalent value - Qualified leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media equivalent value - Leads - Event KPI’s - Newsletter KPI’s - SEO rankings - Reach - Market budget ration to overall company revenue - Website behaviour - Awareness
	Participant 6-1	44:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper marketing controlling established - Event KPI’s - Newsletter KPI’s 	
	Participant 6-1	45:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantity of follower in social media - Engagement rates - Incoming leads via social media - Incoming sales and service requests 	
	Participant 6-2	28:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEO rankings - Lead value 	
	Participant 6-2	29:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach - Leads 	

Appendix 27 – KPI’s considered

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 6-2	30:49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales Qualified Leads - Reach 	
	Participant 6-2	32:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant KPI’s for trade shows: - Reach - Awareness 	
	Participant 6-3	43:14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing budget ration to overall company revenue 	
	Participant 6-3	44:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website behaviour (e.g., dropout rates) - Qualitative feedback via surveys 	

Appendix 28 – Formulation of communication targets prior to execution

Appendix 28 – Formulation of communication targets prior to execution

Main reference: Interview guide question18

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	32:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targets are defined upfront, at least annual targets are defined - Leads - Revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General targets e.g., generating business are outlined without a clearly defined KPI - No concretely defined communication goals before implementation
	Participant 1-1	35:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product awareness is of more relevance, as the company is known in the market 	
	Participant 1-2	50:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete social media targets defined upfront 	
	Participant 1-2	53:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often a target definition is forgotten in advance - The target is often to publish a content and after publication, the question will be discussed what should be the target and how to measure 	
	Participant 1-3	08:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally, generating sales / supporting sales is the overall target 	
	Participant 1-3	29:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KPI's are not defined upfront. Used KPI's are: - Quantity of contacts and prospects - Revenue 	
	Participant 1-4	19:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leads - Quantity of follower (in social media, especially LinkedIn) 	
	Participant 1-4	42:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete KPIs per communication channel - Defined key words for google ranking / SEO by which Company 1 want to be within the top 10 	
	Participant 1-5	30:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target for revenue and follower is defined for the upcoming year - "Hard KPI": Generated revenue via online communication channels / online customer platform - "Soft" KPI: Quantity of follower in social media (LinkedIn) 	
	Participant 1-5	32:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target for online sales via customer platforms is defined with a percentage share of the overall revenue 	
	Participant 1-5	32:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funnel for marketing qualified leads / sales qualified leads / offers / revenue is defined 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	26:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brand awareness is always a defined target for all communication activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General targets e.g., generating business or brand awareness are outlined without a clearly defined KPI - Monthly defined and tracked KPIs for social media and website
	Participant 2-1	26:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness is always a defined target for trade fairs - Generation of revenue is always defined as a target as well 	
	Participant 2-1	01:02:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly defined / tracked KPI's e.g. social media performance, website visitors 	

Appendix 28 – Formulation of communication targets prior to execution

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Monthly review to take actions if required	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- Cross-selling potential - Duration since last contact - Buying behaviour - Products purchased	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- Target setting can differ between regions and is used to determine marketing communication measures supporting business targets	
	Participant 2-2	34:27	- Approach to work based on KPIs and defined targets is defined, but is currently in development rather than already established	
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- Monthly and quarterly review of defined objectives and key results	
	Participant 2-3	22:40	- Overall communication targets are derived out of corporate strategy	
	Participant 2-3	46:48	- SEO / SEA key word lists and ranking is considered	
	Participant 2-3	47:50	- Website visitors - Leads (coming from website)	
	Participant 2-4	11:55	- Reach (Online channels) - Sales Qualified Leads - Turnover	
	Participant 2-4	12:05	- Opening rate - Leads - No concrete targets are not defined upfront	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:05:56	- Targets are defined upfront, but the quality differs within team - Some people determine their goals upfront with the SMART method, some only defined approximate goals and measures upfront	- Targets are generally defined upfront, but quality of targets and tracking differs currently dependent on team / responsible
	Participant 3-1	01:07:07	- Mother company also defines KPI's / targets which will be interrupted into business unit communication targets - KPI's are defined along the customer journey	
	Participant 3-3	38:26	- KPI's are not in specific used to monitor communication measure outcome for the next budget review	
	Participant 3-3	42:17	- No concrete goal setting for dedicated measure - Comparing effectiveness of similar measures done - Costs per lead / click	
	Participant 3-4	17:51	- No concrete communication measure targets are defined - Overall sales targets are defined and communication measures should support those, but there is not concrete goal defined upfront how the measure is contributing in specific	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	35:20	- Communication targets are defined upfront, but it's hard to measure KPIs	- General targets e.g., generating business are outlined without a clearly defined KPI

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication targets defined for communication - Qualitative feedback, if the originally intention was perceived in the same manner by the customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some targets defined upfront - Challenges to measure KPIs transparently
	Participant 4-3	36:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication measures should generally support sales targets 	
	Participant 4-3	38:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Besides the overall target to support sales targets, strengthening the image is also a general and overall target 	
	Participant 4-3	41:59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support customer loyalty in general with communication measures 	
	Participant 4-4	38:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targets are defined partially upfront, but they are not completely monitored - For events, a success evaluation is also made, but further lead tracking is not possible - A quantity of followers could also be determined upfront 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	31:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core objectives are defined prior to the implementation - If possible quantified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General targets e.g., generating business are outlined - Core objectives are defined up front for main communication measures e.g., campaigns
	Participant 5-2	37:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General campaign targets are determined by overall business unit objectives and communication measures are defined in relation to the business impact by the campaign size 	
	Participant 5-3	35:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General campaign targets are determined by overall business unit objectives and communication measures are defined in relation to the business impact by the campaign size 	
	Participant 5-4	14:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General communication approach / selection of communication channels is determined upfront with stakeholders to align on the right customer approach upfront 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	43:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete target setting up front, but main KPI's are tracked - Also, because the effects are not always directly recognizable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General targets e.g., generating business are outlined without a clearly defined KPI in every case - No concrete target setting up front, also because stakeholders like sales find it difficult to determine them
	Participant 6-2	28:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business impact is the driver of decisions - Evaluation not that easy - Assumptions about the impact still have to be make 	
	Participant 6-2	30:49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concrete KPI's are more defined internally within the marketing communication team - Sales department finds it difficult to specify concrete KPI's - Main measures: Sales qualified leads & reach 	
	Participant 6-3	53:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication targets are not determined in detail upfront, as it is always a face accuracy due to the fact that multiple aspects can affect the evaluation 	

Appendix 29 – Understanding of the term marketing

Examples in which context participants used the term “marketing” instead of “communication” or “marketing communication”:

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
Company 1	Participant 1-1	05:17	“All customers in this market know that. But with marketing , we don’t have the classic task of generating any attention.”
	Participant 1-1	39:08	“For me, marketing is totally simple. So, when you say: There is a customer journey, think of yourself as a customer or myself when I need something. Yes, I search for it on the internet, or I get information at some point, I need it on my journey and decision-making path, I gather information and that’s how you have to map it in this company. And the people who are in contact must somehow be empowered or provided with information at certain points. And then you can hope that they will talk intelligently with each other as soon as the dialogue starts and that we will be able to convince them with our products through the arguments that we provide. So, for me, it’s actually very simple.”
	Participant 1-2	11:25	“The only issue we still have is when we have new products and machines, when we go into niches, of course we are always looking at what else we can do. Of course, we can do a bit more. But because our marketing has to look and function in a completely different way and because the way we approach customers works in a completely different way than it does in companies that don’t have this theme, we work relatively autonomously, independent of [the group]. We often try to say that this and that are our ideas, but we often find out that it doesn’t fit for us and then we make our own variation.”
	Participant 1-2	22:29	“I have the feeling that marketing, marketing communication, especially lately with the topic of digitalisation, social media and so on, is becoming more and more fast-paced and that you just don’t lose touch. That means that you always remain greedy for new knowledge, but that you also always strive for creativity and then also look at what new possibilities there are.”
	Participant 1-2	26:24	“And that’s why we’ve been doing a lot about it lately. We want to focus more on that than on any marketing emails. That also works better than on social media.”
	Participant 1-4	09:10	“I would say we work in a market, so we are market leaders and we work in an oligopoly in the [product segment] and we have achieved market leadership without strong communication measures, without much marketing . We were organised in such a way that we, I’ll say it in quotes, the product sold itself. Of course, there were marketing documents and so on, but the marketing communications team was never very big either. Of course, we did some things and they were appreciated, but I wouldn’t say that the topic of marketing communication is very important in the company in terms of success.”
	Participant 1-4	16:49	“I just need that understanding. Marketing candidates would certainly need these skills. And it is certainly also helpful (---) to design and master classic campaign management. And online tools, when we work a lot with things like Hubspot, for example, that they have an understanding and can handle such tools with confidence.”
	Participant 1-4	29:59	“So based on this planning, we then decide at some point in the year, okay, what do we actually want to spend next year? To put it bluntly. So, what do we want to spend? And then we just make this plan and discuss it with our board and then they say ok, I think it’s good. Or they say we think it’s too much money for marketing and then we have to go a bit over and then we have to deal with less, make do with less.”
	Participant 1-5	19:28	“So, if the [manufacturer] markets its product in its channels, so to speak, then the reference to [Company 3] is the same and vice versa. Of course, we also have a competitive situation. You have to play it well, but on the one hand you have this multiplier in the social media and on the other hand you make some work easier for the customer, because you have to take over some

Appendix 29 – Understanding of the term marketing

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
			coordination [...]. And this cross- marketing , so to speak, with their partners for their customers, that is something we can also build on.”
	Participant 1-5	20:39	“Form is what I said earlier, the whole lead generation and lead tracking. Unfortunately, our current systems only allow for that to a limited extent. That’s why we are in the process of treating ourselves to a new CRM system. (-) Where we have a direct connection and tracking and transparency from the digital touchpoints, right through to the marketing people who do it, right through to the sales people who make the offers and get the orders at the end of the day.”
	Participant 1-5	43:57	“Yes, I just wanted to say that again. We are also a relatively small team in marketing and especially in communication, which the guys and girls have really managed to do, to use the content again. So we don't make brochures any more, but I still have the webinars, I have various social channels, I have internal customer communication. That the content really does have the same format and the same voice across all channels, so to speak. We don't have a channel manager, everything runs through marketing and communication.”
Company 2	Participant 2-1	24:28	“As an example, perhaps you are also trying to set up an e-shop in a pilot project in China. It is limited for local products. A marketing manager from China is ultimately responsible for this in the countries. Of course, there is a German counterpart who is also in charge of this, but none of them has experience in the eShop area.”
	Participant 2-2	31:21	“So, we have to make that transfer and it's welcome. And I'm also a big fan of doing that, I say! I'm also a big fan of looking at B2C marketing methods and seeing how they can be transferred to B2B. There is often the negative attitude that this is B2C, we don't do that. I don't agree. (--) So, a concrete example is really this SEO topic.”
Company 4	Participant 4-1	07:31	“So, this team also coordinates a lot. How do we communicate, what do we want to communicate and who does it? Because marketing then has to pass that on to the agency. And everyone has their role.”
	Participant 4-1	12:55	“Target group oriented marketing . We are active in the small niche market. It wouldn't make sense for us to advertise in the daily news or something, that would be really fatal money, but we have to reach very, very small target groups with our messages. And the challenge is, I think, to reach them with the new media, with LinkedIn campaigns, whatever.”
	Participant 4-2	05:15	“Then I have two marketing officers. One of them is mainly responsible for the social intranet, i.e., internal communication, but also for everything else that is done in the field of marketing . So, I would say from business cards to printed materials to video production, everything that concerns sales-supporting media. She is the contact person for the outgoing companies, for the colleagues in the foreign companies, i.e., the marketing colleagues in the foreign companies.”
	Participant 4-3	22:56	“At the beginning of the year, we have the trade fair planning and what I would still like to see. We also have a rough overview, i.e. a rolling marketing master plan, but I would like to see more structure there.”
	Participant 4-4	09:31	“But I would try to put it as diplomatically as possible. I think the added value that the marketing or marketing communication function can have is only recognised to a limited extent. As far as I think the classic corporate process, how it should usually run with interaction, marketing , sales, project management, I don't think everyone involved is quite clear about it.”
	Participant 4-4	13:08	“And of course that can also become a quick deck fire, if it's always “Yes, marketing will do that somehow” and ‘ marketing will make a cool campaign out of this’. That might go well once or twice, but in the long run it's not healthy either.”
Company 5	Participant 5-1	08:31	“And marketing itself also has a matrix structure. We gave it to ourselves two years ago in 2020. Before that, we were also clustered into purely operational units. So, the classic departments, so to speak, which did brochures and I don't know what, and were responsible for corporate design in general. Of course, digital media or whatever they were called at the time, the classic online channel and digital tools and live marketing , and we then changed this as a matrix, in that here again we have, so to speak, the vertical lines in a matrix and the horizontal central lines are now the so-called strategy units, where the content is collected.”

Appendix 29 – Understanding of the term marketing

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
	Participant 5-2	12:43	“ Marketing has a very high weight, a very high focus in the company. But as I said, the four instruments are naturally divided. In this respect, people also like to talk about marketing in other areas. But one always means different aspects. So, our owner is definitely very marketing -savvy, and you definitely notice that in the expenditure on big measures, big events, big trade fairs. Also, in terms of investing in the website in the long term. So that's enormously important to him, definitely.”
	Participant 5-2	23:24	“We are becoming more conceptual, more strategic, because the company is probably run in a very ad hoc way, maybe even the whole thing or at least the marketing is very ad hoc, was very ad hoc in the past. I have always used the image. In principle, product management leads marketing , has led marketing in the past, in other words, it is the extended workbench of product management. I know from many organisations that marketing is the extended workbench of sales, that sales says "Hey, my customer wants this and that - go for it". And then, at best, even tells them what they need. So not only flyers, but also what is written on them. Here, the product management even specifies the texts.”
	Participant 5-3	15:44	“You need this input in any case, and I know that texts were often written that were skimmed over by marketing and then packed and implemented operationally.”
	Participant 5-4	05:27	“And maybe for my taste they have a too strong, rather traditional approach with brochures and a very strong focus on trade fairs, which don't even take place anymore at the moment. And I think it would do us good to become a bit more digital in our marketing .”
	Participant 5-4	17:42	“The second step is probably similar: These are the priorities of the messages and then marketing with the operational instances gets to work and prepares the trade fair appearance or, or.”
Company 6	Participant 6-2	12:55	“The marketing demands were not yet excessive, and we were able to design it in such a way that it doesn't go into the area where you say it's okay now, you're damaging the brand or something. Or even the lead pipeline in the long term. So, we have cut back. But we've been able to do that moderately, and we've also been able to make our own decisions within that. So, the significance of that is actually quite good. In terms of personnel, of course, marketing was also affected. It was actually more the case that my boss made a weighting and said that digital marketing in particular is important, that it is also future-oriented, that it remains important and that it will increase rather than decrease.”
	Participant 6-2	19:09	“So this corporate communication only exists in [City], while marketing in many business segments also exists locally in the countries.”
	Participant 6-2	19:58	“If you take CRM as a very big pie, then we take care of marketing , a relatively normal area. We have divided the topic, so we have divided it up on the basis of the different, (--), positions in the sales funnel, you can say. And we are very high up. We have the campaign object. It's exactly what you said with communication control and we have the lead object as its result at the end.”
	Participant 6-3	00:14	“Yes, [Participant 6-3]. I am currently Chief Marketing Officer at [Company 6]. I am responsible for all marketing worldwide for the [Company 6] Group. This core task is extended by additional tasks, slash public affairs, where I am also in close exchange with [Participant 6-1]. There are certain overlaps.”
	Participant 6-3	13:15	“That is often underestimated. But the areas that do little marketing are the ones that depend on it. I'll put it bluntly now. As a [manufacturer], as a classic engineering area, the [Business segment] has little marketing , few customers, few new customers. This is changing because you have more new customers in the [industry] sector. They come immediately and realise, okay, we need more. Before, we know everyone, they know us, it only costs money. Doesn't help, but they are already there unconsciously anyway. Marketing and brand position and communication at the AG level have gone along for the ride, while [business segment] sees the importance just like the board of directors.”

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	00:32	- Responsible for all communication channels as well as internal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for internal and external communication - Creation of campaigns, storylines and contents - Execution of campaigns and communication measures - Supporting subsidiaries - Responsible for developing marketing communication landscape and tools - Ensuring corporate identity
	Participant 1-1	12:16	- Translation of technical features into customer benefits is one of the tasks	
	Participant 1-1	01:03:18	- Responsible for executing regional marketing measures e.g., trade fairs, as local entities do not have marketing communication managers	
	Participant 1-2	03:01	- Coordination of social media channels, content and campaign creation as well as agency coordination	
	Participant 1-2	26:24	- Creation of direct mailings in support of sales	
	Participant 1-2	57:21	- Strategic marketing does market research	
	Participant 1-2	01:01:41	- Marketing communication responsible to determine the content - Agency only responsible for implementation	
	Participant 1-2	01:01:41	- Agency support design / layout, creation of photo and video contents	
	Participant 1-2	01:01:41	- Support of central holding organisation / support department	
	Participant 1-2	01:03:19	- Support of central holding organisation / support department – seen as 'Media agency'	
	Participant 1-2	01:03:19	- Support of central holding organisation / support department for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media - Website 	
	Participant 1-3	00:54	- Marketing Communication is seen as "service department" to execute communication measures supporting sales	
	Participant 1-4	10:48	- Creation of corporate/customer magazine - Advert placement	
	Participant 1-4	28:07	- Responsible for media planning and definition of topics	
	Participant 1-4	29:05	- Selection of marketing communication channel mix and formats belong to marketing communication department	
Participant 1-5	08:35	- Marketing communication is responsible for the appearance of the company towards the external world / stakeholders - This incorporates the responsibility for corporate design up to the design of trade fairs, or general corporate design as well as the creation of suitable contents in communication channels used		

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 1-5	26:18	- Collecting customer feedback relies in the responsibility of account managers and people in direct contact, not specifically in marketing communication	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	00:23	- Market intelligence department as team of the marketing department creates competitor and industry analysis and customer analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring corporate identity - Execution of campaigns and communication measures - Supporting subsidiaries - Responsible for developing marketing communication landscape and tools (e.g. CRM system) - Responsible for internal and external communication - Support of HR communication activities - Creation of campaigns, storylines and contents - Responsible for online shop
	Participant 2-1	02:26	- Campaign planning - Responsible for tool selection, roll-out and implementation/usage	
	Participant 2-1	10:02	- Responsible for developing communication tools - SEA, SEO - Budget planning	
	Participant 2-1	18:30	- Creation of corporate brochure and consulting of management board regarding communication measures and formats - Train and consult sales teams - Responsible for measuring communication success, e.g. social media KPIs	
	Participant 2-1	26:01	- Support HR with regard to their Instagram account	
	Participant 2-1	39:25	- SEO responsible	
	Participant 2-2	54:25	- Support of subsidiaries - Consulting subsidiaries and providing the tools - Ensuring brand and corporate identity (international)	
	Participant 2-2	00:47	- Marketing communication especially manages the communication channels - Marketing communication belongs to marketing team and additionally contains customer trainings as well as strategic marketing	
	Participant 2-2	05:06	- 'Placement' is a topic that is supported by the marketing department / strategic marketing department - At least to determine the basis of the strategic approach - Supporting this strategic direction also means to illustrate the potential of new channels e.g. online sales channels - 'Classical' sales channel and partnerships are in the responsibility of sales	
	Participant 2-3	08:56	- Creation of catalogues - Responsible for websites and digital marketing	
	Participant 2-3	12:42	- Marketing communication team members always do have a topic responsible - Responsible for digital marketing	
	Participant 2-3	13:11	- Responsible for	

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newsletter - Social media - E-Mailings 	
	Participant 2-3	23:06	- Tool development e.g., CMS system	
	Participant 2-3	46:48	- Digital Agency for SEO and SEA	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	00:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for execution of sales and marketing communication request - Responsible for ensuring corporate identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for internal and external communication - Creation of campaigns and contents, but storylines and USP are provided by marketing - Execution of campaigns and communication measures - Supporting subsidiaries - Ensuring corporate identity - Execution of holistic corporate topics which are defined by corporate holding - Exchanging best practice educating the organisation with regard to marketing communication - Responsible for community management - Supporting management board to establish corporate influencer - Change communication
	Participant 3-1	02:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal communication and C-level communication - External communication 	
	Participant 3-1	05:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal communication and C-level communication - External communication - Coordination and best practice sharing with other communication teams within the business segment as well as across business segments 	
	Participant 3-1	17:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of sales department for social selling - Marketing Communication also supports management board to position themselves in social media 	
	Participant 3-1	43:56	- Focus relies on content expertise and content steering	
	Participant 3-1	23:19	- Responsible for community management	
	Participant 3-1	43:56	- Testing of new communication channels and tools (supported by responsible department within corporate holding)	
	Participant 3-1	47:14	- Creation of persona profiles and profile exchange across teams/departments	
	Participant 3-1	57:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication does sees itself as consultant - Team should also have the courage to take new paths 	
	Participant 3-2	00:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining communication strategies - Creating reporting's and communication analysis 	
	Participant 3-2	08:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of communication plans jointly with marketing managers - Conception, coordination and execution of communication campaigns - Ensuring communication quality e.g., using value-based argumentations rather than technical argumentations 	
	Participant 3-2	11:48	- Overlap / functional responsibility between marketing communication and marketing manager	
	Participant 3-2	23:29	- Coordination of agencies	
Participant 3-2	35:07	- Developing communication strategies based on created market and target group analysis, creation of communication measures, execution and evaluation		

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-3	03:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External communication for product segments and industry communication - Reporting, analytics, demand generation - Best practice sharing across business units 	
	Participant 3-3	06:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring best practice and communication metrics exchange across all business segments 	
	Participant 3-3	12:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting and support of management board regarding social media - Communicative support of organisational change communication 	
	Participant 3-3	34:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating the annual communication plan 	
	Participant 3-4	02:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation and execution of product launch communication 	
	Participant 3-4	04:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication department ensures - Ensuring message consistency - Execution of communication measures - Content integration on website, social etc. 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management: creates content - Marketing communication: creates story + executes communication - External agency creates content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for internal and external communication - Creation of campaigns, storylines and contents (especially in support with product management) - Supporting subsidiaries and business segments - Ensuring corporate identity - Responsible for developing marketing communication landscape and tools
	Participant 4-1	11:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is in the driver seat to execute communication / is in the project lead 	
	Participant 4-1	22:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing Communication department defines the communication strategy (how to promote topics) 	
	Participant 4-2	14:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiated redesign of products (by marketing communication department) 	
	Participant 4-3	19:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade fair planning and execution for German region - Approving local trade fair concepts and communication measures to ensure corporate identity 	
	Participant 4-4	00:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media planning - Editorial/advertisement planning - Corporate communication - Development of communication channels - Internal communication 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	08:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for all marketing communication activities of company → live marketing, digital marketing and other marketing communication services e.g. print - Creation of contents and execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for external communication - Creation of campaigns, storylines and contents - Supporting subsidiaries and business segments - Ensuring corporate identity
	Participant 5-1	12:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for content creation process and defining communication strategy/campaign 	
	Participant 5-1	18:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation/coordination of picture and video materials 	

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 5-2	17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for social media and social media strategy - Coordination of online advertisements, e.g., Google adds - Community management - E-Mail marketing - Trade fairs and road shows - Print materials - Mobile product show rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchanging best practice educating the organisation with regard to marketing communication - Responsible for developing marketing communication landscape and tools - Responsible for online shop
	Participant 5-2	23:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing marketing communication and communication channels - Supporting and steering subsidiaries 	
	Participant 5-2	46:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate communications is a separate department reporting to the CEO - Specialists magazines are coordinated by marketing communication - Content creation (pictures, videos) is made jointly 	
	Participant 5-3	01:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for the online shop - content management, development and interface towards IT 	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	05:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical responsibility for online platforms e.g., website, content management system, digital asset management system, e-mail marketing tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for internal and external communication - Creation of campaigns and contents - Execution of campaigns and communication measures - Supporting subsidiaries and business segments - Ensuring corporate identity - Educate the organisation with regard to marketing communication and tools - Responsible for public affairs - Representatives in associations - Responsible for developing marketing communication landscape and tools (e.g. CRM system) - Support of HR communication activities
	Participant 6-2	15:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train/qualify specialists on self-built online tools/platforms 	
	Participant 6-2	19:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for dedicated CRM parts 	
	Participant 6-2	20:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agile process between marketing and IT department to develop digital channels - Marketing team: Product owner → steering of project teams 	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibility for social media is not located in HQ function. It is located in business segments. HQ involved and social lead integration into CRM 	
	Participant 6-2	48:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing Team in Business Units – especially for content creation - One counterpart for online requirements as counterpart to headquarter function 	
	Participant 6-2	53:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support subsidiaries with IT requests, if necessary to ensure approval process as well as data security, architecture fit, etc. 	
	Participant 6-2	54:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting and process/project support for incoming IT requests 	
	Participant 6-3	07:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital marketing activities/platforms - Trade fairs, events, and conferences - R&D marketing - Collaboration with universities 	

Appendix 30 – Responsibilities of the marketing communication department

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 6-3	08:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company representation within associations - Customer relationship building/ensuring customer loyalty for bigger customers 	
	Participant 6-3	44:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing Communication has to initiate an organisational mindset towards digital media / digitally driven thinking - sales, employees, etc. 	
	Participant 6-3	45:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for educating the organisation regarding marketing communication 	

Appendix 31 – Most relevant communication channels and touchpoints

Appendix 31 – Most relevant communication channels and touchpoints

Main reference: Interview guide question 10

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	17:23	- LinkedIn to generate awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct contact / sales - Trade Fairs - Website - Social Media (LinkedIn) - Direct mailings - Customer magazine - Online customer portal - Webinars
	Participant 1-1	17:23	- LinkedIn to generate awareness - Trade fairs to maintaining contact / relationship - Mailings to maintain contact / relationship	
	Participant 1-2	31:43	1) Direct Mailings to share information and keep staying in contact 2) Trade fairs to build / maintain relationships as well as to make business 3) Social media to create awareness and generate new contacts	
	Participant 1-3	17:07	- Webinars - Direct mailings	
	Participant 1-3	18:06	- Social media / LinkedIn	
	Participant 1-3	18:37	- Trade fairs - Customer magazine	
	Participant 1-4	18:35	- Direct mailings (send out via main contact person)	
	Participant 1-4	19:12	- Web appearance / website (especially the latest and updated sections) - Online customer portal, which is currently enabling customers to purchase spare parts. This portal should be developed to also use the platform to communicate and interact with the customer - Social Media (LinkedIn and Direct Industries as platform)	
	Participant 1-5	14:50	1) Direct contacts and relationship are the most relevant channel	
	Participant 1-5	15:13	2) Digital platforms / channels with the opportunity to exchange e.g., webinars to generate business	
Participant 1-5	15:58	3) Online customer portal to support after sales, but also be able to interact with customers		
Company 2	Participant 2-1	31:21	1) Direct sales contact → to gain trust as the products do need to fulfil highest quality standards to ensure safety 2) Customer visits / trade fairs / events / trainings / seminars → to enable the customer to gain knowledge 3) Social media / website → to provide / publish relevant information, purchase and engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct contact / sales - Trade fairs - Website - Social media (LinkedIn) - E-mailing / Newsletter - Webinars
	Participant 2-2	49:15	1) Website → to provide information 2) Price list (which is not digitally available at the moment) 3) LinkedIn and e-mail marketing	

Appendix 31 – Most relevant communication channels and touchpoints

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	51:10	- Personal contact / exchange extremely important	
	Participant 2-3	26:48	1) Personal contact of sales 2) Online communication channels - especially corporate website supported by SEA measures	
	Participant 2-3	29:05	3) E-Mailings / Newsletter	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	33:19	1) Website and paid search / SEA 2) Social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) 3) Special editorials (and online publications) 4) Industry fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website - Direct contact / sales - Social media (YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) - Search engines - Webinars - Corporate Influencer
	Participant 3-2	27:12	- Sales / direct contact - Trade shows → personal exchange	
	Participant 3-3	28:09	1) Website(s) 2) Social media (LinkedIn) 3) Google / Search engines	
	Participant 3-3	30:07	4) Corporate Influencer	
	Participant 3-4	20:31	1) Trade shows / virtual trade shows (own platform) → for direct contact 2) Webinars → Generation of awareness 3) Social media (LinkedIn, Twitter)	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	14:14	- Direct sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct contact / sales - Technology centre - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube) - Trade magazines - Trade shows
	Participant 4-2	25:00	1a) Personal exchange esp. by direct sales 1b) Live events (direct exchange with sales)	
	Participant 4-2	26:42	2) Social Media (LinkedIn, YouTube)	
	Participant 4-3	04:17	1) Technology centre → for hybrid selling - virtual customer demos, etc.	
	Participant 4-4	36:04	1) Adverts (print and online incl. paid adverts and earned social media) 2) Public relations / trade magazines 3) Trade shows	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	56:09	1) Website → broad reach / awareness 2) Direct sales 3) Trade fairs → networking + practical for new products to demonstrate 4) Social media → no high effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website - Direct sales - Trade fairs - Social media (LinkedIn)
	Participant 5-2	19:44	1) Website 2) Personal contact / sales 3) Trade fairs / events	
	Participant 5-3	25:03	1) Trade fairs → especially for image and awareness reasons 2) Website	
	Participant 5-4	08:00	1) Website 2) LinkedIn 3) Direct sales Person-to-Person (in person or virtually)	

Appendix 31 – Most relevant communication channels and touchpoints

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 6	Participant 6-1	24:23	1) Trade shows & events 2) Direct sales / customer support 3) Website 4) Newsletter	- Trade shows - Direct contact / sales - Website - Social Media - Newsletter - Online customer portal
	Participant 6-2	41:49	1) Website 2) Customer Portal 3) Social media / e-mailings	
	Participant 6-3	15:08	1) Direct - sales and after sales	
	Participant 6-3	15:19	2) Live events / trade shows / events	
	Participant 6-3	15:53	3) Digital communication channels: website / customer portal / social media	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Main reference: Interview Guide question 9

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	05:17	- Social media and trade fairs to generate awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube) - Trade fairs - Print (Customer magazine) - Website - Online customer portal - Direct sales/personal touchpoints - Webinars - Newsletter
	Participant 1-1	17:23	- LinkedIn to generate awareness - Direct mails to inform customer about latest developments and by this maintain relationships - Trade shows for direct contact and maintaining relationships	
	Participant 1-1	19:22	- LinkedIn to create awareness - Customer magazine (print) - 2x a year to build customer relations	
	Participant 1-1	22:32	- Magazine to illustrate high quality and create brand association	
	Participant 1-2	26:24	- Website to create awareness, engage with customers (contact formulars), inform customers - Customer magazine will also be uploaded as PDF on website in the future	
	Participant 1-2	26:24	- Specialised press to create awareness - Trade shows and open house days to present innovation and network with customers and attract prospects - Social Media (LinkedIn and YouTube) to generate contacts and awareness - Direct mailings/newsletter to built customer loyalty - Webinars to inform customers	
	Participant 1-2	35:14	- Webinar to keep customers updated about new products and topics of interest - Short update sessions to teaser topics + involve customers	
	Participant 1-2	37:23	- Slight reduction of live events possible, but also image wise necessary to participate - Networking and personal exchange is elementary and will remain after Covid - Fast-moving digital media remains - Personal touchpoints are more formative and thus still relevant	
	Participant 1-3	16:55	- Webinars - Mass e-mails / newsletter	
	Participant 1-3	17:07	- E-Mailings/direct mailings distributed by main contact person to ensure personal exchange	
Participant 1-3	18:06	- LinkedIn		

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 1-3	18:37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade shows, but there are only a few, even though the quality is good and the channel is relevant in general - Customer magazine 	
	Participant 1-3	20:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No general change in relevance of communication channels or mechanics - even though trade shows were not possible for a period of time 	
	Participant 1-3	20:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remote selling as option, if people cannot meet in person 	
	Participant 1-4	18:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct Mailings, send out by main contact, are of high relevance 	
	Participant 1-4	19:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website 	
	Participant 1-4	19:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer online portal to sell spare parts but also to communicate with customers - Social Media (LinkedIn) 	
	Participant 1-4	21:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance of trade fairs is limited for company 1 - Compared to other companies, the relevance and the resources invested are much lower 	
	Participant 1-4	24:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance of trade shows was already below average at Company 1 in the last decade. 	
	Participant 1-4	25:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blogs are not required due to market environment (oligopoly market) 	
	Participant 1-5	14:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct contact / account manager is the most relevant touchpoint 	
	Participant 1-5	15:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital customer platform to generate service revenues, but also to communicate with customers 	
	Participant 1-5	15:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinars allow interaction and to engage via customer workshops with them 	
	Participant 1-5	17:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building a digital ecosystem (also for sales and after sales purposes) is on the agenda and should become a more relevant touchpoint 	
	Participant 1-5	18:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using social media to promote solutions from two ways: 1) Company 1 promotes customer by talking about the provided solution 2) Customer promotes Company 1 	
	Participant 1-5	35:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use social media and Google to address new prospects in unknown customer / industry segments 	
	Participant 1-5	37:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usage of webinars to generate sales qualified leads 	
	Participant 1-5	43:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-channel approach // reuse of contents 	
Participant 1-5	54:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website and landing pages 		
Company 2	Participant 2-1	16:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materials like brochures and case studies are requested from sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, WeChat, Instagram) - Trade fairs - Website
	Participant 2-1	18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate brochure is used in multiple ways: 1) Content creation: cross-channel usage possible due to QR code integration 	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			2) Direct sales material → both support awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online customer portal - Direct sales/personal touchpoints - Webinars - Newsletter - Print (brochures, price lists, hybrid brochures) - Search engines (SEA)
	Participant 2-1	26:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - YouTube - WeChat - Instagram (for HW marketing purposes) - Website/landing pages - Christmas wishes/post cards - Case studies/success studies - Reference/image brochure - Industry brochures - Price lists 	
	Participant 2-1	34:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assumed advantage of webinars for customers: - Compressed knowledge transfer without much effort to get this information - Flexible access 	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication channel strategy differs due to different sales demands - Some countries are not capable to handle the high number of incoming leads, whereas some countries need to focus on lead generation 	
	Participant 2-2	32:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinars can general high-quality leads to a highly reduced effort in comparison to live events 	
	Participant 2-2	49:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website is seen as most relevant touchpoint, as also previous "offline" media like price lists or product information are nowadays integrated online on the website 	
	Participant 2-2	51:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main content projects" that drive sustainable the content planning e.g. corporate brochure/history - Started as brochure and ended up with a hybrid format (brochure with QR codes and each contains a story that can be expanded step by step) - Increase awareness and usage of digital media and tools (like QR code) lead to hybrid communication approaches - Benefit of hybrid activities: Multiple use of contents and possibility to create customer journeys that can start offline and online 	
	Participant 2-2	53:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hybrid format of brochure allows multiple use and promotion of the same contents via various ways + servers various stakeholders (e.g., sales, "who can take something to the customer as a gift") 	
	Participant 2-3	02:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales configurators (via website or app) to allow a suitable product selection for the customer 	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-3	03:58	- Website as core communication channel to provide a customer portal and access to customer individual documentation as well as to offer additional services	
	Participant 2-3	07:30	- Usage of website as medium to publish company news	
	Participant 2-3	26:48	- Direct contact remains the most important communication channel as the products are consulting-intensive	
	Participant 2-3	27:49	- SEA is used to create awareness and website visits	
	Participant 2-3	37:23	- Independence of location creates a high advantage for digital channels and formats	
	Participant 2-4	08:36	- Main targets for communication activities in general: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image - Awareness - Revenue 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	17:44	- Social media for social selling - Social media used to install corporate influencer - Digital communication channels offer more marketing communication strategies than physical channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit, Twitch) - Social selling - Trade fairs - Virtual events/virtual event platforms - Website - Direct sales/personal touchpoints - Webinars - Newsletter - Search engines (SEA, SEO)
	Participant 3-1	22:06	- Personal branding - Storytelling → both especially for social media and corporate influencer reasons - Install C-Level functions as corporate influencer	
	Participant 3-1	33:19	- (Online) Trade publications do have a high relevance	
	Participant 3-1	33:19	- Digital channels - Social media platforms are getting more important - Represented on all relevant social media platforms e.g. YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter - Testing of additional channels like Tumblr, Reddit, Twitch - Trend to online instead of print magazines - SEO/SEA - Trade fairs are still of high relevance - international (e.g. Hannover Fair), but also regional trade shows	
	Participant 3-1	40:29	- Virtual events to generate high quality sales leads	
	Participant 3-1	41:54	- Virtual events will become an increased relevance besides live events and therefore contribute to the lead generation	
	Participant 3-3	28:09	- Website, social media (especially LinkedIn) and Google are the main channels to create awareness	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-3	30:07	- Corporate influencer for direct/indirect brand communication (→ importance to be evaluated)	
	Participant 3-4	16:09	- Target should be to combine physical/real touch points and digital touchpoints - Focus on digital channels	
	Participant 3-4	20:31	- Social Media to create awareness (for events, virtual events, etc.)	
	Participant 3-4	22:33	- LinkedIn is the strongest B2B channel - Twitter does also have a relevant role	
	Participant 3-4	23:03	- Virtual event platform was built up in the course of the last years and does have several advantages compared to regular trade fair e.g., regional independency and access the whole year, if required	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	15:03	- Virtual events (trade fairs and webinars) turned out as not being that successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube Twitter, Podcast) - Trade fairs - Website - Direct sales/personal touchpoints - Webinars - Search engines (SEA, SEO) - Experience centre
	Participant 4-1	18:56	- Product launches scheduled based on trade fair calendar to increase awareness	
	Participant 4-2	25:00	- Direct sales still remain as relevant channel, as in B2B trust has to be built	
	Participant 4-2	28:16	- Website as central hub / platform for all digital channels - Social media as teaser of a topic that directs to website - Published article also should always refer to website, etc. - Up to come: possibility to directly make appointments via website	
	Participant 4-2	56:01	- Twitter is losing relevance, but was used to stay in contact with journalists - Upcoming channel is audio podcast to publish contents	
	Participant 4-3	04:17	- Experience centre allow hybrid selling	
	Participant 4-3	5:40	- Experience centre are a relevant channel to convince customers from products via touch and feel - Social media (LinkedIn) has a limited success, as the Company 4 is known in the industry and at customers	
	Participant 4-3	27:53	- Trade shows are still of high relevance, but the relevance is shrinking - Especially transition from international fairs to regional fairs	
	Participant 4-3	37:35	- Trade fairs: Image + networking; Leads are the second priority → Priorities also due to market dominance of company	
	Participant 4-3	05:40	- Due to market conditions, customer experience centre highly relevant touchpoints	
	Participant 4-3	38:10	- Image is the main driver for attending trade fairs (besides generating business)	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 4-3	41:59	- Tendency towards individual targeting → hosting customer workshops or individual demonstrations instead of attending a trade show	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	- Channel follows target group → Company's target group contains mature representatives who still prefer trade magazines - Besides of that, the aim is still to convert print to digital channels and make use of online advertorials	
	Participant 4-4	45:14	- Managers affinity to live events also influences the channel mix and prioritization	
	Participant 4-4	49:22	- Currently no concrete strategy for YouTube - but targeted for 2022 - Voice/podcast might be a future topic to be added	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	56:09	- Website is seen as platform for contents → customers should inform themself comprehensibly about products + be able to purchase them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, YouTube) - Trade fairs - Virtual events/virtual event platforms - Website - Direct sales/personal touchpoints - Webinars - Newsletter - Corporate blog - Search engines (SEA, SEO) - Print (Customer magazine, brochures)
	Participant 5-1	57:52	- Trade fairs are valued as imported due to the following two reasons in specific: 1) Touch and feel with products 2) Direct communication	
	Participant 5-2	18:57	- Print mediums (e.g., customer magazine, employee magazine, catalogue, brochures) were already critically questioned, but still exists	
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- Currently no rolled out corporate blog and newsletter - Room for improvement regarding YouTube marketing and google adds	
	Participant 5-3	15:44	- Contents created have been used in different / various communication channels, but were not adapted → not ideal for the user journey, if a customer / prospect is reading everywhere just the single message	
	Participant 5-3	26:57	- Direct sales and service reminds relevant due to the fact that multiple touchpoints might exist along the customer journey	
	Participant 5-4	08:00	- Website as main digital channel - Social Media activities should direct user towards website	
	Participant 5-4	08:51	- Website number one channel, which have been enforced by the Covid-19 pandemic	
	Participant 5-4	14:58	- Not every product needs to be promoted in every communication channel	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	08:33	- Public relations to ensure reputation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) - Trade fairs - Virtual events/press conferences - Website - Direct sales/personal touchpoints
	Participant 6-1	54:47	- Also, creative ideas need to be implemented, even though the impact and feedback cannot always be estimated upfront	
	Participant 6-1	17:45	- Trend towards digital communication → everything consists of a digital campaign, and live events support this digital campaign instead of hosting a live event and publish it online	

Appendix 32 – Use of communication channels

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Direct contact required as the goods to be purchased are cost intensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate blog - Search engines (SEA, SEO) - Print (Customer magazine, brochures)
	Participant 6-1	25:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade fairs are especially used to built and maintain relations - Newly created virtual formats create new business opportunities e.g., remote commissioning 	
	Participant 6-1	29:22	- Virtual press conferences to communicate financial figures are more cost efficient virtual, that is why this will remain independent from the pandemic	
	Participant 6-1	45:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media to create awareness and brand engagement - Social media to answer customer service requests and to create service leads 	
	Participant 6-1	48:40	- Use social media for employees as brand ambassadors	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media also works for lead generation, but it is hard to generate qualitative social sales leads - Good representation on YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook - Instagram and TikTok started - Social media not coordinated by corporate digital marketing team - instead it is part of the business unit's marketing team 	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most relevant social channels: YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook - To generate especially awareness - Generation of leads - Instagram and TikTok also successful 	
	Participant 6-3	15:53	- Digital marketing essential to over product information, enable the customer to purchase spare parts via online portals	
	Participant 6-3	19:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advantages of live events like elements of surprise will remain and help to build new relationships - Digital communication channels do have their limitations in this regard - Webinars to work well for transferring knowledge, but interaction and feedback is limited 	

Appendix 33 – Current extent of marketing communication mix

Appendix 33 – Current extent of marketing communication mix

Main reference: Interview Guide question 12

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	26:24	- Extent is okay. Nothing to add.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing communication mix is perceived as good - Market conditions (oligopoly market) also lead to the situation that nonadditional actions are required - Building corporate influencer could be a topic - More budget would allow to do more, but not necessary change the communication mix
	Participant 1-3	22:22	- Generally okay - One thing is missing: an online customer experience platform to virtually meet with the products	
	Participant 1-3	41:13	- Building corporate influencer	
	Participant 1-4	25:43	- Extend is perceived as okay - With more money available more communication measured could be handled, but the split of activities would generally remain the same	
	Participant 1-4	25:43	- Due to oligopoly market, no specific communication measures are needed to generate awareness	
	Participant 1-5	18:40	- Extend is perceived as good	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	37:53	- Extent is perceived as good - You can always do more, but the main issue are the missing interfaces between systems (no interactions measurable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing communication mix is perceived as good - It is always possible to do more with more resources, but there would be also limitations regarding the system landscape and missing interfaces - Extent of online marketing activities could be more (in specific SEO, SEA)
	Participant 2-1	37:53	- Extend is perceived as good - Number of tasks has increased over the last years	
	Participant 2-2	54:59	- Extent of marketing mix is perceived as good - Always a dynamic process and discussion how to develop - Especially international expansion of communication mix is of relevance	
	Participant 2-3	25:01	- Extend is perceived as good - But room for improvement is always there - Generally, the marketing (communication) department today is no longer just the "advertising" department. It is seen as department that supports sales in generating qualified leads	
	Participant 2-3	41:05	- Relevant communication channels are covered, but it can be more done with regard to SEA and SEO	
	Participant 2-4	09:12	- Extend is perceived as good	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	43:56	- Extend of communication mix is considered to be very comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing communication mix is perceived as good - It is always possible to improve - Extent of online marketing activities already on high level, but currently missing element would be to build corporate influencer
	Participant 3-2	30:43	- Extend is perceived as good - Organisation is covering a broad range of channels - A clear focus towards digital	
	Participant 3-3	30:07	- Extend of communication channels is perceived as good. Only aspect to add would be a more intense usage of corporate influencers	

Appendix 33 – Current extent of marketing communication mix

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-4	25:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of communication is good - Room for improvement regarding general improvements on the extend of the communication mix 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	16:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A company can always to more, but company feels to be good positioned also compared to main competitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing communication mix is perceived as good - Stronger international steering required to increase efficiency
	Participant 4-2	32:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing mix and output perceived as good - Better do a bit less but in a high quality rather than do more with less quality - Organisation try to ensure efficient usage of budget by using created content in multiple ways (different channels + subsidiaries / foreign countries as multipliers) 	
	Participant 4-3	34:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend is perceived as good 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	26:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend is too low, based on companies' revenue - Downturn over the last two to three years - of course also related to corona pandemic, but downturn is a general thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything necessary covered, but extent could be higher – especially in digital media, more resources and channel enrichments would be helpful (SEO, SEA, Newsletter marketing)
	Participant 5-1	26:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in live events is appropriate, but the budget spend on other channels compared to live is too small 	
	Participant 5-1	28:34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything necessary is executed, but the quality and quantity could be a different one 	
	Participant 5-1	52:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally, understand about aspects is there and all areas are covered - Everything is handled appropriately 	
	Participant 5-2	20:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some missing, minor parts e.g., newsletter marketing, blog marketing - More can be done in topics such as Google adds and a more comprehensive usage of social media (YouTube marketing) 	
	Participant 5-3	29:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most is covered - Further improvements seen in target group specific contents and building up a customer portal would be helpful 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	31:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend is perceived as good - Deficits due to Corona still recognizable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend of marketing communication mix is perceived as good as all necessary channels are covered - It is always possible to do more with more resources
	Participant 6-2	46:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All main topics are covered and extend is perceived as good. 	
	Participant 6-3	24:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All necessary channels are covered, but there is always room to expand activities 	

Appendix 34 – Room for improvement

Appendix 34 – Room for improvement

Main reference: Interview Guide question 25 and additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	01:00:14	- Updating CRM / setting up interfaces between CRM and marketing automation tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM update required for functionalities - CRM data usage for marketing communication purposes - Establish more interfaces between systems and tools - Increase organisational marketing communication capabilities - Expand customer online portal functions and communication via the portal
	Participant 1-2	39:04	- If resources would be available, testing and usage of additional features and functionalities in social media (as currently are only basics are used)	
	Participant 1-3	34:28	- Education of sales teams about mechanics of digital communication tools - Persuasion work	
	Participant 1-4	25:43	- Due to oligopoly, company is known and the usage of additional would be therefore less relevant - Possibly a bit more digital media instead of print	
	Participant 1-5	18:40	- Room for improvement regarding joint promotions with customers - Reference and user stories promoted by [Company 1] customers / partners - The customer and / or partners as a multiplier of a communication message	
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- Interfaces between platforms required - Update of CRM to integrate marketing communication insights - Lead management is currently missing due to a inhomogeneous landscape of systems without interfaces	
	Participant 1-5	21:22	- Positioning of brands as well as updating persona profiles can always be improved	
	Participant 1-5	42:31	- Deeper integration into customer eco system by creating more interactive digital touchpoints can be improved	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	18:30	- Far away from calculating a reliable Return on Marketing Invest value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM update required for functionalities - CRM data usage for marketing communication purposes - Establish more interfaces between systems and tools - Increase organisational marketing communication capabilities - Establish fact based/KPI driven discussion
	Participant 2-1	37:53	- Lack of interfaces hinders the development and improvements of marketing communication measures	
	Participant 2-1	59:26	- Improvements of data evaluation possibilities and capabilities needed - Tools in use have to be updated in addition	
	Participant 2-2	34:27	- Approach to work based on KPIs and defined targets is defined, but it is currently in development rather than already established - Lack of data basis and analytic capabilities within company	

Appendix 34 – Room for improvement

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	42:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Break down silos by working together with the relevant stakeholder e.g., sales - Be more empathetic and see yourself as a conflict resolver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stronger international cooperation
	Participant 2-2	46:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successful development of marketing communication requires to rethink the KPIs used in the organisation - Change necessary towards customer benefits due to the fact that not everything can be measured based on a figure 	
	Participant 2-3	47:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More KPI driven discussions are requested 	
	Participant 2-3	58:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange/interaction with subsidiaries in foreign countries can be further improved 	
	Participant 2-4	09:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A stronger international cooperation and by this a stronger brand appearance 	
	Participant 2-4	21:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unification of topics international could be improved 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	29:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer Journey concept well established as tool to develop a campaign or communication strategy, but for the implementation itself, room for improvement is seen - Mostly, expertise and experience of stakeholders is limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish more interfaces between systems and tools - Increase organisational marketing communication capabilities - Increase usage of customer journey driven marketing communication planning and implementation - Increase transparency in marketing metrics and data
	Participant 3-1	53:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value based communication approach - Theme or campaign-oriented approach 	
	Participant 3-2	30:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interfaces between different platforms to push communication but also tracking, reporting and optimisation are needed - One central tool to coordinate all communication channels as well as for monitoring, as everything currently is dispersed in different tools 	
	Participant 3-2	28:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train and involve sales departments more actively to improve effectiveness of digital interaction 	
	Participant 3-3	19:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency in tracking/monitoring (which is challenged by data security regulations) 	
	Participant 3-4	25:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency in data and sharing of data coming from direct sales - Gaining more transparency along the digital customer journey 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	17:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convincing sales to also use social media and gain experience/building capabilities is a topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM update required for functionalities - CRM data usage for marketing communication purposes - Establish more interfaces between systems and tools - Increase organisational marketing communication capabilities (especially social media)
	Participant 4-2	21:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is always a possibility to develop yourself 	
	Participant 4-3	22:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaining more transparency in communication channel split and evaluation of measures - Involving subsidiaries more than until now on a more frequent basis 	
	Participant 4-3	31:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of IT capabilities 	
	Participant 4-3	34:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Digital touch and feel” - work more with augmented reality 	

Appendix 34 – Room for improvement

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Online shop and self-shopping, interfaces for digital purchases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of IT capabilities - Stronger international cooperation
	Participant 4-3	34:22	- Targeting of specific customer groups online can be improved - More HR marketing / employee branding needed	
	Participant 4-4	47:41	- Image and brand could be strengthened to be also attractive as employer brand	
	Participant 4-4	49:22	- YouTube is used as a channel, but not systematically - Topic about voice e.g., podcasts, could be a new and potential channel	
	Participant 4-4	54:59	- Missing CRM, access and transparency of available customer data - Currently missing tools lead to "untargeted" execution of communication measures	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	45:12	- Recently started to continuously improve knowledge about market and customers via a dedicated "customer excellence" team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand usage of tools like Google Adds, social media, SEO, etc. - Website improvements - Establish fact based/KPI driven discussion
	Participant 5-1	52:55	- Not enough resources	
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- Channel usage improvements for Google Adds, YouTube Marketing - Improvement in marketing controlling needed	
	Participant 5-3	16:27	- More resources needed for SEO and tools	
	Participant 5-4	06:11	- It is not enough to increase number of website visitors - Additional conversations and offerings needed	
	Participant 5-4	06:32	- Too much content on website and USP's are product benefits are less recognisable due to the mass of information	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	17:45	- Ability to be quick and agile - A more digital mindset is needed - Even though personal exchange with customers remains the most relevant touch points, a digital first mindset needs to be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand usage of online advertising and social media - Improve agility to react quicker - Improve digital mindset of organisation - Establish fact based/KPI driven discussion
	Participant 6-1	20:29	- Process from awareness to purchase is far to long, also in comparison to competitors	
	Participant 6-1	31:18	- A stronger focus/more attention on digital communication, even though the extend of the marketing mix is perceived as good	
	Participant 6-2	15:04	- Deeply integrated and diverse marketing team instead of agency coordination	
	Participant 6-2	32:41	- More KPI driven/fact-based decisions required	
	Participant 6-2	46:35	- Online adverting is represented rarely	
	Participant 6-2	47:08	- Less usage of online advertisements	
	Participant 6-3	24:18	- Additional possibilities are always there - Last years were determined by budget cuts, not only because of covid	
	Participant 6-3	28:27	- More social media usage required - with appropriate contents and on a higher frequency	

Appendix 35 – Missing elements in current marketing mix

Appendix 35 – Missing elements in current marketing mix

Main reference: Interview Guide question 13

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-3	22:22	- One thing is missing: an online customer experience platform to virtually meet and demonstrate virtually products and digital solutions	- Online customer experience platform is missing to interact with customers (e.g., virtual product demonstrations) - Building up corporate influencer
	Participant 1-3	41:13	- Building corporate influencer	
Company 2	Participant 2-3	44:21	- Online shop and online sales configurator are missing	- Online shop and sales configurators are missing
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:20:41	- Systematic approach of speaker placement on events etc. is missing - In time of virtual events also easier to establish	- Corporate influencer - Digital sales / Social sales
	Participant 3-3	30:07	- Social Influencing can be improved - Less knowledge about impacts	
	Participant 3-4	25:47	- A more digital oriented sales including more active usage of social media platforms e.g., LinkedIn	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	28:16	- Possibility to directly make appointments with sales via website - Feature with is currently under development	- Website feature for directly make appointments with sales - Online shop - Voice based channels e.g., podcasts
	Participant 4-3	34:22	- Online shop and self-shopping, interfaces for digital purchases	
	Participant 4-4	49:22	- Topic about voice e.g., podcasts, could be a new and potential channel	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	28:34	- Everything necessary is executed, but the quality and quantity could be a different one	- Newsletter - Corporate blog - Customer portal - Additional features like product selectors needed to enable online sales
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- No comprehensive newsletter marketing (not in general use) - No corporate blog	
	Participant 5-3	29:35	- Building a customer portal as a strong touchpoint supported from multiple internal stakeholders	
	Participant 5-4	07:08	- Product selectors to support decisions and online buying process	

Appendix 36 – Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on communication measures

Appendix 36 – Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on communication measures

Interview question 11: Do you see a change here in the relevance of certain communication channels due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	23:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar as additional offering & new channel, which will remain - Remain because of tracking possibilities and the opportunity to measure the sales impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covid-19 as accelerator to develop the digital communication channel mix - Covid-19 lead to introduce webinars as additional communication channel / touchpoint - Best practice sharing within company entities due to high uncertainty at the beginning and without knowing what measures will work out - Trade fairs / personal touchpoints remain relevant, but the attention shifts towards digital communication channels
	Participant 1-1	25:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade fairs will remain because they are perceived as relevant touchpoint to build customer relationships 	
	Participant 1-2	35:14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covid has changed the communication landscape / interaction / touchpoints sustainable, because customers got used to other channels / formats, which they like. 	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best practice sharing with other marketing communication departments across the concern 	
	Participant 1-4	21:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The introduction of a complementary communication channel "webinars" would probably not have happened without Corona - Corona as an accelerator to test further digital channels and introduce them if successful 	
	Participant 1-5	17:16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona as accelerator for digital communication channels - Personal exchange also relevant in digital channels and a shift towards digital exchange recognizable 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	34:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade fair still relevant, but other channels like webinars or online trainings also successful to transfer knowledge and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional digital touchpoints added (webinars) to channel mix - Covid-19 as accelerator for a shift towards digital communication channels - Benefits for virtual events given on both sides, that why they are accepted and will remain - Changing relevance of live events → reduction of budget share - Covid-19 did allow to gain new knowledge and skills in the marketing communication team - Covid-19 lead to rethink and shape virtual touchpoints more customer oriented / according to user journey optimization
	Participant 2-1	35:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has inspired creativity to transform existing live events into digital and, due to great success, to let them exist digitally as well - Added values are savings of time and effort on both sides 	
	Participant 2-2	31:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has contributed to broadening the marketing horizons of marketing communications team - Corona has created new responsibilities within the teams 	
	Participant 2-2	32:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exceeded expectations in the implementation of webinars: - Exceeded number of participants - High quality leads 	
	Participant 2-2	51:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona as accelerator of digital communication channels - Increase awareness of stakeholders to deal with digital channels + its opportunities 	
	Participant 2-2	51:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased attention from digital media also leads to new hybrid communication concepts 	

Appendix 36 – Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on communication measures

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-3	17:53	- Changed priorities in Marketing Communication target setting though Corona - no focus on lead generation at the moment	
	Participant 2-3	30:21	- Effectiveness of trade fairs compared to digital channels are a currently discussed → Changed relevance of trade shows - Communication channel effectiveness questioned - Risk reduced to reach people when selecting an online communication channel	
	Participant 2-3	35:19	- Corona as accelerator for digital communication channels (webinars + trainings) - Success did lead to a sustainable implementation of these formats (incl. 2 new and additional resources to even further expand the channel offerings)	
	Participant 2-3	37:23	- Corona as accelerator for creative ideas to enrich digital communication channels and formats to interact with customers	
	Participant 2-4	9:02	- Corona as accelerator of digital communication channel strategies / quicker, but not new approaches	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	17:44	- Corona has also increased the amount of internal communication - Social Media as platform with a higher necessity to engage with customers (in comparison prior to covid) → Social selling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share of digital media already the highest before Corona - Corona has increased the awareness on digital media and its usage - Especially social media usage to engage with customers has increased - Social selling is a currently discussed topic - Corona did have an impact on marketing communication budgets - Extended usage of webinars since Corona
	Participant 3-1	17:44	- Share of digital communication channels also high before Corona	
	Participant 3-1	35:48	- Corona has led to adopt new digital channels/increase relevance - Webinars - E-Mail marketing	
	Participant 3-1	40:29	- If Corona has changed the channel approach sustainable needs to prove by time - Virtual formats did create more valuable leads, but less (compared to bigger live events)	
	Participant 3-1	41:54	- Corona has led to a sustained increase in the use of digital channels	
	Participant 3-1	58:31	- External affects like Corona did also have an impact on the budget	
	Participant 3-1	01:00:39	- Corona sustainable also changed budgeting approach - No effect on budget amount, but on the distribution	
	Participant 3-2	28:50	- Corona has changed the way of interaction - Digital channels do create a distance (for instance because you connect to larger customer groups via webinars, etc.)	
Participant 3-2	28:47	- No shift in communication channels, because digital did already represent the majority		

Appendix 36 – Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on communication measures

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-4	16:09	- Trend towards digital channels was already existing before Corona, but has increased the relevance	
	Participant 3-4	20:31	- Expansion of virtual events during the pandemic - Virtual trade fairs as alternative in the duration of Covid-19 Pandemic a good and successful alternative - But how long and whether this format will work is uncertain	
	Participant 3-4	20:31	- Extended usage of webinars since Corona	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	14:28	- Direct sales remained the most relevant contact during the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct sales remain most relevant touchpoint - Density of virtual events to high during pandemic and formats like virtual trade fairs not successful - Successful adoption of social media - Shift towards digital media - Transformation from print to online publications independent from Corona
	Participant 4-1	15:03	- Virtual trade shows were not a huge success - During pandemic, too much virtual event offerings in general - No specific change at all, because company awareness is high, and customer still know the company	
	Participant 4-2	29:57	- Company had to change the approach due to the fact that trade magazines as channel did not work out though the pandemic and the digital offerings were bad → Change to social media (especially LinkedIn) with great success and a higher reach	
	Participant 4-3	25:21	- Changed direct sales communication → towards virtual - Virtual customer demos (with a high acceptance) - Shift towards digital tools/media - Social Media (LinkedIn) instead of print	
	Participant 4-4	40:38	- Transition from print to online publications is independent of pandemic	
	Participant 4-4	40:38	- Biggest impact on events and unclarity at the beginning how to handle situation and what kind of online formats are suitable for target group	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	26:41	- Corona did have a huge impact on marketing communication budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona did have a huge impact on budget - Trends towards digital communication channels has accelerated through pandemic - Corona has increased relevance of website in communication mix additionally
	Participant 5-1	30:35	- Virtual events were a good alternative in the duration of the pandemic - Virtual events will remain after Corona - The share of virtual event budgets vs. live marketing budgets will be approx. 1/10	
	Participant 5-2	14:06	- Corona has pushed the shift towards digital communication channels - Even though there was the tendency before Corona to reduce live marketing budgets and invest into digital channels, the trend has accelerated rapidly and [Company 5] assumes to transfer both shares 1:1 in a timely manner	
	Participant 5-3	28:34	- Digital channels have become more relevant since Corona as well as the virtual offers / touchpoints	
	Participant 5-4	09:48	- Corona has increased the relevance of the website even further	

Appendix 36 – Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on communication measures

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It has changed the Person-to-Person communication in sales for all direct contacts, but the question is that what extend this will remain - Virtual might be more efficient sometimes 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	17:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal contact though trade fairs is missing since Corona and not 100% replaceable by other channels due to the complexity of the product - Anyhow, the relevance of digital media - also in the context of events - has changed. Everything nowadays is a digital campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal contacts are not completely replaceable by virtual contacts - Success of virtual events limited - Corona has created new business ideas/customer offerings - Some events like investor relation events have gained budget effectiveness as they are now hosted virtually - Corona has impacted marketing communication budgets - Shift towards digital channels as accelerated
	Participant 6-1	25:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Success of virtual events and virtual trade shows limited, because building a relationship is much more difficult virtually - Network maintenance and expansion an issue that was difficult during Corona - Virtual shows from KPI point of view (Leads) unsuccessful 	
	Participant 6-1	25:38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has created new business ideas and virtual product offerings, which also determine a more digital communication and interaction with the customer 	
	Participant 6-1	29:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinars have become a powerful and helpful tool to engage with customers - Virtual press conferences for investor relations have also led to budget savings 	
	Participant 6-1	31:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has slightly pushed the digital communication channels additionally - Deficits in the extend of marketing communication measures still recognizable 	
	Participant 6-2	43:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift towards digital channels - New established digital channels like webinars will remain sustainable - Webinars do also create a lot of content, which can be used for other communication measures 	
	Participant 6-2	44:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital channels will not replace physical touchpoints completely, but Corona did also lead to test new approaches and communication tools e.g., video streaming's, live chat functionalities, virtual reality and virtual showrooms. These additional touchpoints will remain. 	
	Participant 6-3	19:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has accelerated digitalization and digital marketing - But building relationships (as needs in B2B) are much harder to establish purely virtually, that is why live events will remain 	
	Participant 6-3	21:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corona has ensured a sustainable shift from live events to digital communication channels - Assumption: 20-40% reduction of live marketing budgets 	

Appendix 37 – Personal influence on decisions

Main reference: Interview Guide question 27

Company	Participant	Time code	Role	Personal influence and responsibility
Company 1	Participant 1-1	10:25	Marketing Communication head	- Marketing communication head can act/execute communication measures quite independently
		32:03		- Decision to execute communication measures is based on marketing communication heads' opinion
		47:54		- Involved and active party in organisational change process (e.g., pushing digitalisation and digital eco-system)
		01:01:22		- Marketing communication head acts quite independent out of his view
		01:01:59		- The longer he is in this position, the less he has to justify what the department is doing - Marketing communication head wants to set impulses and drive topics with his team
	Participant 1-2	17:56	Communication Expert	- Involved in content planning - However, also receives short-term, non-self-determined work assignments/priorities
		01:08:59		- Less involved in strategic planning process to determine annual marketing communication agenda
	Participant 1-3	25:26	Internal Stakeholder	- Sees his role especially in giving guidance and providing contents rather than determining the plan
		26:18		- Involved in budget approval process – especially in a supporting role
		26:59		- Provides requirements and is prior to the budget approval process involved in aligning the communication and budget plan
		44:25		- Perceives high impact of sales, as marketing communication department understands itself as support function for sales
	Participant 1-4	50:35	Supervisor	- Strategic development of marketing communication is also seen as a topic of relevance by the supervisor - Strategic marketing head defines/approves communication department development
	Participant 1-5	22:15	Supervisor	- CSO is involved in defining topics and is especially involved in defining topics for the customer magazine as well as webinars
		23:22		- Not directly involved in designing communication measures, but approves main headlines and topics
38:25		- Management board approves budget and topics		
Company 2	Participant 2-1	00:23	Internal Stakeholder	- Involved in budget and marketing roadmap planning
		02:26		- Involved in campaign planning and execution - Involved in tool selection and developments (e.g., e-mailing tool) as well as defining the future tool/system landscape

Appendix 37 – Personal influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Role	Personal influence and responsibility
		01:10:37		- Sees herself as interface between sales and marketing which combines different perspectives
		01:11:27		- Strategic marketing is involved in defining the contents of the marketing roadmap
	Participant 2-2	00:47	Marketing Communication head	- In the lead to determine and execute the marketing roadmap - Sees responsibility to link sales and marketing more strongly
	Participant 2-3	57:27	Communication Expert	- Strong influence of marketing communication team members on marketing communication strategy → worked out and defined as a group based on corporate strategy
		57:46		- Personal influence through involvement into marketing roadmap definition
	Participant 2-4	09:30	Supervisor	- Marketing communication works out a planning proposal and management board critically questions approach and finally approves the budget
		13:14		- If a decision between two measures has to be made, the board member selects the option which is most comprehensive to him
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:16:48	Marketing Communication head	- Sees herself and the team in the responsibility to implement and execute communication measures in the most appropriate way based on sales and marketing, as well as management board, specifications
	Participant 3-2	38:35	Communication Expert	- Individual of marketing communication team do contribute based on individual capabilities and are differently involved
		58:55		- Direct influence is given across subsidiaries by marketing communication team lead
		59:07		- Less direct influence on corporate holding level as marketing communication team lead within a business unit
	Participant 3-3	03:40	Communication Expert	- Drives the topic analytics and demand generation across all sub-teams and initiates best practice sharing meetings
		34:36		- Annual marketing communication plan is created by the marketing communication head
	Participant 3-4	41:44	Internal stakeholder	- Mediator roll between product management and communication - Ensures the quality of information (Quality gate that need to approve content coming from product management) - Creating of value story and customer needs - Mapping with communication trends
		43:27		- Coach / empowerment of team members
Company 4	Participant 4-1	18:56	Internal Stakeholder	- Product management is in the responsibility to define the marketing roadmap jointly based on its input to ensure the right positioning and promotion of relevant products
		20:42		- Discussion on eye-level between product management, sales and marketing communication → the best argumentation lead to a joint decision
		26:15		- Defines product and launch priorities
	Participant 4-2	26:42	Marketing Communication head	- Defines the communication channels and its usage in the marketing communication mix
		32:40		- Defines extent of affordable communication measures
		45:04		- Does have the authority to shift budgets dependent on organisational needs

Appendix 37 – Personal influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Role	Personal influence and responsibility
	Participant 4-3	01:01:25	Internal Stakeholder	- If the marketing communication head is planning his plannings accordingly well, only the CEO must approve the planning finally
		00:19		- Sales responsibility (global and functional)
		16:45		- CEO ca intervene and is involved in budget approval
		19:28		- Involved in defining the communication plan
	21:05	- Marketing communication head approves trade fair concepts of subsidiaries to ensure CI		
	Participant 4-4	54:11	Communication Expert	- Marketing experts are now involved in corporate strategy process and therefore influence the departments strategy in addition
Company 5	Participant 5-1	01:03:11	Communication Expert	- High involvement and influence on live marketing topics
	Participant 5-2	23:24	Marketing Communication head	- Shapes and implements its vision and strategy to develop the marketing communication department
		32:38		- Marketing communication is responsible to work out a concept and execute it
		56:23		- Approval of the concept is given by the marketing communication head or management board
	Participant 5-3	11:53	Communication Expert	- Approval of concepts by marketing communication head or management board
	Participant 5-4	15:47	Internal Stakeholder	- Corporate identity and brand image are defined and shaped by marketing communication head and company owner/CEO
	Participant 5-4	15:47	Internal Stakeholder	- Marketing communication experts take self-determined decisions to execute projects, as a lack of resources sometimes hinders to align upfront with every involved stakeholder
Company 6	Participant 6-1	00:25	Internal Stakeholder	- Involved in annual planning process by providing business segment insights and defining storylines
		52:25		- Sees himself responsible for supporting and shaping the organisational change through internal and external communication
	Participant 6-2	26:12	Communication Expert	- Come up with creative ideas to shape the brand and impress customers and other stakeholders
		57:00		- Acts as product owner for digital marketing tools/landscape and defines development priorities
	Participant 6-3	07:09	Marketing Communication head	- Sees himself to drive digitalization rather than only administer it
		08:43		- Responsible for corporate marketing activities - especially all digital marketing activities, branding and sponsoring as well as corporate events
		32:15		- Representative of organisations within associations
				- Responsible for corporate strategy and involved in strategy processes
				- Marketing communication head also approves business unit and regional marketing communication budgets

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Main reference: Interview Guide question 26

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
Company 1	Participant 1-1	32:03	- High decision-making power in the field of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic marketing and marketing communication heads define and align planning jointly - Marketing communication can generally execute the topics on its own - CSO/management board is involved in defining overall topics and approves the budget - Sales is providing requirements and is especially involved in working out the contents and providing customer insights - Product responsible are only supporting with contents/product insights - Corporate holding marketing function is supporting with executing digital marketing measures and by this approving the contents to ensure message consistency
	Participant 1-1	36:34	- Marketing communication head is involved in decision-making process about topics/contents and strategic direction of department	
	Participant 1-2	11:25	- Marketing communication works generally independent of the mother company, as the target group and market environment is much more specific compared to the other companies within the holding	
	Participant 1-2	14:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communications team determines the marketing communication focus and measures (resources + priority) - If no additional input does come from Management board or strategic marketing, decision by marketing communication department alone - Main decision made by Marketing Communication head 	
	Participant 1-2	01:08:59	- Marketing and marketing communication department head are primary define the department strategy	
	Participant 1-2	01:12:37	- Marketing communication team defines the topics to a certain extent jointly and discusses what content do make sense when	
	Participant 1-3	25:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing and marketing communication department head are primary define the department strategy - Marketing and marketing communication define the annual budget primary 	
	Participant 1-3	26:18	- Planning of marketing communication is independent of overall company/business targets	
	Participant 1-3	26:59	- Sales is giving input and formulating requirements for marketing communication (aligning the frame)	
	Participant 1-3	27:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product responsible are also able to formulate requirements - Controlling is involved during budgeting process 	
	Participant 1-4	02:13	- Marketing communication belongs to strategic marketing department and is therefore influenced by it	
	Participant 1-4	50:35	- Strategic marketing is involved in the decision-making process to determine which contents are promoted and how the brand image is defined	
	Participant 1-5	22:15	- CSO is involved in defining topics and is especially involved in defining topics for the customer magazine as well as webinars	
	Participant 1-5	24:26	- Management board defines the topics	

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales is involved in defining the contents - Corporate holding function is supporting in executing the communication measure and approves roll-out 	
	Participant 1-5	38:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board approves budget and topics 	
	Participant 1-5	16:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing / marketing communication function is seen as support for sales and reacts based on needs 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company owner and managing director is deeply involved in topics like company brochure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company owner/managing director is deeply involved in specific topics like corporate brochure - Marketing communication team members to have a high level of self-responsibility - Marketing communication is deriving their planning out of the corporate strategy - Management board approves budget - IT is involved in the decision-making process, as the budget for digital communication channels and tools relies in their department
	Participant 2-1	18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication drives the topics, in which the managing director wants to be involved e.g., the corporate brochure 	
	Participant 2-1	54:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication supports subsidiaries - Selection of tools is made by marketing communication and subsidiaries can hand-in their requirements upfront 	
	Participant 2-2	00:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High level of personal responsibility within marketing / marketing communication department 	
	Participant 2-2	00:47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication strongly involves sales and subsidiaries into decision-making process (but drives the discussion) 	
	Participant 2-2	42:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication department is driving e-commerce shop activities / building the platform 	
	Participant 2-3	06:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is also involved in corporate strategy development as well as business model discussions 	
	Participant 2-3	20:23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is planning its budget and the management board must approve it 	
	Participant 2-3	22:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IT is involved in decision-making process, as the department must plan the digital media budget e.g., website budgets 	
	Participant 2-4	09:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication works out a planning proposal and management board critically questions approach and finally approves the budget 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	23:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication functions as consultant for management boards and supports them in all communication issues (e.g., internal communication, but also in the function as corporate influencer, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board of business unit defines general direction and main topics (through business segment strategy) - Sales and marketing define product launch planning, storylines and USPs - Marketing communication plans communication budgets jointly and executes communication
	Participant 3-1	57:21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderator and consultant in creation/idea foundation process 	
	Participant 3-1	01:16:48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topics are defined by management board and shared via information cascade (management board → sales → marketing → communication) 	
	Participant 3-2	59:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less direct influence on corporate holding level as marketing communication team lead within a business unit 	

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 3-3	33:26	- Marketing communication is responsible for defining the contents along the customer journey of target groups in support of the specialist departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing and marketing communication align jointly the communication budget - Corporate holding communication department additionally defines overall topics which must be incorporated - Product management provides technical details to marketing managers - Organisation supports owning responsibility on operational level
	Participant 3-3	34:36	- Annual marketing communication plan is created by the marketing communication head	
	Participant 3-3	39:22	- Corporate holding communication department also defines overall topics which must be executed by business segment marketing communication departments	
	Participant 3-3	43:27	- Marketing manager approve contents created from product manager and ensures a customer-oriented communication based on customer benefits instead of technical features	
	Participant 3-3	51:00	- Marketing communication department has a high relevance and is involved in multiple topics and cross-functional - e.g., roll-out of new tools for sales	
	Participant 3-4	03:36	- Marketing defines the roadmap, features, USPs and contents - marketing communication is executing the communication measures across the communication channels	
	Participant 3-4	27:32	- Corporate communication in holding company is defining the general direction of activities and communication channel priorities	
	Participant 3-4	35:39	- Joint budget planning between marketing and marketing communication departments to evaluate the optimal approach under given conditions	
	Participant 3-4	41:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of trends and adaptation of trends to department purposes - Mediator role ensuring that the customer needs are currently reflected in communication approach (not based on technical features) - "Quality gate" / approval of documents created from the product management 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	03:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product managers are responsible for managing the produced along its lifecycle - This included sales argumentation, product launch preparations as well as the "content ownership" for communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management defines product roadmap and is responsible for managing the products along the lifecycle – including the planning of launches and defining storylines - Sales, product management and marketing communication define jointly the annual communication topics - Marketing communication does have the responsibility to proactively collect requirements, prepare and execute communication measures - Marketing communication plans and defend the communication budget
	Participant 4-1	05:13	- Storylines are defined by product management and marketing communication must derive "promotional materials"	
	Participant 4-1	07:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product launch committee consisting of Sales, Marketing communication, product management and project owner - Product management and committee decides on content and support launch preparations 	
	Participant 4-1	10:15	- Sales responsible does have an important role in the decision-making process	

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
			- Alignments between sales, product management and marketing communication define and approve the communication planning and measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management board approves budget - Marketing communication defines the corporate identity - Management board and sales are seen on a similar level and are able to set priorities for the marketing communication department - Marketing communication department will now be integrated in corporate strategy process
	Participant 4-1	11:37	- Marketing communication is responsible for proactively executing the planning and for collecting the requirements and contents	
	Participant 4-1	18:56	- Product management is involved in annual marketing roadmap planning - Product management has to approve the plan (including trade fair planning, etc.)	
	Participant 4-1	20:42	- Management board approves budget	
	Participant 4-2	07:56	- Marketing Communication department brings in creative ideas, which do not convince stakeholders all the time directly	
	Participant 4-2	33:58	- Marketing communication department is responsible for brand image and consults subsidiaries - Subsidiaries do have profit and loss responsibility and can therefore decide for themselves	
	Participant 4-2	45:04	- Marketing communication budget planning and decision about executing communication measures are the responsibility of the marketing communication head	
	Participant 4-2	01:01:25	- If the marketing communication head is planning his plannings accordingly well, only the CEO has to approve the planning finally	
	Participant 4-3	02:37	- Product management belongs to sales department → Sales and product management are the main two stakeholders for marketing communication	
	Participant 4-3	12:32	- Sales is interested in aligning a "rolling master plan" for marketing communication - Sales has a main interest to define the direction for marketing communication, but the decision is made with the main parties involved jointly (sales, product management, marketing communication)	
	Participant 4-3	16:45	- CEO ca intervene and is involved in budget approval	
	Participant 4-3	21:05	- Sales is driving the company's product policy and therefore acts actively to determine product launches etc.	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- Sales is also involved in budget alignment to ensure that for instance investments into trade fairs are also aligned and adjusted dependent on sales feedback/relevance of trade fair in the future	
	Participant 4-4	15:20	- Dependency from product management regarding provision of contents is given - rather that marketing communication received proactively contents from the product management	

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
	Participant 4-4	19:28	- Budget planning for marketing communication relies in the responsibility of the department itself, but has to be aligned upfront with the main stakeholders	
	Participant 4-4	21:49	- Sales and management board are on a similar level and can determine short-term communication measures to support sales or the corporate strategy initiatives - Management board and sales can therefore redefine the priorities of the marketing communication department	
	Participant 4-4	23:20	- Adjustments on advertorial planning are made, if priorities are changing the possibility to adjust exists	
	Participant 4-4	42:25	- Person preferences also affect communication channel selection (e.g., trade shows)	
	Participant 4-4	54:11	- Marketing experts are now involved in corporate strategy process and therefore influence the departments strategy in addition	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	25:45	- If no alignment could be found upfront, Marketing communication head must decide or will take the decision based on additional discussions on higher management level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Owner/Management board is involved in defining CI - Management board or marketing communication head approve plannings (dependent on budget authority) - Business segments/sales is involved in planning the marketing communication mix by giving input and formulating requirements - Marketing communication was/is seen as “extended workbench” from product management (→ reputation is changing at the moment) - Marketing communication determines look and feel as well as implements communication measures
	Participant 5-2	32:38	- Marketing communication is responsible to work out a concept and execute it - Approval of the concept is given by the marketing communication head or management board	
	Participant 5-2	44:24	- Product management sees marketing communication as their "extended workbench"	
	Participant 5-2	56:23	- High influence on marketing communication decisions as Marketing communication head - Most of the campaigns are approved by marketing communication head - Marketing communication head is involved in brand and CI related discussions with the CEO and Owner	
	Participant 5-3	43:56	- Business segments and management board are involved in approving online shop developments/investments	
	Participant 5-4	14:58	- Business segments / sales is involved in determining the marketing communication mix for a specific topic / content	
	Participant 5-4	15:47	- Business segments / sales is involved in trade fair planning as well as in determining the storyline and booth design	
	Participant 5-4	16:50	- Marketing communication determines look and feel → implementation is in their responsibility	
	Participant 5-4	17:42	- Marketing communication has to proactively incorporate business segments to ask for relevant topics / contents during the planning phase	

Appendix 38 – Functional influence on decisions

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
Company 6	Participant 6-1	01:41	- Corporate communication is especially responsible for change communication / supporting the organisational change - internal and external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate holding marketing department is defining the frame for business segments in terms of corporate identity, tools, etc. - Corporate holding marketing department does have the responsibility to increase efficiency by defining and executing developments that support all business segments - Corporate holding marketing department is responsible for handing over generated sales leads and therefore also responsible for defines parts of the CRM system - Corporate communication department is responsible for internal and external communication, CI and change management - Marketing communication head (CMO) approves communication budgets of business segments - IT does have a dedicated team to support technical digital marketing developments
	Participant 6-1	53:23	- Involved in branding and brand appearance topics - by also creating new ideas for communication measures	
	Participant 6-2	11:35	- Corporate holding marketing functions sees themselves responsible for increasing efficiency by re-usage of things or roll-out of topics that fit to the 80:20 rule	
	Participant 6-2	19:58	- Marketing communication is steering the communication activities as well as the resulting leads	
	Participant 6-2	20:55	- Marketing communication is steering an IT team to execute digital marketing tool/platform measures - Close relation as well as clear responsibilities between sales and marketing communication regarding CRM data management and fields of responsibility	
	Participant 6-2	26:12	- Digital marketing created an annual roadmap to be executed and business segments can hand-in their requirements	
	Participant 6-2	37:11	- Contents and developments are separated → digital marketing team in corporate holding focusses on platform development whereas business segments are the content owners	
	Participant 6-2	57:00	- Marketing communication department of corporate holding is positioning themselves to drive topics rather than administer topics	
	Participant 6-3	58:02	- Marketing communication is seen as part of the corporate strategy - One major responsibility is to balance the independence between headquarter and business segments	
	Participant 6-3	01:00:11	- Marketing communication function in corporate holding is in the responsibility to define the frame (image, branding, ...)	

Appendix 39 – Significance of marketing communication within organisation

Appendix 39 – Significance of marketing communication within organisation

Main reference: Interview guide question 6

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	02:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In comparison to other industries is the significance quite low (especially due to the oligopoly market in which the company is well established) - The significance in new business segments is much higher in comparison, as the company must create awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance is seen differently in the company → generally seen as relevant, but the managements interest is seen higher than on operational level - Marketing communication is of high significance in the context of the organisational setup - Significance quite low compared to other industries - Focus and attention of marketing communication has changed towards digital communication channels
	Participant 1-2	08:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally, in the company, marketing communication is seen as relevant, as communication addresses the customers - The significance is lower when looking at the available resources of the communication team to the perceived relevance of the function in the organisation 	
	Participant 1-3	06:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is of high significance regarding the organisational structure and interfaces towards sales director and management board - In comparison, available resources are scarce 	
	Participant 1-4	09:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication does not have the highest significance in the company, as the market situation is an oligopoly - Relevance is currently changing, as diversification of products is of higher relevance nowadays 	
	Participant 1-4	12:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance of marketing communication is seen differently within the company - Higher attention does come from the management whereas the business segments do have a lower interest currently 	
	Participant 1-5	08:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of marketing communication has not changed in general, but the focus has shifted more towards digital communication channels instead of print 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	16:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance is increasing, as the department is not anymore seen only as department which creates costs since marketing (communication) can outline that though taken measures revenue has been generated - Also, management board and sales department are showing more interest in understanding marketing communication and perceive the department more and more as valuable support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increase over the last years - Significance has increased over the last years - Added value of marketing / marketing communication department is meanwhile recognised - Department has the freedom to further develop
	Participant 2-2	18:12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing department was seen as "service department" of sales until the company's anniversary 	

Appendix 39 – Significance of marketing communication within organisation

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This role has now changed, and the department is seen to support the company's strategy - Increasing significance of marketing / marketing communication in company recognizable 	
	Participant 2-3	25:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good positioned - Department has developed over the last years to a valuable and especially for sales supporting department (by generating sales qualified leads) 	
	Participant 2-4	03:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is of high interest and the department does have the space to develop 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	16:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increase in the course of the last ten years and additionally accelerated during the corona pandemic - One of the reasons is that today's tools (like social media) allow a two-way communication / interaction - Especially with regard to social media, nowadays sales do show more interest as social sales is already a topic - Also, management functions are trained to act as social influencer, this is why the interest and attentions is continuously growing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increased over the last years - Department is seen and recognized equally to other departments - Strategic value is recognized - Attention of department has grown with the growth of social media - Lack of organisational capabilities and knowledge about marketing communication within the organisation - Does have a significance in company holding
	Participant 3-2	16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance of marketing communication seen on similar level that marketing as it is represented and does have the visibility on all management levels - Additionally, also corporate communication does have a high significance on the mother company structure 	
	Participant 3-3	10:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication is perceived as relevant part in the business unit and organisation in general - With the transformation (not that long ago) to "split" the central marketing communication department into communication departments in all business units, the function is closer to the customer processes - The close relationship with the business unit board is also showing the acceptance and relevance of marketing communication in the business unit 	
	Participant 3-4	13:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High significance due to strategic value 	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High significance with regard to organisational structure as well as acceptance in organisation due to clear roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increase over the last years - Lack of organisational capabilities and knowledge about marketing communication within the organisation - Organisational setup is not considered ideal
	Participant 4-2	11:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increase over time and is perceived as good, also because how marketing communication is nowadays located in the organisational structure (direct report to CEO instead reporting to sales as in the past) 	

Appendix 39 – Significance of marketing communication within organisation

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 4-4	09:31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The value of marketing communication is not completely recognized in organisation - Organisational structure is not ideally supporting interfaces / clarification of interfaces needed - Lack of organisational capabilities (basis knowledge about marketing communication) as well as transparency with regard to customer data 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	47:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium significance due to two reasons: 1) organisational structure is not ideally supporting the position and significance 2) Resources are more limited than in other areas and the quality of the arguments counts only to a limited extent (marketing communication is seen as a department that incurs costs and does not necessarily add value, although it does) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational setup is not considered ideal - Medium significance due to lack of resources and organisational structure - Significance is seen differently in the company → different external and self-perception
	Participant 5-2	12:43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is recognized and does have a high significance, especially the company owner is marketing addicted and supports investments especially with regard to trade fairs, events and website 	
	Participant 5-4	05:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities of marketing communication team are recognized - Ambitious team 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	06:23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does have a high significance in company holding and did increase over the last years also due to a constantly changing environment and necessary increase of change communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance has increased over the last years - Does have a significance in company holding - Significance is seen differently in the company → dependent on the relevance of the business segment - Added value of marketing / marketing communication department is meanwhile recognised
	Participant 6-1	12:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of communication in management board is high and board does also see a high significance in communication 	
	Participant 6-2	12:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Especially digital marketing is perceived as future oriented invest whereas in general marketing communication is still seen as a department that incurs costs 	
	Participant 6-3	12:39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally high significance and awareness in top management and management board (especially for a B2B company) - Significance in business segments can slightly differ 	

Appendix 40 – Marketing communication skills needed in in the future

Appendix 40 – Marketing communication skills needed in in the future

Main reference: Interview Guide question 8

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	12:16	- Customer oriented and customer benefit-oriented mindset and thinking is required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to think in terms of customer benefits rather than technical argumentations - Holistic thinking / holistic customer journey view rather than being focused on a few elements of the customer's journey - Analytical skills - Digital media capabilities – especially social media
	Participant 1-1	12:16	- Holistic customer-oriented thinking along the customer journey	
	Participant 1-2	22:29	- Stay open minded and open for new and upcoming things in a ever fast becoming social media landscape	
	Participant 1-3	14:45	- Strength in communication - Project management in cross-functional teams - Analytical skills to demonstrate the success of measures	
	Participant 1-4	15:27	- Affinity for online media and tools - Capability to think comprehensive about customer experience along all touch points - Value based view rather than technical oriented	
	Participant 1-5	12:34	- Ability to be stay open for changes and usage of social media	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	22:01	- Cross-functional thinking - Analytical skills - Ability to dynamically adopt to changing environment - Social media affinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to think in terms of customer benefits rather than technical argumentations - Holistic thinking / holistic customer journey view rather than being focused on a few elements of the customer's journey - Cross-functional thinking - Analytical skills - Digital media capabilities – especially e-commerce and social media - Digital mindset - Generally, more comprehensive marketing communication expertise rather than being in expert in one specific topic
	Participant 2-1	24:28	- Digital marketing / e-commerce capabilities to build and develop online shops	
	Participant 2-2	39:25	- Strong personal competencies - Digital mindset and ability to handle digital tools - Ability to think across tools / systems and combine them	
	Participant 2-2	40:54	- Networked knowledge, knowledge of interfaces and technical systems	
	Participant 2-2	42:15	- Data analytics and the ability to interpret data correctly are required	
	Participant 2-4	04:52	- Well educated employees with marketing communication capabilities, because it is not anymore to just build a catalogue - Ability and willingness to operate international and think international - Ability to simplify complex topics to form concrete and relevant messages (that globally work)	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	22:06	- Personal branding - Storytelling (Both especially for social media and corporate influencer reasons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical skills - Digital media capabilities – especially social media

Appendix 40 – Marketing communication skills needed in in the future

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community management to ensure interaction and empathy with followers - Openness to share experiences and test them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital mindset - Open mindset (for trends, intercultural topics, etc.) - Storytelling capabilities - Agile mindset and working methods - Community management / ability to use social media as corporate influencing tool as management
	Participant 3-1	23:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be open for digital tools (who might change often) - Digital mindset - Data Analytics 	
	Participant 3-2	19:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication manager is becoming a consultant within the organisation - Agile mindset - Analytical skills 	
	Participant 3-3	13:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical skills and ability to derive results out of complex issues 	
	Participant 3-4	28:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media capabilities 	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	21:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay open minded and ability to perceive trends and adopt them if it makes sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital media capabilities – especially social media - Agile mindset and working methods - Analytical skills - Open mindset (for trends, intercultural topics, etc.) - Combined skills of marketing communication and IT
	Participant 4-2	24:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay open for changes, new technology and the ability and empathy to select the most appropriate way to address customers and prospects 	
	Participant 4-3	31:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to act professional in digital media landscape (presence in front of a camera, changing ways of communication) - IT capabilities 	
	Participant 4-4	01:03:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market Intelligence capabilities 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	52:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication know how across all marketing communication disciplines - Capability to evaluate measures comprehensively a high level - Currently lack of experiences, which have to build over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical skills - Digital media capabilities – especially social media - Digital mindset - Open mindset (for trends, intercultural topics, etc.) - Generally, more comprehensive marketing communication expertise rather than being in expert in one specific topic - Combined skills of marketing communication and IT
	Participant 5-2	53:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project management skills and know how besides specialist qualifications 	
	Participant 5-2	53:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve basis knowledge, as it has developed over time in marketing communication - Enable people out of other disciplines like sales to gain a solid and comprehensive marketing communication knowledge 	
	Participant 5-3	19:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and social media capabilities - The ability to express oneself in a channel-specific way - Ability to self-produce communication measures 	
	Participant 5-3	19:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capabilities that not alone focussed on one special capability. Combined IT and communication and marketing knowledge is of relevance 	

Appendix 40 – Marketing communication skills needed in in the future

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 6	Participant 6-1	17:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agility, especially related to digital communication tools and the capability to react quick - Organisational mind-change from "live events" to digital first thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital media capabilities - Digital mindset - Open mindset (for trends, intercultural topics, etc.) - Generally, more comprehensive marketing communication expertise rather than being in expert in one specific topic - Combined skills of marketing communication, IT and technical knowledge - Agile mindset and working methods
	Participant 6-1	17:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital marketing capabilities are needed even more in the future 	
	Participant 6-2	15:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More technical driven mindset - Marketing communication teams should get more diverse and incorporate specialist knowledge rather than only doing project management jointly with agencies 	
	Participant 6-3	01:03:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More broad and diverse marketing communication knowledge - Communication capabilities - Resistance and ability to convince other stakeholder from benefits of marketing and its necessity - Language skills (especially English) 	
	Participant 6-3	01:05:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical knowledge is additionally required to combine perspectives from R&D, IT, sales and marketing 	

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Main reference: Interview Guide question 17

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	31:02	- Product strategy gives orientation to evaluate what kind of communication measures needs to be created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product roadmap/Product strategy - Sales, Service and digital team requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (collected from sales representatives) - External market data (from data bases, consultants) - Benchmarking - Experiences - Customer satisfaction evaluations
	Participant 1-1	29:06	- Frequent input from division managers (Sales, Service, Digital) to evaluate what kind of marketing communication support is needed	
	Participant 1-1	29:06	- Individual internal surveys to better understand what sales is requiring - Individual internal survey about the quality of communication measures and acceptance – e.g., did you like the content, etc..	
	Participant 1-1	38:07	- Implementing new tools required sometimes to involve external consulting before building up internal processes	
	Participant 1-1	43:59	- Customer insights are collected from sales teams - Information is not accessible in a data base / if this would be the case in sales, marketing communication does not have access to it	
	Participant 1-2	50:26	- No defined information gathering process - Information collected from product responsible to identify customer pain points to derive a customer value story	
	Participant 1-2	57:21	- Market research / market studies are used - Most of insights do come from product / project responsible	
	Participant 1-2	58:54	- Corporate digital marketing team supports in purchasing market research studies or does market research by their own	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- Information does come from salespeople, no useful information provided from CRM system - Experiences	
	Participant 1-3	30:08	- Source of information is always sales and marketing besides marketing communication - Market figures and experiences out of teams are considered	
	Participant 1-3	31:16	- Market potentials as well as product launches also drive the budget and planning process	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	- Benchmarking - within organisation across different business segments as well as with competitors	
	Participant 1-3	33:09	- Benchmarking	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	- Benchmarking - Which communication channels do our competitors use	
Participant 1-4	34:00	- Generation of insights though market research		
Participant 1-4	36:47	- Experiences		

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 1-4	40:04	- Customer satisfaction evaluation	
	Participant 1-4	41:38	- Customer surveys conducted approximately every second year to get feedback	
	Participant 1-4	42:42	- Mentioned KPI's are not actively used to derive a strategy how to improve / develop a communication channel in specific like website	
	Participant 1-5	25:56	- Customer feedback, collected internal from Sales and Account Management (who have to ask their customers)	
	Participant 1-5	26:18	- Customer feedback via interviews or feedback from point of contact (sales / account manager)	
	Participant 1-5	35:21	- Market data accessed / purchased from institutes or consultants	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Market Intelligence "department" provides information out of various sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales and marketing requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (from CRM data base) - External market data (from data bases, consultants) - Benchmarking - Experiences - Corporate strategy - Communication KPIs, e.g. website KPIs - Testing of new tools and communication channels - Attending seminars/congresses
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Input from sales (who does have the direct customer feedback / knowledge)	
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Usage of CRM Purchasing behaviour	
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Usage of CRM and ERP data - but currently limited	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- CRM system does provide first relevant data for marketing communication purposes	
	Participant 2-2	27:45	- Gaining new information also contains attending to seminars or congresses, as well as exchanging with agencies or consultants	
	Participant 2-2	27:45	- Testing and use case results are used to scale / roll-out solutions and topics	
	Participant 2-3	41:05	- Benchmarking with main competitors	
	Participant 2-3	46:48	- SEO / SEA insights	
	Participant 2-3	47:50	- Website KPI's considered to figure out what is requested by the customers	
Company 3	Participant 2-4	11:22	- Corporate targets - Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product roadmap/product launch planning - Sales and product management requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (collected from sales representatives) - External market data (from data bases, consultants) - Benchmarking
	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Customer insights (to all buying center perspectives) are collected from sales and business development experiences - External sources are hard to use - Sometimes, customer surveys are conducted	
	Participant 3-1	55:35	- Guidance for CI coming from corporate holding communication department(s)	
	Participant 3-1	01:09:01	- Monthly insights from external industry analysts - Concrete persona projects executed by external industry analysts	

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-2	32:41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website KPI's considered to figure out what is requested by the customers - Cross-channel dashboards created and used to monitor and analyse campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiences - Corporate strategy - Communication KPIs, e.g., website and social media KPIs, communication dashboards - Touchpoint analytics - Target Group/persona analytics - Testing of new tools and communication channels - 4C planning concept
	Participant 3-2	35:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product details - Product USP's - Customer needs and requirements - Market trends - Target group profiles / analysis - Touchpoint analysis 	
	Participant 3-2	53:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target group descriptions / persona descriptions - Sales 	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking with competitors and start-ups - Self-research 	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot tests and lessons learned sharing across business units from tests 	
	Participant 3-3	19:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign tracking and evaluating 	
	Participant 3-3	26:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analytics from used online tools e.g., marketing automation tool or webinar platform 	
	Participant 3-3	33:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer journey insights and knowledge about touchpoints is used to determine communication approach for a certain campaign 	
	Participant 3-3	39:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication planning is always based on new products, product features, topics addressed from stakeholders 	
	Participant 3-3	39:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given topics by the holding company are also considered 	
	Participant 3-3	40:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate and business unit strategy / strategic targets are considered in the planning 	
	Participant 3-3	42:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication KPI's are used to optimise following communication measures (e.g., optimising webinar advertisements based on previous webinars) 	
	Participant 3-3	44:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External information is not considered on digital information pool level 	
	Participant 3-4	16:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer Journey and Touchpoint KPI's 	
	Participant 3-4	27:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General trends and how to optimise the communication mix is also supported by central communication department 	
	Participant 3-4	32:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4C planning concept (Customer, Channel, Costs, Communication) 	
	Participant 3-4	37:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usage of persona - Usage of sales insights 	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market studies from strategy departments 	

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 4	Participant 4-1	18:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product launches are used for the planning to determine the timings of product launches - Trade fair calendar as element for planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product roadmap/product launch planning - Sales and product management requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (collected from sales representatives) - External market data (from data bases, consultants) - Benchmarking - Experiences - Communication KPIs, e.g., website and social media KPIs
	Participant 4-1	22:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management: Benchmarking with competitors I also related to communication strategy and focus - Sales: Customer insights & what is requested by the customers + regional necessities 	
	Participant 4-1	22:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management supports with benchmarking insights from competitors - Sales provides customer insights 	
	Participant 4-2	35:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usage of communication KPI's e.g., campaign KPI's to adjust following campaigns based on so far generated experiences 	
	Participant 4-2	37:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media post content analysis 	
	Participant 4-2	48:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online screening tool to know what is published around the globe online from [Company 4] itself, but also from main competitors - Tool necessary, because to many online channels do exists, so that it's not possible to detect everything by its own 	
	Participant 4-3	36:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where to generate new contacts on the most efficient way - Where to generate most successfully sales qualified leads 	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking of different print media to allow periodization, topic clusters and budget definition 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	19:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Message House defines collected information base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product roadmap/product launch planning - Sales and product management requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (collected from sales representatives) - External market data (from data bases) - Benchmarking - Experiences - Communication KPIs, e.g., website and social media KPIs - Touchpoint analytics - Target Group/persona analytics - Message house concept
	Participant 5-1	56:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales organisation in region determines the communication channel strategy and mix → local needs/situation to be considered in the planning process 	
	Participant 5-1	56:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usability study about website usage 	
	Participant 5-1	57:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Web KPI's / User journey insights 	
	Participant 5-2	20:56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the past, "own" opinion and thoughts out of the sales and marketing team were the driver to determine marketing communication measures - Fact and KPI based steering is the target by using user behaviour data, etc. 	
	Participant 5-2	34:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target of initiative / product / ... - Target group(s) / persona - USP and use case of product - Market description - Regional / country coverage and relevance - Customer verticals 	

Appendix 41 – Information considered in planning process

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 5-2	36:05	- Comprehensive briefing session to define message house jointly with accountable business unit	
	Participant 5-2	44:24	- "Customer clinics" → meetings with customers - Strong sales force → but not well documented - Customer surveys - Internal expert surveys - Usability projects - External data bases (structural data, etc.) - Customer visits (by marketing team jointly with sales or corporate communication)	
	Participant 5-3	35:35	- Briefing session with business unit to determine the message house before starting the detailed workout	
	Participant 5-3	40:36	- Online shop ideas do come from foreign countries and will be taken up in backlog to evaluate them and priorities based on customer requirements	
	Participant 5-3	42:05	- Feedback from sales (and indirect feedback from customers via the sales reps.) to improve channels (e.g., online shop and its functionalities)	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	22:42	- Benchmarking with competitors - what do they do, how do they present dedicated topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product roadmap/product launch planning - Sales and product management requirements - Internal feedback from sales - Customer insights (from CRM data base) - Benchmarking - Experiences - Communication KPIs, e.g., website and social media KPIs, SEO, SEA - Online surveys
	Participant 6-2	28:03	- KPI's e.g., SEO rankings - Comparing different communication measures and channels - Assumptions on overall impact of measure	
	Participant 6-2	29:51	- Continuous improvement based on learnings from reach + lead KPIs	
	Participant 6-2	38:06	- Almost all customer data is stored in one central CRM system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales data / personal data required for sales processes - Website behaviour - E-Mail data - Trade show visits - Campaign info - Participation info → Data used for marketing automation purposes	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	- Acceptance and social media usage + social leads	
	Participant 6-2	46:35	- General consideration of marketing communication literature	
	Participant 6-3	44:00	- Image, brand positioning	
	Participant 6-3	44:00	- Digital channel KPI's e.g., drop-out rates - Online surveys	

Appendix 42 – Relevance of B2C in B2B Marketing

Appendix 42 – Relevance of B2C in B2B Marketing

Additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary
Company 2	Participant 2-2	31:21	- Adoption of B2C methods in the focus of Marketing Communication responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B2C does have more evidence to test new trends / channels - B2C is perceived to be head - Slower adaption of trends in B2B compared to B2C
	Participant 2-2	46:32	- B2C is more disruptive - but required, because otherwise you are losing track and relevance - B2C does have more experience with Social Influencing	
Company 3	Participant 3-2	44:14	- B2C is one or two steps sometimes ahead of B2B	
	Participant 3-3	30:07	- Role of B2B influencers compared to B2B is much less relevant at the moment	
Company 4	Participant 4-4	30:11	- Anticipation from private online media usage reduced because companies adopt much slower - Trends from B2C are important, if companies want to reach the next generation of employees - Examples mentioned: TikTok, Clubhouse	
Company 5	Participant 5-2	11:41	- Comparison of marketing communication landscape to peer group in industry perceived as good, but behind B2C	
Company 6	Participant 6-3	28:27	- More social media usage required - with appropriate contents and on a higher frequency	
	Participant 6-3	49:05	- B2C magazines are used to stay informed, as no appropriate B2B magazine is in place	
	Participant 6-3	01:06:55	- Marketing communication is more supported in B2C compared to B2B for an organisational standpoint	
	Participant 6-3	01:10:11	- B2C is perceived as more independent to test new channels - Independent of B2C or B2B - everything refers back to customer interaction	
	Participant 6-3	49:05	- Less content available in trade magazines for B2B than B2C marketing communication	

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Main reference: Interview Guide question 20

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	32:02	- Information do come from product strategy and strategic marketing → Role of MarCom: Check what content is already available + what is than needed in addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - Consultants - Sales departments - CRM data (planned, but not available yet) - Benchmarking - Trade magazines - Corporate holding - External market studies - Net promoter score evaluation - Individual knowledge - Strategic marketing department - Customer feedback - External market data bases
	Participant 1-1	38:08	- Processes must be worked out internally	
	Participant 1-1	38:27	- Consultants - Support in initial consideration of evaluating tools	
	Participant 1-1	43:59	- Sales department - Does have customer insights about customer needs and ist intentions for development, but this information is not shard with the marketing communication department	
	Participant 1-2	52:18	- Content / Story determines communication channels and touch points - Relevance of topic determines communication channels	
	Participant 1-2	57:21	- Contents are based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most information is collected from project responsible - Market research results (purchased or own research) - Own research is based on online search and specialist magazines 	
	Participant 1-2	58:54	- Corporate holding digital marketing department supports business unit by providing market research data	
	Participant 1-3	17:07	- CRM data input currently comes from sales representatives/key account	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- CRM is not used for the planning	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- Planning based on experience (non-fact based) + educated guess for new measures	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- Decisions are only built on experiences and individual knowledge	
	Participant 1-3	30:08	- Sales department and marketing communication gather information (based on individual experiences)	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	- Benchmarking with other brands / business units within corporate holding - Benchmarking with main competitors - Trade magazines (sales related: "Sales Excellence")	
	Participant 1-4	34:00	- Usage of market research data to gain market expertise and derive strategies	
	Participant 1-4	36:47	- Based on experience	
Participant 1-4	40:04	- Net promoter score evaluation		

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Usage of NPS to win back customers with a lower rank and take counter measures	
	Participant 1-4	41:38	- Decisions based on direct customer feedback (bi-yearly customer evaluation and customer satisfaction)	
	Participant 1-5	09:45	- Strategic marketing department provides market insights that allow the company to define current and future market potentials and trends as well as guide marketing communication	
	Participant 1-5	25:56	- Sales and Account Manager are able to evaluate what kind of content are of most interest and share their insights with marketing communication	
	Participant 1-5	26:18	- Collecting customer feedback also with regard to certain communication channels e.g., company magazine via account manager	
	Participant 1-5	35:21	- External data basis or consultants are used to collect market data and evaluate potentials based on it	
	Participant 1-5	37:05	- External consultants provide market analysis	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	16:17	- Feedback from Sales	
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Associations are a source for Industry developments	- Product management
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Purchasing of external data basis and market studies	- Internal and external Consultants
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- CMR data is used for creating target-oriented communication measures	- Sales departments
	Participant 2-2	25:26	- External consultants	- CRM data
	Participant 2-2	27:45	- Understand a new topic first internally, before steering it via agency	- Benchmarking
	Participant 2-2	34:27	- Campaign specific KPIs	- Trade magazines
	Participant 2-2	36:15	- Lead process/information	- Corporate holding
	Participant 2-3	46:48	- SEO / SEA Tracking - Key Word Tracking	- External market studies
	Participant 2-3	47:50	- Website KPI's / Tracking	- Individual knowledge
	Participant 2-3	49:52	- Market information/insights from Market Intelligence department - Input from sales - Tool developments are also executed by a digitalisation team - their plannings are also considered	- Strategic marketing department
	Participant 2-3	51:00	- Product Information System (PIM) is currently built up - CRM data	- Customer feedback
	Participant 2-4	14:15	- Market insights - Company/department insights	- External market data bases
Company 3	Participant 3-1	29:51	- Customer Journey insights and tracking of campaign KPIs along the journey	- Channel specific KPIs
	Participant 3-1	30:27	- Marketing automation tool and lead nurturing process information	- Customer Journey KPIs
				- SEO / SEA / Key word tracking

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-1	43:56	- Tool/platform strategy team provides insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM data - Benchmarking - Trade magazines - Corporate holding - External market studies - Agencies - Individual knowledge - Customer feedback - External and internal knowledge data bases - Channel specific KPIs - Customer Journey KPIs - Associations - Target Group analysis - Marketing Automation tool KPIs - Internal lessons learned meetings - 4C Planning - Campaign specific KPIs - Direct customer insights - Anticipation from private social media usage
	Participant 3-1	53:03	- Sales & business development do have customer insights - Market research is not common / used on frequent basis	
	Participant 3-1	01:09:01	- Monthly insights from external industry analysts - Concrete persona projects executed by external industry analysts	
	Participant 3-2	32:41	- Website KPI's / Tracking	
	Participant 3-2	33:44	- Lessons learned meetings across business units, but also within ow communication team	
	Participant 3-2	35:07	- Market studies / reports	
	Participant 3-2	35:07	- Trend studies - Target group analysis	
	Participant 3-2	51:30	- Direct exchange with customers - Internal customer information from sales teams or usage of available platforms	
	Participant 3-2	53:27	- Data base with target group descriptions (generic) - Sales required to get specific customer insights for a specific communication measure e.g., product story / communication	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	- Lessons learned sharing trough pilots in other business segments	
	Participant 3-3	03:40	- Frequent internal best practice sharing meetings	
	Participant 3-3	06:13	- Exchange with specialist communication teams in different business units and corporate holding function	
	Participant 3-3	26:25	- Usage of marketing automation tool - Data handling is a challenge - Data input handling and data input processing towards sales to follow up is a challenge	
	Participant 3-3	27:16	- Possibilities today are far more than a few years ago (statement about marketing automation and monitoring)	
	Participant 3-3	33:26	- Input from specialist departments dealing with the product/topic to be promoted - Customer journey information by customer group to evaluate what contents are requested by the group	
	Participant 3-3	40:56	- Business unit strategy already defines relevant content/topic clusters, which must be taken over by the communication department and measures derived	
	Participant 3-3	42:17	- Lessons learned based on individual communication measures - e.g., webinar and its promotion. Derive learning how to do it better next time	

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-3	48:12	- Adaptation of own (/private) user experiences in business context to target groups	
	Participant 3-4	04:37	- General unique selling point argumentation is provided by sales marketing teams	
	Participant 3-4	18:24	- Lessons learned from gather experiences (and KPI driven)	
	Participant 3-4	32:06	- 4C planning details and information that describe the target group and content of measures are used as basis for deriving communication measures	
	Participant 3-4	37:18	- Direct sales organisation	
	Participant 3-4	37:18	- Sales as input for Customer Insights (Customer groups; Industry insights) - Persona evaluations / updates (from time to time)	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	- Usage of market studies	
Company 4	Participant 4-1	10:15	- Monthly exchange with product management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - Consultants - Sales departments - CRM data (planned, but not available yet) - Benchmarking - Agencies - Associations - External market studies - External data bases - Channel specific KPIs - Publishers - Anticipation from private social media usage
	Participant 4-2	37:07	- Social media channels Analysis of likes and follower to derive what kind of content is of interest	
	Participant 4-2	48:52	- Online tool with competitive insights/publications on daily base available	
	Participant 4-2	50:41	- CRM data base currently contains not the data marketing need to have, but [Company 4] is currently working on this topic	
	Participant 4-2	51:44	- Input from agencies	
	Participant 4-2	53:34	- Information exchange about market, customers, and trends through associations	
	Participant 4-3	22:56	- Sales, product management and service inputs through monthly jour fix meetings to define marketing communication plan	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- Live marketing KPIs e.g., costs per lead to evaluate where to participate - Input from sales or other employees - Online marketing KPIs - (CRM data input)	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	- Information/insights from publishers about latest developments and new/future advertisement offers	
	Participant 4-4	30:11	- Social media networks to anticipate/detect trends and user ideas for marketing communication planning and creation	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	08:31	- Consolidation of internal inputs and information via strategic marketing communication responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product management - Usability studies - Sales departments - Benchmarking - Made experiences
	Participant 5-1	32:53	- Use made experiences during planning - Benchmarking by using personal network to gain insights in KPIs	
	Participant 5-1	45:12	- Usability studies	

Appendix 43 – Information processing

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Insights from sales and product management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External market studies - External data bases - Channel specific KPIs - Campaign specific KPIs - Idea backlogs - Message house inputs
	Participant 5-2	20:56	- Online marketing KPIs / user behaviour analysis	
	Participant 5-2	44:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Usage of external data bases to understand media usage and demographics of target groups - Usability studies 	
	Participant 5-3	35:35	- Message House per campaign is created with support of the specialist departments - strategy, business segment, corporate communications	
	Participant 5-3	38:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usage of sales feedback - Backlog with requirements 	
	Participant 5-3	40:36	- Specialist departments define requirements	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	28:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEO KPIs - Lead tracking and optimisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead tracking - Consultants - Sales departments - Portfolio manager - CRM data - B2C trends - Benchmarking - Agencies - Associations - External market studies - Direct customer insights - Management board
	Participant 6-3	37:57	- Agenda setting / corporate strategy / board member input for contents	
	Participant 6-3	38:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic development plan and marketing (communication) strategy is developed in a separate meeting frequency - Board members and selected business unit manager are involved 	
	Participant 6-3	43:14	- Ratio company revenue vs. marketing spend	
	Participant 6-3	44:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveys - Evaluations like dropout rates, advertising behaviour 	
	Participant 6-3	49:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering B2C trends - External network with press or associations - Competition / benchmarking 	
	Participant 6-3	49:54	- Direct contact with (key account) customers	
	Participant 6-3	01:03:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales - Portfolio Manager - Management - Management board - External stakeholders - Agencies 	

Appendix 44 – Obtaining new knowledge

Appendix 44 – Obtaining new knowledge

Main reference: Interview Guide question 21

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	38:57	- Insights from Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No structured process, most knowledge is gained on individual level through various ways - Agency insights - Publications in magazines like Harvard Business Manager - Trainees / students - Temporary hirings - Benchmarking - Listing to podcast - Reading
	Participant 1-1	41:24	- Harvard Business Manager - Trainees /students - Temporary hirings to replace persons on parental leave	
	Participant 1-2	01:00:36	- Marketing theory is not of interest - Trainees are frequently supporting the department and bring in new ideas	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	- Best practice sharing with other marketing communication departments across the concern	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	- Information out of magazines for sales department	
	Participant 1-3	33:09	- Benchmarking with main competitors	
	Participant 1-4	44:51	- Listening to podcasts - Reading books - No systematic process to gain new knowledge	
	Participant 1-5	35:21	- General market data (not specifically for marketing communication) to evaluate the market in general, market potentials as well as the environment via market data institutions (e.g., Euro-Monitor)	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	01:04:02	- Best practice sharing by attending to associations (BVIK) and using the platform to exchange thoughts etc. within the mechanical engineering industry with similar companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-research - Reading - Trainees / students - Looking at B2C practices - Exchanging knowledge within network (internal/external) - Attending seminars and conferences
	Participant 2-2	27:45	- Self-research - Participation in webinars, seminars, congresses	
	Participant 2-2	29:46	- Input / new perspectives from students who "train" the team with their generated knowledge from university, etc.	
	Participant 2-2	31:21	- Evaluation of B2C practices	
	Participant 2-3	52:51	- Attending seminars	
	Participant 2-4	01:31	- Exchanging knowledge and thereby learn new things is always a two-way exchange (with experts / specialists from the marketing department)	
	Participant 2-4	14:34	- Networking (with marketing department or other people) - Reading - Attending seminars	

Appendix 44 – Obtaining new knowledge

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-4	16:10	- Improvements can only be achieved if somebody else does have the knowledge and shares it	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	09:44	- Management style affects openness for knowledge, transparency and can lead, by this, to a learning culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking and thereby exchanging knowledge (internal / external) - External guest speakers - Internal communities across the business units - Self-research - Looking at B2C practices - Listening to podcast - Anticipate from start-ups - Benchmarking - Trainees / students / new colleagues
	Participant 3-1	01:09:01	- Exchange with industry analysts - Example: Insights in Persona concept	
	Participant 3-1	01:12:52	- "Go to expert" - an internal consultant for the organisation who's day-to-day business is related to the channel and learnings from him are shared within the teams + he/she is also supporting team members, if questions occur etc.	
	Participant 3-1	01:15:52	- Learning organisation: sometimes, interesting marketing insights available and useful	
	Participant 3-2	08:47	- Marketing Manager - R&D - Marketing Manager exchange meetings (within business unit and across) - Communities within BU's for cross functional topics - Inter-organisational communication exchange meetings	
	Participant 3-2	08:47	- Competitor information - Product / solution UPSs	
	Participant 3-2	04:57	- Internal learning cycles to exchange experiences	
	Participant 3-2	27:12	- Indirect customer insights coming from sales - Direct customer insights (based on touchpoints about creating customer reference cases) - Direct customer insights generated from exchange on trade shows	
	Participant 3-2	42:56	- Internal exchange meetings on a weekly or monthly basis to gain insights in certain topics - External guest speakers are also invited	
	Participant 3-2	44:14	- Self-research and usage of different specialist online portals - Considering B2C trends - Anticipate from start-ups - Listen to podcasts	
	Participant 3-2	45:48	- Internal exchange meetings on a weekly or monthly basis to gain insights in certain topics - External guest speakers are also invited	
	Participant 3-2	56:01	- Self-research - Benchmarking with main competitors	

Appendix 44 – Obtaining new knowledge

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 3-3	03:40	- Each individual does have its expertise which helps the group to increase their knowledge through frequent exchange meetings	
	Participant 3-3	45:44	- New ideas also come up by the exchange with younger generation / new employees and internal communities	
	Participant 3-4	39:03	- Separate teams responsible to detect trends and new communication channels: - Sales Strategy Innovation - Marketing Promotion (one responsible- Participant 3-2)	
Company 4	Participant 4-2	51:44	- Exchange with external freelancers and agencies about trends and topics to test, general evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking and thereby exchanging knowledge (internal / external) - Agency insights - Self-research (e.g., via LinkedIn) - Anticipate from private user behaviours/experiences
	Participant 4-2	53:34	- Networking with agencies and associations	
	Participant 4-2	54:54	- Usage of working groups / peer groups to get insights from the market, customers and trends	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- Input from departments and employees - mainly driven by headquarter functions, but also country share their ideas and best practices	
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- If a good idea comes up, never mind who was the initiator, it will be discussed	
	Participant 4-3	49:53	- Internal exchange meetings do not exist	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	- Exchange with agency network - Sparing with publishers (who are currently in the transition towards more digital offerings)	
	Participant 4-4	30:11	- Usage of social media channels e.g., LinkedIn to detect trends - Adaptation of private user behaviours (esp. testing new communication channels/platforms)	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	41:35	- Best practice sharing by participating in association events - Best practice sharing also related to KPIs, which are usually not mentioned in magazines on the same detail level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking at B2C practices - Benchmarking - Networking and thereby exchanging knowledge (internal / external) - Agency insights - Attending seminars - University projects and exchange with science
	Participant 5-1	45:12	- Benchmarking with peer groups	
	Participant 5-1	01:01:09	- International exchange of best practices in addition to be informed about local activities and evaluate regional ideas for international distribution	
	Participant 5-2	11:41	- Gaining insights from B2C trends - Benchmarking	
	Participant 5-2	48:03	- Close relationship to professors and research projects with universities	
	Participant 5-2	51:34	- Increasing knowledge by a structured seminar schedule for the whole team - Agencies	

Appendix 44 – Obtaining new knowledge

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning by doing - Freelancer 	
Company 6	Participant 6-1	22:42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-research and benchmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benchmarking - Networking and thereby exchanging knowledge (internal / external) - Agency insights - Attending seminars and conferences - Reading - Self-research
	Participant 6-2	34:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agencies - Vendors of tools e.g., Salesforce etc., who inform about latest developments and possibilities - Self-research - Conferences, trainings - Trade magazines, studies - Best practice with other companies 	
	Participant 6-2	34:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diverse departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales departments - Digital Team - E-commerce shop team 	
	Participant 6-3	49:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Associations (VDMA) - Best practice sharing in associations - Learning by doing - Newspaper - Some marketing communication trade magazines / online articles (Horizont) - Agencies do not understand the business – that is why critical to talk to sometimes - Exchange with customers 	
	Participant 6-3	52:19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information gathering should always rely on multiple sources from various disciplines - Trade magazines are to slow + quality is getting poor 	

Appendix 45 – Role and usage of marketing theory in practice

Main reference: Interview Guide question 22

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	39:08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing theory does not have an added value for business, because reality always looks different - Value relies in "operational doing" and testing - Marketing is simple - Catching up new ideas from agencies and search for information online by his own - For implementation, individual argumentation is always needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory does not provide an added value for the day-to-day business - Theory not applicable in practice - Trainees / students share latest insights from their studies
	Participant 1-2	01:00:36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing theory is not of interest - Trainees are frequently supporting the department and bring in new ideas 	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reads magazines for "sales excellence" as he is in the position as head of sales II Non-specific marketing communication theory considered from his side 	
	Participant 1-4	44:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read trade magazines and books + listen to podcasts - related to the business and marketing / marketing communication - Active push to other team members does not happen / no exchange internally 	
	Participant 1-3	32:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSO interested in general market data + customer feedback II Non-specific marketing communication theory considered from his side 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	01:04:02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try to stay informed by attending lectures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainees / students share latest insights from their studies - Some concepts are used, but no active monitoring of literature - "Theory remains more or less the same, as the general principles do not change"
	Participant 2-2	08:33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input from students who write their final papers (Bachelor, Master, PhD/DBA) in the context of Company 2 to improve a dedicated issue (e.g. Customer Journey optimization) 	
	Participant 2-2	29:46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input from students who write their final papers (Bachelor, Master, PhD/DBA) in the context of Company 2 to improve a dedicated issue (e.g., Customer Journey optimization) 	
	Participant 2-3	52:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopting theory based on participation in webinars - So far adopted concepts: Customer Journey, Persona concept 	
	Participant 2-4	17:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General principle will always remain the same - No specific need to look on the latest marketing theory 	
Company 3	Participant 3-1	01:10:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing concepts like "content marketing" are understood, but concept is not concretely gathered from academic papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory is important to stay up to date – no specific approach for search
	Participant 3-1	01:12:52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading of trade magazines and newsletters (but not frequently) 	

Appendix 45 – Role and usage of marketing theory in practice

	Participant 3-2	48:07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing Communication theory is important to stay up to date - Individual search - inspiration while reading though online articles, etc. - Interested in deep dive into topics to comprehensible understand the latest findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irregular use of online search, trade magazines, newsletter
Company 4	Participant 4-2	51:44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indirect information about latest trends from agencies (= filtered information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory is helpful for justification purposes / argumentations with stakeholder - No active search or usage – trends are perceived in online media and through the consulting of agencies - Theory does not reflect practice and is quicker in adopting new trends that the companies target group itself → nice to know, but not applicable
	Participant 4-3	46:58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indirect information by attending to seminars, trainings, etc. 	
	Participant 4-4	25:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory can be quicker than practice, as the target group is not that quickly adopting to the latest communication channels (in this case: target group still requires print magazines rather than online publications) 	
	Participant 4-4	30:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment and landscape are so dynamic that people do not anticipate directly from learned knowledge - What they do is based on practical experience - New information / trends are gathered from communication channels like LinkedIn 	
	Participant 4-4	33:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory (would) support explanation of marketing communication department / experts, as stakeholders does not always trust channel experts 	
Company 5	Participant 5-1	40:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent reading for trade magazines and online search related to live marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal trainings / seminars / university projects to stay up to date with theory - Reading (frequently) trade magazines
	Participant 5-1	42:53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal training to keep team up-to-date based on marketing communication theory 	
	Participant 5-2	48:03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process introduced to actively latest findings from research - Training from university professors to increase the knowledge of the team - Connected to marketing professors via associations - Workshop conducted with a professor about brand management - Research projects with universities - Theory of interest to better understand how theory can be integrated into praxis 	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	34:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading of studies - Participation at conferences and trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in conferences to gain some insights - Only a few colleagues read marketing communication trade magazines
	Participant 6-3	49:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only a few colleagues are read in marketing communication trade magazines (e.g., Horizont) - Most insights do come from colleagues / business network 	

Appendix 46 – Knowledge about customers

Appendix 46 – Knowledge about customers

Main reference: Interview Guide question 23

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	22:32	- Knowledge of age structure → no digital natives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer knowledge available in organisation, but fragmented - Lack of knowledge transfer to marketing communication - Comprehensive insights are available in sales and key account teams - Involvement of top management into customer interactions
	Participant 1-1	43:59	- Customer knowledge available in organisation, but not in Marketing Communications department	
	Participant 1-1	45:22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No knowledge transfer about customer insights between sales and marketing in a system (no interfaces between existing systems) - No tracking possible what was the driver of the purchase - Sales does not want to share their insights 	
	Participant 1-2	01:04:57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As company in general, knowledge about customers perceived good due to long lasting relationships with customers - No exchange of data between sales and marketing 	
	Participant 1-3	34:28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Account structure available - Insights into key account customers bigger - Key Account insights are more aggregated in headquarter 	
	Participant 1-5	27:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good customer knowledge on key account basis combined with a trustful partnership - Also due to the fact that management levels are in a frequent exchange about strategic developments and due to joint product developments 	
Company 2	Participant 2-1	59:26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Even though CRM data is already used (56:30), the level of customer knowledge have to be improved further. - Ideas how to use data for marketing communication purposes exists, but access to data is missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM customer data already used for marketing communication purposes - Customer knowledge differs in marketing communication department
	Participant 2-3	55:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information transfer from sales to marketing not completely given - Customer Knowledge in Marketing / Marketing Communication department is limited (average level of knowledge) 	
	Participant 2-3	55:48	- Knowledge dependent on role within marketing / marketing communication department	
	Participant 2-4	19:11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge about customers that the company know are good - Main question is: Whom do company 2 miss and is not aware about this potential customer / prospect 	
Company 3	Participant 3-2	51:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer data available, but always a topic that can be improved - A lot of effort to evaluate and select the required data 	- Customer data available , but always be improved
Company 4	Participant 4-1	24:23	- Good customer insights and openness from customer site to share his opinion	- Comprehensive insights are available in product management

Appendix 46 – Knowledge about customers

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
			- Improvements are seen in analytical methods and more analytical procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM data cannot be used for marketing communication purposes so far - Customer knowledge is perceived as good on sales side
	Participant 4-2	50:47	- CRM data base not good enough to use the data for marketing communication purposes	
	Participant 4-3	04:17	- Limited market size with only a few players that are quite stable	
	Participant 4-3	05:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer knowledge is good - Due to limited customer quantity and market position, company 4 is well-known in the market and most of the customer do know company 4 	
Company 5	Participant 5-2	44:24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of customer data is available, but not ideally stored - Marketing does not have the same level of insights than sales or product management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of information is available, but unstructured - Business unit does have comprehensive customer insights - Marketing communication does not have comprehensive access to customer insights
	Participant 5-3	45:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer knowledge does rudimentary exist - Documentation is missing and by this, most of the time the general customer picture is not clear enough 	
	Participant 5-4	21:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Unit does have a good understanding of customer needs - especially for bigger customers - In area sales, a lot of topics are not seen 	
	Participant 5-4	22:29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer understanding decreases with distance from the head office. Especially because the relevance of the subsidiaries is smaller than in the country of the head office - Primarily operational units are on site in regions (Asian countries) and not strategic functions. 	
Company 6	Participant 6-2	38:06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Almost all customer data is stored in one central customer data base / CRM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales data / personal data required for sales processes - Website behaviour - E-Mail data - Trade show visits - Campaign info - Participation info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive insights in customer insights available on marketing communication side - All relevant digital marketing communication customer data is already part of the CRM system and used for communication purposes - Involvement of top management into customer interactions - Relationship management done by marketing communication head and frequent exchange with customers
	Participant 6-3	49:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing communication head is involved in customer interactions also connected to customer network (→ relationship management done by marketing communication as well) - Frequent exchange with customers 	
	Participant 6-3	56:27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good customer knowledge - Stored on CRM with a good quality 	

Appendix 47 – Usage of a customer data base

Appendix 47 – Usage of a customer data base

Additionally derived content cluster

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
Company 1	Participant 1-1	45:22	- CRM system not adopted to today's Marketing Communication Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CRM data base not applicable for marketing communication - Poor data quality - Investments into new CRM system planned, but were also postponed from 2022
	Participant 1-1	45:22	- Outdated CRM tool and no great possibilities to integrate marketing functions - Therefore, another tool was purchased for this purpose	
	Participant 1-1	45:56	- CRM has no interface to Marketing Communications --> Manual work, if somebody does have the resource to take a look	
	Participant 1-1	45:56	- Availability of data dependent on internal data policy.	
	Participant 1-1	45:56	- No interface or data exchange between existing tools --> manual effort to connect marketing communication and sales data	
	Participant 1-1	45:56	- Exchange of data between individuals / departments across company is also political due to: "control of the employee's activities" --> workers council	
	Participant 1-2	01:04:57	- Limited awareness about CRM System and its benefit for the organisation	
	Participant 1-3	10:09	- Of main pain point is the lack of a modern CRM system, which would support to properly monitor incoming leads	
	Participant 1-3	28:43	- No valuable marketing communication information in CRM available	
	Participant 1-4	32:37	- Invest into new system postponed (originally planned for 2022) - Larger invest topics are not only reflected in the annual budget plannings. Here, longer decision periods are part of the decision process and not only a part of the annual planning process	
	Participant 1-5	20:39	- Invest into new CRM system to allow marketing to use comprehensive data, which is not possible at the moment - New CRM system should also bridge currently missing interfaces between systems	
Participant 1-5	20:39	- Necessity to integrate marketing communication touchpoints and measures in CRM tool recognised by management board		
Company 2	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Several information from CRM system is used to set up appropriate marketing communication measures - Note: even though participant is of the opinion that they need to know more about their customers (Min. 59:26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Usage of CRM data, but limited - Regional rollouts of CRM system are currently running - Most of the time manual effort to analyse data
	Participant 2-1	56:30	- Usage of CRM and ERP data - but currently limited	

Appendix 47 – Usage of a customer data base

Company	Participant	Time code	Statement summary	Case summary (Green = multiple resp. / Orange = single resp.)
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- Value of CRM system known, but they currently do not have the data available	
	Participant 2-2	22:57	- (Regional) implementation and expansion of functionalities of CRM currently running - So far, huge manual effort to analyse the data	
Company 3	Participant 3-3	26:25	- Webinar platform and Marketing Automation Tool	- Not directly mentioned, but CRM system and data available – discussions are especially focussed on digital marketing tools and platforms , which are additionally used
Company 4	Participant 4-2	50:41	- CRM tool in use, but does not contain the right information currently - Main user: Service and Sales organisation	- CRM system currently not available for communication (only used for lead management) - Lack of transparency in data
	Participant 4-3	46:58	- Usage of CRM to handle online customer queries	
	Participant 4-4	09:31	- CRM not available, but a system should be rolled out - Marketing communication has prepared everything, but other departments are currently slowing down the implementation speed due to the fear of losing control and more transparency - Marketing needs CRM to evaluate current measures, what is currently not possible in that detail	
	Participant 4-4	54:59	- CRM system needed 1) to have more transparency in customer data 2) to execute marketing communication measures more target-oriented 3) to monitor measures and evaluate the success of measures	
Company 5	Participant 5-4	24:10	- CRM system is constantly developing in all companies and there is no status quo where everything globally is comprehensible filled - Data maintenance always differs per country and per group of people who maintain it	- CRM quality differs between regions and business units - CRM developments especially in foreign countries
Company 6	Participant 6-2	01:33	- Salesforce as CRM system in use	- CRM is established and also used for various marketing purposes - Marketing communication actively shares customer insights from social media via CRM with sales - Online marketing lead management
	Participant 6-2	17:22	- CRM training done by Marketing department for the sections marketing is responsible in the CRM tool	
	Participant 6-2	19:58	- Marketing is responsible for dedicated sections of the CRM	
	Participant 6-2	20:29	- CRM used to steer marketing communication campaigns	
	Participant 6-2	39:43	- Integration of social leads in CRM	
	Participant 6-3	56:27	- CRM with qualitative data available and in use	

Appendix 48 – Shared insights of researcher

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
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Topic: Current KPI systems and their disadvantages in dealing with data maintenance

Company 2	Researcher	43:55	<i>“So, the second: sovereignty knowledge. We had it or you had already mentioned it. Of course, it's also a question of power. So whoever has the information is perhaps smarter and says, “Well, I can't go to the customer without me, because I'm the salesperson here. I know what the customer is concerned about. This is actually also a question that we are currently asking ourselves with the background of collecting data.”</i>
	Participant 2-2	46:32	<i>“I believe that these KPI systems, the ones we have learned, will no longer work. So, if I really only focus with sales on the topic of incoming orders, then that is exactly the point. Then they have no interest in entering data and then it will be difficult to make [...] this attractive, because the added value is not that great.”</i>

Topic: Perceived change of relevance of trade fairs though the Covid-19 pandemic

Company 2	Participant 2-3	30:21	<i>“I'll follow up on that right away. So what's obvious is that everything online has increased a lot. We were just talking about this today. We have two big fairs next business year, one is [Fair 1], the other is [Fair 2]. Fair 1] has always been the leading fair for us. That's where we have to go. That is the most important tool of all. Today we looked each other in the eye and asked ourselves, is it really still? We will spend about an [amount], maybe even [amount] on it. How much SEO, how much SEO could you do with it. And how many people would you be able to reach with that? And how much do you reach now at [Fair 1], where travel restrictions might still be there in August and nobody knows how it works?”</i>
	Researcher	31:16	<i>“Yes, maybe I can play it back in the same way. We had similar questions last year and also said that the budget is one thing. Of course, you can get more sales qualified leads and the like. However, the quality was still a factor for us, it was still a factor for a trade fair. It was said that you can't replace this qualitative exchange, the personal, online. Maybe the scope of trade fair participation will definitely be different. But staying away completely from an image point of view and because of the quality of this possible lead still spoke for it. So probably relatively similar to what you discussed.”</i>
	Participant 2-3	32:07	<i>“Exactly, that is also one of the reasons. But you can also generate good clicks online and I would like to give an example. I don't know if [Participant 2-2] or one of the other colleagues has already brought this, then you can stall me. Is the Experience area [Company 2]. We had lockdown on the first or the complete lockdown. The world was lying fallow. We were afraid that our business would completely collapse. And then we said, okay, we have to do something. We do webinars. And we set up a webinar system very quickly. We advertised it endlessly. Topics were we explain the world of [product segment]. We called it a training break. Half an hour of brief information about [product segment] on various technical topics. That in general, other relevant for the relevant design or also [product segment] relevant things [...]. We thought that if there were 30-40 participants, then we were already really, really good. I think we exceeded 100 participants at every event, if I remember correctly. We generated a massive amount of really good leads. There were some who attended all the events until the end [...]. That was a resounding success, we later translated that into Russian again, that the colleagues did that and so on. For a tenth of the price. So that's why the question arises.”</i>

Appendix 48 – Shared insights of researcher

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
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Topic: Shared experiences with e-commerce in B2B and potential challenges during the introduction of the sales channel

Company 2	Researcher	42:44-43:19	<i>"In addition, they also have a different product strategy or sales strategy. You find product lines in the shop that the normal area salesperson cannot sell at all. To avoid exactly that, that you say you're ruining your own prices. Because you can now say as a seller, if you want to have a standard device for, let's say, simpler application. Here's the voucher. Ten per cent. I can't sell you that at all. And I, let's say, the higher-priced products, you can only get them from me via direct sales."</i>
	Participant 2-3	43:19-43:22	<i>"That's a cool strategy."</i>
	Researcher	43:22-44:21	<i>"Exactly. So of course you also have to build a second brand. They have one relatively early on. I think it was even independent of the shop. It was still set up in catalogue times with [brand]. It's also bought OEM. But we also do that for certain products, because I don't manufacture any myself. So it's a relatively sophisticated strategy and you don't have what we had for a while. The internal competition between the channels, because I think the bottom line is that sales is always more incentivised by commission. If you then ask for good things on the online shop and suddenly maybe not all the enquiries end up with you, then of course you also ruin your own commission. When you are in such a competitive situation, it is always difficult to see the web shop as a friend and an extended workbench. It's a change management process, and for us at least, it took quite a bit longer."</i>
	Participant 2-3	44:21-45:48	<i>"That will also be exciting for us. That is perhaps an area where you say, where are we not well positioned? We don't have a shop at the moment. That is certainly something that will be necessary, but of course there are also those who are reluctant. That exactly the last sentence you said. How do we take our distribution with us? How can we do that? We are now going to build the pilot or we are building a pilot in China. We are building up a sales configurator, which is also necessary in this respect. (-) Because currently the design of [product] is brought in-house via a service. We have [programme] as a design programme. It is our own development and has no connection to SAP. That means you design a [product] and then enter all the data again in SAP and in case of doubt something else comes out because a different calculation is stored there. In the worst case. This is now being brought together and should also be available as an online solution. But it will take a few more years until it works properly."</i>

Appendix 48 – Shared insights of researcher

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
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Topic: Introduction of „Brückenbau Marke“ (Bride construction brand) concept

Company 3	Researcher	48:07-49:26	<i>“I had recently, or what do you mean recently. Last year, I became aware of Mr Baumgart because he opened an Instagram channel and also a LinkedIn channel with the title ‘Brückenbau Marke’. His basic intention behind it was to say, “We are noticing more and more on the theoretical side that there is no longer any transfer from theory to practice because the requirements for scientific work are extremely high on the one hand. Of course, this also complicates the applicability. On the other hand, there are trends such as Fast Science and the like, where it is difficult to make the right selection due to the flood of information. What are the topics now, the right topics for me. And he says, how should I put it, as the basic motivation behind this whole project of building bridges for brands, that it is becoming more and more difficult to apply this marketing theory because it is very specific and analyses a concrete subject area very precisely. Is that how you perceive it?”</i>
	Participant 3-2	49:26-50:08	<i>“Yes, it does go a bit in that direction and I think that is often the extent to which the person or persons choose or show interest in it. For me, however, it is often simply a certain inspiration and stimulus and I don't think I would filter it all from A to Z, but I do look at it very selectively and pick out what is interesting for me. Where I think I can do something with it. But I think that's also very individual. I think it's also the case that everyone deals with different topics differently.”</i>
	Researcher	50:08-50:10	<i>“That is true.”</i>
	Participant 3-2	50:08-50:45	<i>“But I still find such stories super important, because in this day and age, of course, everything is fast-moving, but and yes, you do a lot according to your gut feeling, but these certain fundamental building sites, I like to be someone who really dives a little deeper and theoretically tackles certain topics. Of course, I wonder if this can be put into practice by the end. I doubt that too.”</i>

Appendix 48 – Shared insights of researcher

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
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Topic: Analytics & online event platform

Company 3	Researcher	22:11-25:31	<p><i>“Exactly. We looked at On24 within the group because it creates a kind of online platform/ecosystem for the customer. So you build a customer portal, so to speak, and every touchpoint within this portal is broken down to the customer. That means, for example, if you set up x access for the customer because he says “Hey, I’m interested in this right now, I want to take a look at the video here”, then he has to log in beforehand and you see every single time he logs in. You see which document he downloads. You see which on-demand webinar, video or whatever he has watched and when. On24 also has an interface to Salesforce so that you can link all interactions, perhaps even the questions he asked during the webinar, directly with everything. I thought it was very powerful, but it wasn’t financially feasible within the scope of our possibilities. The other thing I would like to tell you about, at least again, is this tracking along the customer journey or the purchase funnel. That was a question that originally prompted me to think about this thesis, the doctoral project. Our primary demand was: “What’s the point of investing another 100 euros in social media, to put it bluntly? We were always in need of explanations. Then we just said that for us, quite schematically: you have your five to eight different steps in the customer journey in the purchase funnel, whatever you want to call it. Actually, you could make a cross-section like this and say: For everything where the channels pay attention to awareness, because you want to initiate a dialogue somehow, you can measure clearly across all channels for a target group, how big is the conversion to the next phase. Of course, this presupposes that you also have your KPI for social media and awareness in this case, but it also applies to all other channels. In the case of an advertisement that you place somewhere editorially, the question would of course be whether it is the number of contacts or circulation that you achieve, or do you include a QR code as a standard KPI that links to further material and that is then a reliable signal. So of course it’s always a bit like the question of what to include. But that’s how we tried to build it up step by step and then at least tried to find out from the cross-section how big the conversion is and where it breaks off and which of the channels then helps, for example, in the awareness or loyalty phase or wherever to bring something forward from the highest conversion, so to speak. Is the euro invested in a webinar or a trade fair more sensible than, for example, in a TikTok or Snapchat post or whatever?”</i></p>
	Participant 3-3	25:31-25:38	<p><i>“What was probably even easier in this case: You were at the medium-sized company, I think, right?”</i></p>
	Researcher	25:38-26:25	<p><i>“Exactly. We serve the whole of EMEA. It’s also about [industry]. That means we are always involved in one way or another in almost every industry, because most of the time it’s about getting goods from A to B within the company. That makes the number of stakeholders in the industries very diverse. Nevertheless, we have committed ourselves to three/four main personas, where we have said that they fit in across regions and basically in every industry. That’s more or less what we try to base our communication on.”</i></p>
	Participant 3-3	26:25-27:14	<p><i>“At [Company 3], the large corporation, of course, sometimes stands in our way, because it’s super complex to get through the distribution structures at our company alone. As you say, you use On24. For example, we have On23 as a webinar platform that is linked to our marketing automation tool [name]. Likewise, we’re in the pilot right now for what you just described with On24. That means [name] that we are testing, where the data also flows into the [marketing automation tool]. Nevertheless, somewhere in our [Marketing Automation Tool] you have a flood of data and you still have to think about when is the right time to actually transfer a contact. It’s incredibly difficult, but exciting. I think it’s really cool because I always think that the possibilities you have now to let off steam are so much more diverse than they were 10 or 15 years ago.”</i></p>

Appendix 48 – Shared insights of researcher

Company	Participant	Time code	Translated statement
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Topic: How to handle trade fairs during covid

Company 4	Researcher	46:27-47:41	<i>“Very exciting. But I think it's also a long-term transition that's taking place. Perhaps reflected back from my point of view. We were faced with similar challenges, of course, but we had already come to the conclusion two or three years earlier, step by step, that the relevance and the type of visitors at our leading trade fairs had changed and that there was always the question "In which direction do we want to turn it? Which then, of course, worsened in an extreme way. But yes, in general I can only underline the importance and relevance of B2B as far as trade fairs are concerned. There are also various studies that say in a pre-Corona era 40-50 percent of the marketing budget is always attributable to trade fairs or live marketing measures. Yes, I'm curious to see how this will continue after Corona. But let's see. Are there then any things that you are missing in the communication mix with you? That haven't been served yet? For some reason?"</i>
	Participant 4-4	47:41-49:03	<i>“B2C, as mentioned. We are not there yet. So especially if you want to rejuvenate yourself as a company in parallel and also strengthen the employer brand. In my opinion, you also have to use some B2C channels in order to reach the corresponding target groups. You have to weigh up exactly which channels these could be. But (-), yes, I'll put it this way: the younger the target group, the more you should think about B2C channels as a supplement. I think our generation doesn't have to think about, well, Facebook is already out of date for them. We no longer need to be addressed somehow via TikTok. We would probably only be reached to a limited extent via TikTok. But everything that follows now, they use other channels. They use WhatsApp, they use TikTok, they use YouTube. We are nowhere represented as a company as far as employer marketing is concerned. And there are certainly things that the company still has to adjust.”</i>
	Researcher	49:03-49:22	<i>“Yes. (--). It's exciting that you mentioned YouTube in this context. Because YouTube is also relevant as a distribution channel because of the search algorithm and the connection to Google. Are you just as little represented there, or is that?”</i>
	Participant 4-4	49:22-50:36	<i>“We're on YouTube, but, yeah, it's a [Company 4] video archive. I think you can call it that. We don't develop content specifically for YouTube. We don't run campaigns on YouTube either. That's hopefully one of the big levers this year. Last week would have been. We had a big workshop with our digital agency, Annual Planning 22, where we would have discussed things like YouTube and also voice, podcasts, etc. We'd like to see more of that. There [is] one, we are certainly not optimally positioned as far as the topic of voice is concerned. Yes, otherwise yes, we use YouTube. We have the channel. All videos are stored there, but there is no strategic, systematic use of this important platform. And as I said, it's really only pure B2B content there. Whereby, I don't know, it really should go up again. Maybe the new employer branding videos, some of them contain employer branding stories.”</i>