**Aalto University
School of Business**

Improving inter-organizational internal communication and collaboration with the help of enterprise social media Case study: A multinational corporation

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the possibility of a better use of the social media tools by companies, in order to improve their internal communication paths. Special attention was given on examining the benefits which may turn out in internal communication processes, when global organizations follow the new communication trends. At first it records the existing communication status and challenges among the employees in big multinational organizations. Secondly, it investigates the employees' perception about using social media tools at work and thirdly explores how personal relations impact internal communication among colleagues. Finally, the introduced scenario is carried out for a real global organization leading the market in the technology areas.

The research follows a single case qualitative method in order to collect the data under concern. Initially, the data was recorded in spring 2014 from the case company by fourteen semi structured personal interviews and three focus groups. The study also utilized secondary data such as previous survey results available by the case company.

This research has shown that enterprise social media tools can to some extent contribute to the improvement of internal communication and collaboration. Enterprise social media tools should be integrated into the internal communication processes rather than completely replace the traditional methods. Moreover, six communication challenges that multinational organizations face were identified. Four of them could be eliminated by social media tools. Additionally, the study also recognized a negative attitude from the employees towards using social media tools at work which needs to be resolved before utilizing the tools. Four reasons were recognized as causes for the formation of negative attitude but in general it can be said that it was formed due to inefficient briefing. Finally, the study showed strong positive connection between personal relation among employees and effective internal communication.

This study offers several practical implications to the case company. The most important implications are to clearly define the used enterprise social media tools and to devote more time into internal marketing. In addition, the study comes into agreement with existing literature that imply that new media channels improve communication but it also contributes to existing literature by bring new insights about why employees are too reluctant into using them.

Tekijä Sabrina Avanidis

Työn nimi

Organisaatioiden sisäisen viestinnän ja yhteistyön kehittäminen sosiaalisen median työkalujen avulla. Tapaustutkimus: Monikansallinen yhtiö

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Tiivistelmä

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tutkitaan yritysten mahdollisuuksia parantaa sosiaalisen median työkalujen käyttöä sisäisten viestintäketjujen kehittämiseksi. Erityishuomiota kiinnitettiin niihin etuihin, joita ilmenee sisäisissä kommunikaatioprosesseissa globaalien organisaatioiden seuratessa uusia kommunikaatiotrendejä. Aluksi työssä tarkastellaan olemassa olevia kommunikaationmenetelmiä ja -haasteita isoissa monikansallisissa organisaatioissa. Seuravaksi tarkastellaan työntekijöiden näkemyksiä sosiaalisen median työkalujen käytöstä työpaikalla, ja kolmanneksi selvitetään kuinka henkilöstön keskinäiset suhteet vaikuttavat kollegoiden väliseen sisäiseen kommunikaatioon. Työssä esitelty skenaario jalkautetaan todelliseen globaaliin organisaatioon, joka on alansa markkinajohtaja.

Työ perustuu kvalitatiiviseen tapaustutkimukseen. Aineisto kerättiin tutkimusyrityksessä keväällä 2014 tekemällä 14 puolistrukturoitua henkilöhaastattelua ja kolme ryhmähaastattelua. Sekundaariaineistona käytettiin jo aiemmin yrityksessä tehtyjen kyselyjen tuloksia.

Tutkimus on osoittanut, että yrityksen sosiaalisen median työkalut voivat parantaa sisäistä kommunikaatiota ja yhteistyötä. Lisäksi todettiin, että sosiaalisen median työkaluilla ei pidä korvata traditionaalisia menetelmiä vaan integroida ne muuhun sisäiseen kommunikaatioon. Tutkimuksessa tunnistettiin kuusi kommunikaatioon liittyvää haastetta, joita monikansalliset organisaatiot kohtaavat. Neljä näistä haasteista voitaisiin eliminoida sosiaalisen median työkalujen avulla. Lisäksi havaittiin, että sosiaalisen median aiheuttamat negatiiviset asenteet tulisi ratkaista ennen sosiaalisen median työkalujen käyttöönottoa työpaikoilla. Näiden negatiivisten asenteiden taustalta löytyi neljä eri syytä, mutta yleisesti ottaen näiden yhdistävä tekijä oli tehoton opastus. Lopuksi tutkimuksessa havaittiin voimakas positiivinen yhteys työntekijöiden välisten henkilösuhteiden ja tehokkaan sisäisen kommunikaation välillä.

Tämä tutkimus tuotti tapausyritykselle useita käytännön sovellutuksia ja suosituksia, joista tärkeimmät olivat sosiaalisen median työkalujen selkeä määritteleminen ja panostaminen sisäiseen markkinointiin. Tutkielman tulokset tukevat aikaisempia tutkimuksia jotka väittävät että uudet mediakanavat parantavat kommunikaatiota. Samalla tutkielma tuo lisää informaatiota siihen miksi työntekijät suhtautuvat vastahakoisesti uusiin kommunikaation menetelmiin työpaikoilla.

Avainsanat sisäinen viestintä, yrityksen sosiaalisen median työkaluja, epävirallinen viestintä, yhteistyö, sisäinen markkinointi, monikansallinen yritys, Yammer, SharePoint, viestintäkanavat

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, more and more companies are expanding their businesses globally willing to be the market leaders in their realm. In this effort special attention has been paid to the implementation of marketing methodologies in all external (sales and marketing) and internal (communication) processes. Since global organizations tend to be multinational and multicultural, a high level communication between the white collar employees is required. In order to achieve this, the information should be exchanged in a very simple, accurate and meaningful way. These targets can be achieved by improving inter-organizational communication and collaboration. Adopting and adjusting social media communication techniques is not so obvious, and it always demands time and patience, brainstorming and investments. (Quirke, 2008)

This thesis examines how a marketing communication department of a multinational corporation can exploit social media as a tool to improve internal communication and marketing communications. This thesis specifically has been commissioned by the case company and seeks to provide concrete and practical proposals aimed at improving the existing communication challenges faced by the marketing communications department of the case company. Based on these facts, the thesis study attempts to introduce new communication ideas, and apply the existing methodologies to the global organization's needs.

1.1 Background of the study

Only if we stop for a minute and think what we did ten or twenty years ago we can see how the world has changed over the years. The past decade has been proven as the most qualitative improvement in people's communication. A very common example has been encountered in people's daily communication with the essential need of better and higher technology tools, such as mobile phones, which finally turned to be an absolute part of people's lives. Particularly, technology revolution, in combination with social media, has made the greatest impact. It is not a secret that social media has changed the social behaviour of people over the years. This is recorded in

Constantinides & Fountain (2008), where it is expressed that social media affect the way people socialize, communicate, interact and entertain themselves. Social media communication tools have extensively changed our daily lives and most importantly the way we interact with each other and the world around us.

Marketing discipline has also evolved following the new social trends. According to Lusch (2007), marketing, as a way of thinking and as a practice, still continues to progress. It is adjusted according to the quick worldwide changes. As a consequence, marketing practices have also been changed accordingly, following the rapidly changing social behaviour of people, especially after the introduction of new ways to communicate and to socialize. Figure 1 illustrates how theory and practice of the marketing have been developed (Lusch et al., 2007) with years.
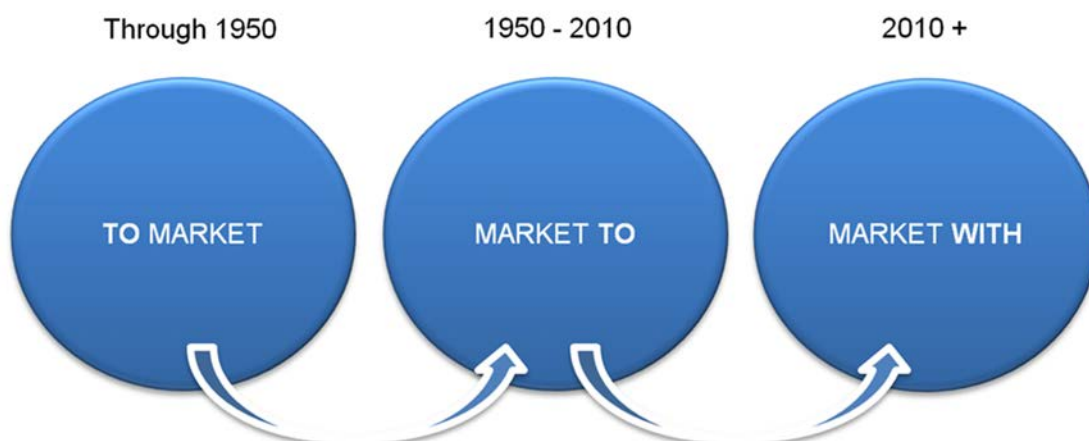
Figure 1 The evolution of marketing (Lusch et al, 2007)

It is obvious that marketing philosophy of the 1950s changed. The marketers are not focusing anymore on exposing goods to the market instead nowadays they have to shorten the distance between production and consumption. By the 1960s, the industrial and distribution sector of the economy grew and there was more supply than demand and so the marketers had to change the way of thinking and doing. It became apparent that they had to sell the product to the customers and convince them to buy the product, they had to market. *"Market(ing) to"* phase of marketing lasted for a while but inside that era some changes, such as the shift from the market orientation to the customer orientation, occurred as well.

The last change that has occurred to the discipline and practice of marketing only in the last years is more relevant to this study. In the latest years, scholars have been discussing how the customer should be involved in the process and be a co-producer. The marketing view has been altered and scholars and practitioners are more and more focusing on the service-logic discipline that raised the importance of customer involvement and relationship communication (Finne & Grönroos, 2009); market with the customer.

Lucsh et al. (2007) argue that "*service-dominant logic is philosophically grounded in a commitment to collaborative processes with customers, partners and employees*" and highlight the importance of collaboration and information sharing. Social media tools give to the users an opportunity to become co-producers (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), and empower the idea of the service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lucsh, 2007).

Following the evolution of marketing, the way external marketing communication is practised has also been transformed over the years. The customer is now more involved, and the marketers have to market with them. Nowadays, technology has given the customers a voice, mostly through social media tools, and external communications have become a two-way dialogue. Social media surprised companies, which seemed to join the social networks and discussions online rather late. The big buzz about social media made the companies implement social media strategies into their marketing plans and strategies. Being present in social media and interacting with their customers seemed to be a must for all the companies. On the other hand, researches showed that people go to social media and networks in order to connect with friends and family and they are not keen on connecting or interacting with companies. In a survey conducted by IBM in 2011, more than 70% of the people said that they go to social media only to connect with friends and family while only 23% stated they engage in social media in order to also interact with brands. Moreover, the survey highlighted the existing perception gap between the customers and the brands about the reason for consumers' interaction with companies in social media. Companies have used social media tools mostly for external communication and with the aim to connect with the customers. The challenge in that is the social media were

not created with that in mind. Ahlqvist et al. (2008) argue that social media are virtual places where people interact and share information, ideas and experiences. It is a place to be social, using a two-way communication approach, and not a place to communicate or promote external information, using a one-way communication approach, which is what most of the businesses do and hope that their customers will engage with them.

As previously discussed, companies have shown less interest in applying social media practices in internal communication and internal marketing communication. As a result the internal communication has not followed the rapid and continuous change and companies have not realized the powerful communication updates (Sedej & Justinek, 2013). Marketers and others have not paid significant attention to the importance of the internal communication, and have tried to implement the new ways of doing marketing and communicating only to external communications. Internal communication has not really evolved during the years and big organizations are challenged with it. Connecting internally makes more sense as people connect mostly with people they know on social media. This fact also supports the reason for the creation of social media as a tool for a two-way communication.

Additionally, internal communication and collaboration in big organizations, especially in multinational organizations with employees located all over the world, have always been a big challenge (Sedej & Justinek, 2013). In multinational companies, in which hundreds of employees try to collaborate and communicate from every part of the world, a two-way communication tool might be very useful (Giesen, 2009). For that purpose enterprise social media tools for internal collaboration have been silently introduced inside big organizations. However, there have not been much research on the helpfulness of those tools in improving communication challenges that businesses face, and how employees perceive them.

1.2   Research question and objective

As previously mentioned, it is obvious that a further improvement in internal communication processes in multinational organizations has to be implemented, since the future benefits might be importantly positive. This thesis tries to investigate if enterprise social media tools can help to further improve the internal communication and collaboration in a group of multinational members. It exposes the idea of social medial communication techniques, so that managers and employees can implement this approach in their working environment.

Therefore, the objective of this study is presented below, and consists of the main research questions and three defining and supporting sub-questions:

> **How enterprise social media can contribute to the improvement of inter-organizational cooperation and information sharing?**

> I.   *What are the current internal communication challenges that multinational corporations face?*
> II.   *How does employee perception of social media tools impact the digital change?*
> III.   *How personal relations affect internal communication in a multinational organization?*

The main objective of this study is to examine and understand if social media tools can help to solve the internal communication challenges in a big organization. Before answering the main research question, it is vital to investigate the supporting sub-questions.

Before trying to find ways to improve internal communication it is essential to discover the present internal communication challenges that employees face in a big organization (*sub-question I.*). At the same time, always before introducing new ways of processes and actions it is relevant to recognize and analyse the attitude people have about the upcoming change, and in this case the attitude towards enterprise social

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media tools (*sub-question II.*). Last but not least, it is interesting to explore if personal relations which social media could embrace and keep up, affect the way internal communication is implemented, and how information is shared among employees (*sub-question III.*).

1.3   Case Study

This study has been commissioned by a global marketing communications department of a multinational corporation operating in a business-to-business context in more than 100 countries worldwide. All the empirical data for this research were collected from the commissioning company. In order to protect the company's privacy, it will be named with a pseudonym "company X" throughout this report. Company X and the global marketing communications department will be presented in more detail in chapter two of the study.

Internal communication is of great value for company X, but the company faces daily internal communication challenges mainly because of time and location restrictions. That results in the reduction of the departments' efficiency. This thesis will not only explore if enterprise social media tools that have been silently introduced inside company X can help to solve the challenges but also identify the challenges, explore the attitude employees have towards social media tools and probe the importance of having personal relations with colleagues.

1.4   Empirical research in brief

For the empirical part of this thesis a single case study approach with a qualitative research method was used. All the data were collected during spring 2014 from the case company which commissioned this thesis.

Qualitative methods usually produce empirical data that apply only to one particular case, which makes it a good tool to be combined with a single case study research. In addition, qualitative research methods are utilized in order to gain a better understanding of the issue which also under scope of this study.

Both secondary and primary data were used to collect information. The secondary data consist of previous empirical research on improving internal communication inside the case company, as well as comments and points of views about enterprise social media found in the company's intranet. In order to collect the primary data fourteen personal interviews and three focus groups were conducted. The methodology of the study is presented in more detail in chapter four.

1.5   Outline of the study

The thesis is organized as follows: In chapter 2, the case company is presented, the internal communication process is introduced and the communication channels and tools are defined.

In chapter 3, a summary of the previous relevant studies is made. First, the social media are defined, presented and explored from a company's perspective. Additionally, the enterprise social media tools that are used inside the case company are introduced and defined using the theory. Then, internal communication is defined, and the most relevant internal communication challenges are identified. Moreover, the internal communication channels and methods are discussed, and the importance of choosing the right channels is indicated. Then, the role of internal marketing in internal communication is determined. Next, a link between enterprise social media tools and internal communication is established and argued. Afterwards, the literature review is concluded and a theoretical framework is created to be used in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical research of the study in detail. Primarily, the research approach and methodology are grounded and presented thoroughly. Then, the validity and reliability of this study is addressed and argued. Next, the issues related to the data collection and analysis are introduced.

Chapter 5 demonstrates all the findings that are analyzed. The empirical findings of the qualitative study are presented and the research question and the sub-questions are discussed. Moreover, the theoretical framework is applied to the findings.

As a conclusion, chapter 6 presents the main findings. The managerial implications and recommendations are discussed and the theoretical contribution is considered. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented and proposals for future research are provided.

2. CASE COMPANY PRESENTATION

In this chapter the case company is presented. Moreover, the internal communication processes of the case organization are demonstrated and explained, and the channels used by company X are presented.

To protect the privacy of the case company, in this study the company carries the pseudonym "company X". In order to collect the empirical data confidentiality and anonymity was promised to the interviewees.

Company X group is a multinational corporation operating in a business-to-business context mainly in the technology areas. Company X operates in more than 100 countries. In Finland, Company X employs thousands of people and has operations in over 30 locations. The company develops and manufactures one of the leading product families of the company in Helsinki, Finland. This study will only focus on the internal communication of the global marketing communication department of that leading product family. The global marketing communications department in Helsinki (Global marcom) is responsible for providing marketing communication materials to local sales units in different countries around the world.

The global marketing communication team has three main internal customer groups that needs to not only collaborate and communicate with but also market the new materials:
- Local marketing communications (local marcoms)
- Global sales and global product and market managers
- Local sales and local product managers.

The global functions including the sales, product and market managers as well as the global marketing communication team, are located in Helsinki. The local sales and product managers and local marketing communicators who have local responsibilities are situated around the world. The different functions will be referred to as internal customers of the global marcom throughout this report. It is vital for the global marketing communication team to effectively inform its internal customers about new

marketing concepts and marketing materials to ensure united approach and messaging and assure their use.

The global marcom produces original and global marketing materials and tools in English to support the sales and marketing of a specific line of products. The global marcom team is responsible for the creation of global materials that serve a wide range of the internal customers' needs.

Furthermore, the local marcoms utilize the provided materials in their countries commonly after making proper actions to localize the materials. Local marcoms as local market experts also create their own marketing materials that serve their business and market purposes. In order to provide the local marcoms the proper materials that they understand and they want to use, global marcom needs to communicate and co-operate with them.

On the other hand, local sales are responsible for customer relations and are the ones who actually interact with the customers so they can be considered as part-time marketers (Gummesson, 1991). At the same time, global sales coordinate and support the local sales. Thus, it is equally important to collaborate with both sales in order to get customer insights and create materials and tools that support sales.

Additionally, global product and market managers hold a key role to provide content to the materials created by the global marcom team. At the moment, the global product and market managers are the ones with whom global marcom cooperates most in order to create the materials. As they are the product and market experts they provide the inputs. The local product managers are only occasionally in contact with the global marcom team as information normally flows to them through the global product managers.

All in all, all the internal customers of the global marcom team are equally important, to communicate and collaborate effectively, but for different reasons. At the moment much closer collaboration is done with the global product and market managers and somewhat with the local marcoms. The global and local sales are occasionally involved in the process of providing input for materials.

2.1 Internal communication inside the organization

In a big organization internal communication is a challenge as the more people are involved the more difficult it is to coordinate and to communicate. Moreover, for the global marcom team the line between internal communication and internal marketing is blurry as in many cases both occur at the same time. Figure 2 below shows simply how communication flows inside an organization. This flow is only valid from the global marketing communication viewpoint and concerns only its internal customer groups. The figure has been adapted and inspired by the service marketing triangle theory which defines internal marketing, and in this case internal communication, as marketing to the employees and enabling the promises given to the end-customers. (Grönroos, 1996)
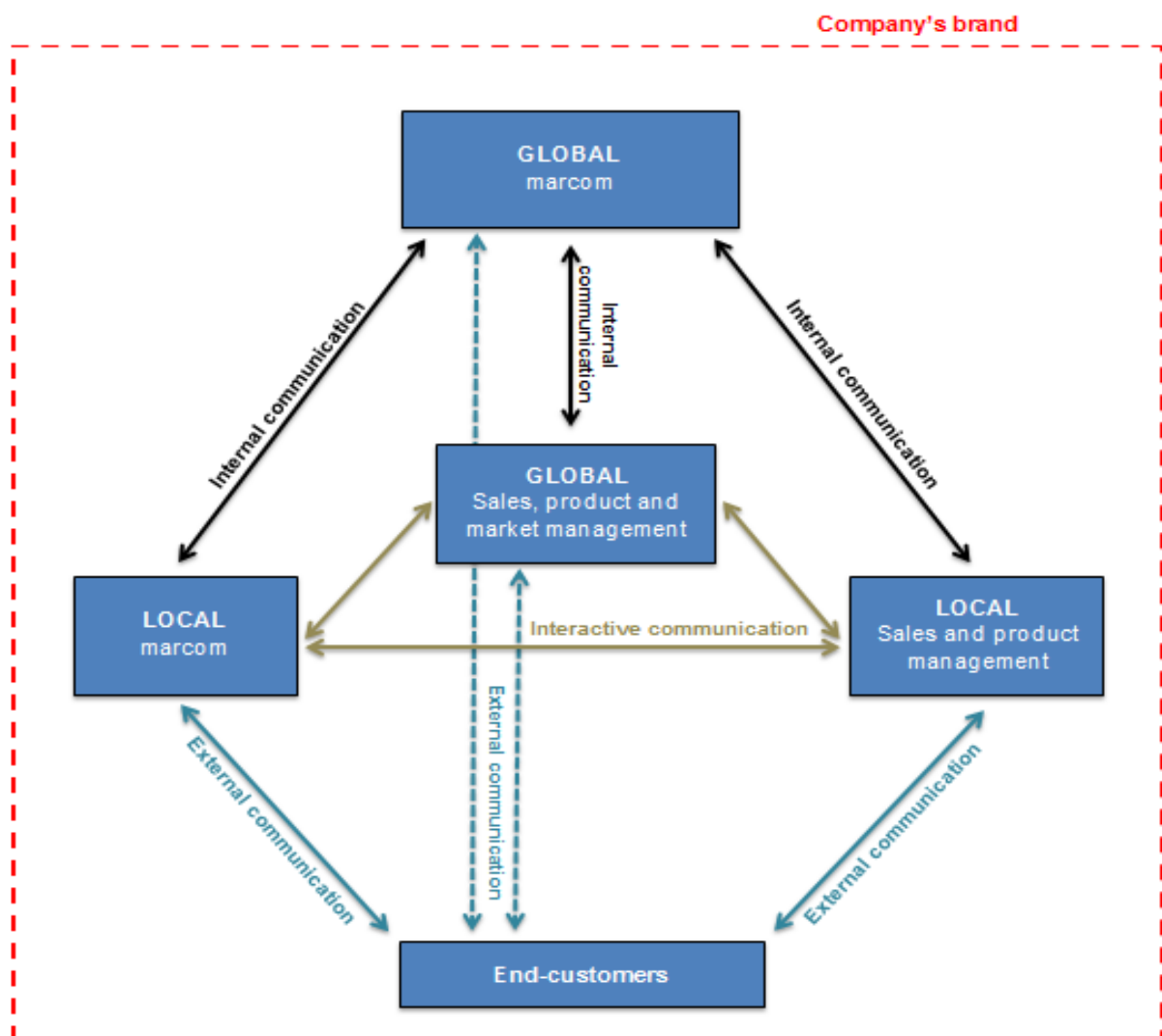
Figure 2 Communication flow

Figure 2 is a simplified way to show how the communication flows from and to the global marcom team. Certainly, in reality the communication and information flow is more complicated but the figure gives an outlook. The figure implies that all communications are somewhat two-way communications.

Internal communication and marketing occurs among the global marcom team and its three internal customer groups (black arrows). The global marcom team consists of different marketing specialists who are responsible for communication of related marketing materials. The marketing specialists have their own areas of responsibilities. Their task is to inform local marcoms, local and global sales and product management about new messaging concepts as well as sales and marketing materials and tools.

Interactive communication exists among the internal customers (grey arrows) while external communication exists mostly between the local marcoms and the local sales and the end customer (blue arrows). The global marcom and the global sales and product managers are also occasionally involved in external marketing and communication (dotted blue arrows). For example, the global marcom periodically releases videos on the internet targeting end-customers while global sales and product and market management sporadically meet the end customers and interact with them.

The companies' brand guidelines influence the ways that information is communicated and shared in order to ensure unity. There are strict rules as to how company materials should be presented. The company brand is strongly present in external communication, but also in internal communication.

This study will only concentrate on the internal communication inside the organization described above. Moreover, the study will explore how the communication process works (see Figure 2) at the moment and how enterprise social media could improve that process.
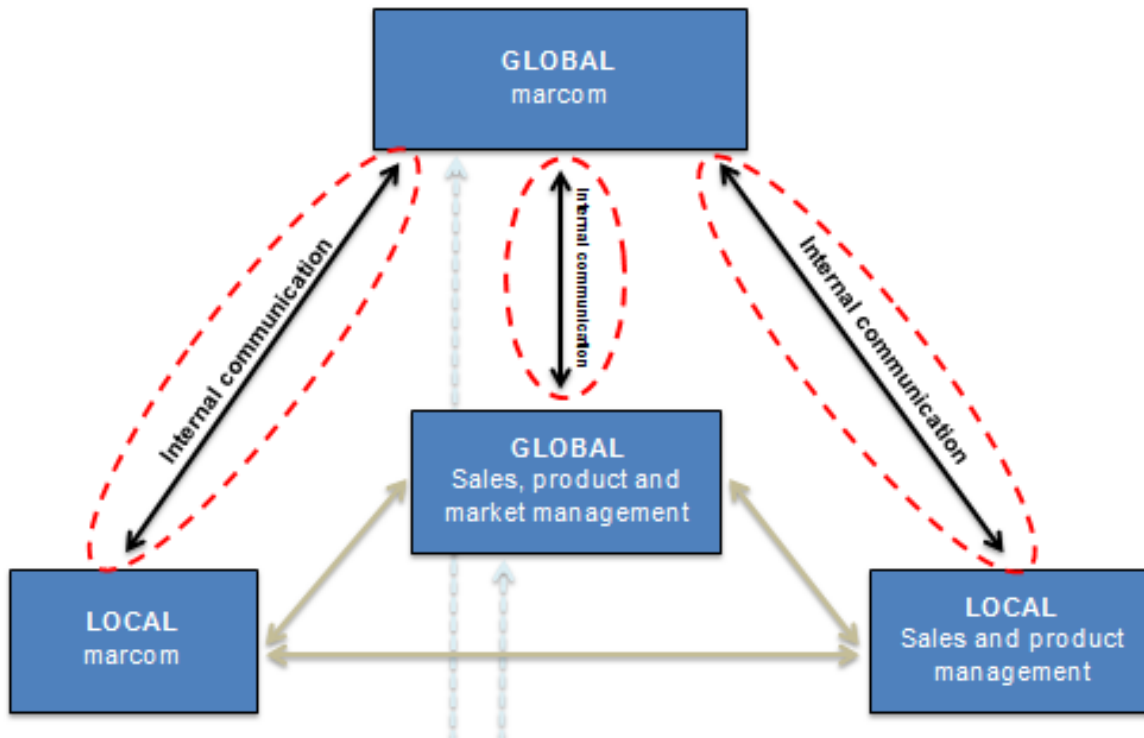
Figure 3 Study focuses on the internal communication

Figure 3 above shows the focus of this study. The focus is on the internal communication between the global marcom, the local marcom and the global and local sales and product management. It concentrates on the two-way communication flow that the global marcom team wants to achieve.

2.2 Channels and tools used by the case company for internal communication

Company X has many communication and collaboration tools and channels available which teams could use in order to communicate internally and externally. The global marcom team utilizes some of them. In this sub-chapter the tools and channels are briefly described.

According to the global marcom team, the team is regularly in contact with the local marcoms, and the global product and market management. They are then responsible to forward the messaging to the other internal customer groups and to the end customers. Additionally, the global marcom team is occasionally in contact with global sales, local sales or local product management but it is not a regular communication.
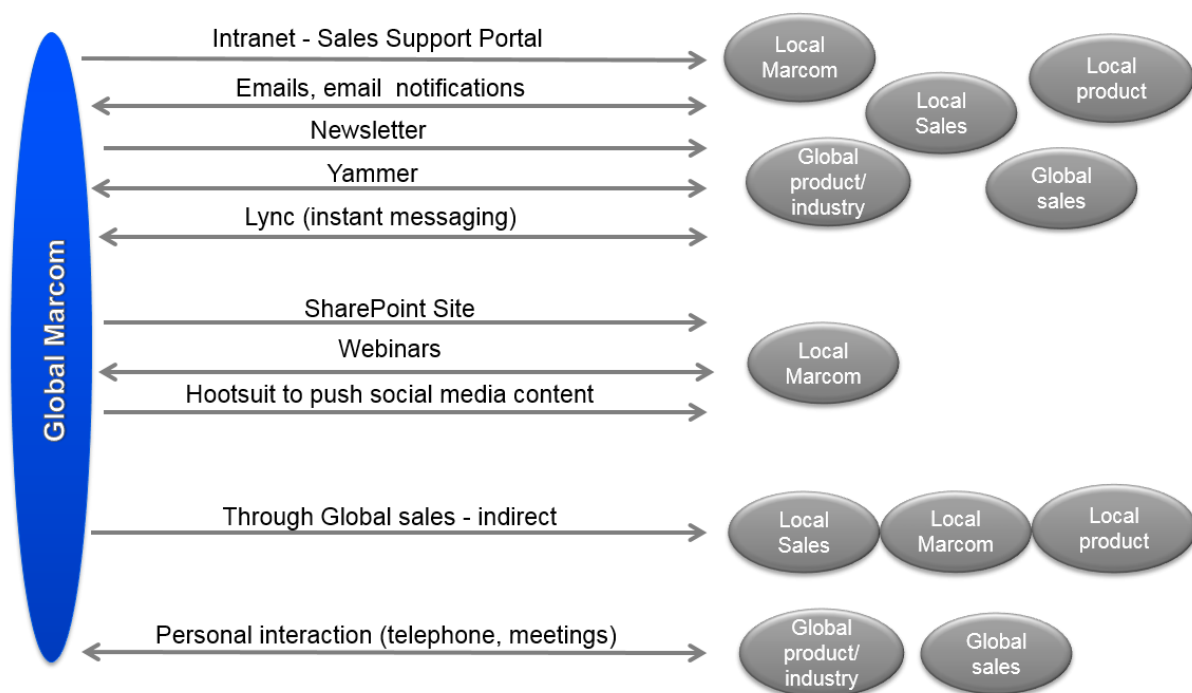
Figure 4 Internal communication channels

Figure 4 illustrates the channels and tools used by the global marcom team when the study was conducted. The arrows also indicate when the global marcom team thinks that the channel or tool allows two-way communication. Somewhat different tools are used to reach different audiences and that is also visible in the figure.

Every channel and tool is used for different purposes by the global marcom and to reach a different audience. The purpose and role of every channel and tool is briefly described below in the order that they appear in Figure 4.

The following channels and tools target all the internal customers. *Intranet* is the place where all the available marketing materials and information about the global marcom team are accessible. Intranet has been in use for the last decade and according to the global marcom team it includes everything that an internal customer may need. *Email* is utilized mostly for personal contact while *email notifications* are used in order to inform the masses about new materials. Email notifications are sent only to the persons who are subscribed to receive them. The frequency of notifications can be controlled. The *newsletter* is also distributed through email and is sent nine times per year. It includes successful stories and best practices as well as updates about new materials. *Yammer,* a social networking tool, is used to inform and reinforce messages about new materials and updates. Commonly the posts contain links that forward the user to another tool (intranet) where the messaging and the materials are available. *Lync*, an instant messaging tool, is used to communicate instantly whenever it is needed.

In addition, the following tools are targeted for the local marcoms. *SharePoint*, a web application platform, is mostly used among the global marcom teams as a database site. It is also somewhat used to share content between the global and the local marcoms. *Webinars* aim to inform and reinforce messages as a whole to the local marcoms. For example, webinars are used to train and inform the participants about the marketing messaging of a new product in accordance with the product launch. *Hootsuite*, a social media management tool, is used to push united marketing messaging to local marcoms for social media channels. The tool is new and the global marcom team is still assessing it.

Additionally, the global sales who are in regular contact with the local teams also communicate marketing messaging and materials to the countries. In order for them to do it correctly they first need to be informed by the global marcom team.

Furthermore, the global sales and product and market management are located in Helsinki where also the global marcom team is situated which allows more personal interaction in the form of meetings or face-to-face conversations.

All in all, the global marcom team still utilizes regularly traditional channels such as email, newsletter, telephone, intranet and meetings but also social media tools such as Yammer, SharePoint and Lync. Email is by far the most used channel in the business world and inside company X. Even though email is a good tool to communicate with people who are not physically near you, the medium is rather asynchronous which means that there is no real time communication among the parties. The social media tools are defined and presented in more detail in the next chapter (see chapter 3.1.4) using the literature theories. The traditional channels will not be presented separately in more detail as their functions and purposes are known.

3. IMPROVING INTERNAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION WITH ENTERPRISE SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

This chapter presents and explores the existing literature related to the topic of this study. This thesis draws from theories in the domains of internal communications, internal marketing, inter-organizational communications, communication barriers and challenges, and enterprise social media. The basis of the theory, can, however, be considered to lie mostly in the field of internal communications.

The existing literature that combines and examines internal communication and enterprise social media phenomena is limited. But, there is a lot of existing literature on internal communication and on social media. In the following sub-chapters social media will be defined, categorized and explored as to what they can offer to the corporate world. Then, internal communication will be defined and explored from a multinational company's point of view, and the most relevant communication challenges will be identified and presented. In addition, the existing communication channels and methods will be discussed, and the importance of choosing the right channels will be demonstrated. Next, the role of internal marketing in internal communication is explained. Further, internal communication literature and social media literature will be combined in order to find possible uses of enterprise social media to improve internal communication in a form of a framework.

3.1 Enterprise social media tools

Silently in the last decade, enterprise social media tools have been introduced to the world, offering social media solutions to companies. In this sub-chapter, social media will be defined and the forms of different social media types will be mapped. In addition, reasons for people to use social media will be explored and ways that companies could benefit from social media will be explored. Last but not least, using the literature review the social media tools used by company X will be presented and defined.

3.1.1 What is social media

Social media is a relatively new concept, and for that reason there is not any clear formal definition of it yet. The existing definitions of social media term rely upon the angle that the author approaches it from. This has resulted in general confusion not only about what it means but also about the correct usage of the term. (Laine & Frühwirth, 2010).

However, here are some definitions that are broadly used. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) approach social media from a strong technological point of view as they define it as "*a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.*" On the other hand, Safko (2010) approaches social media from a more sociological perspective and argues that *"social media is the media we use to be social"* and sees all the web technologies only as tools that enable the social behavior.

At the same time, Kietzmann et al. (2011) define social media from a more functional perspective. They suggest a practical and understandable way to define and monitor social media by using seven functional blocks that outline the various levels of social media. By utilizing the blocks individually or together, the honeycomb framework assists business people in clarifying the social media's ecology and understanding the audiences of each tool. Figure 5 presents the seven functional blocks.
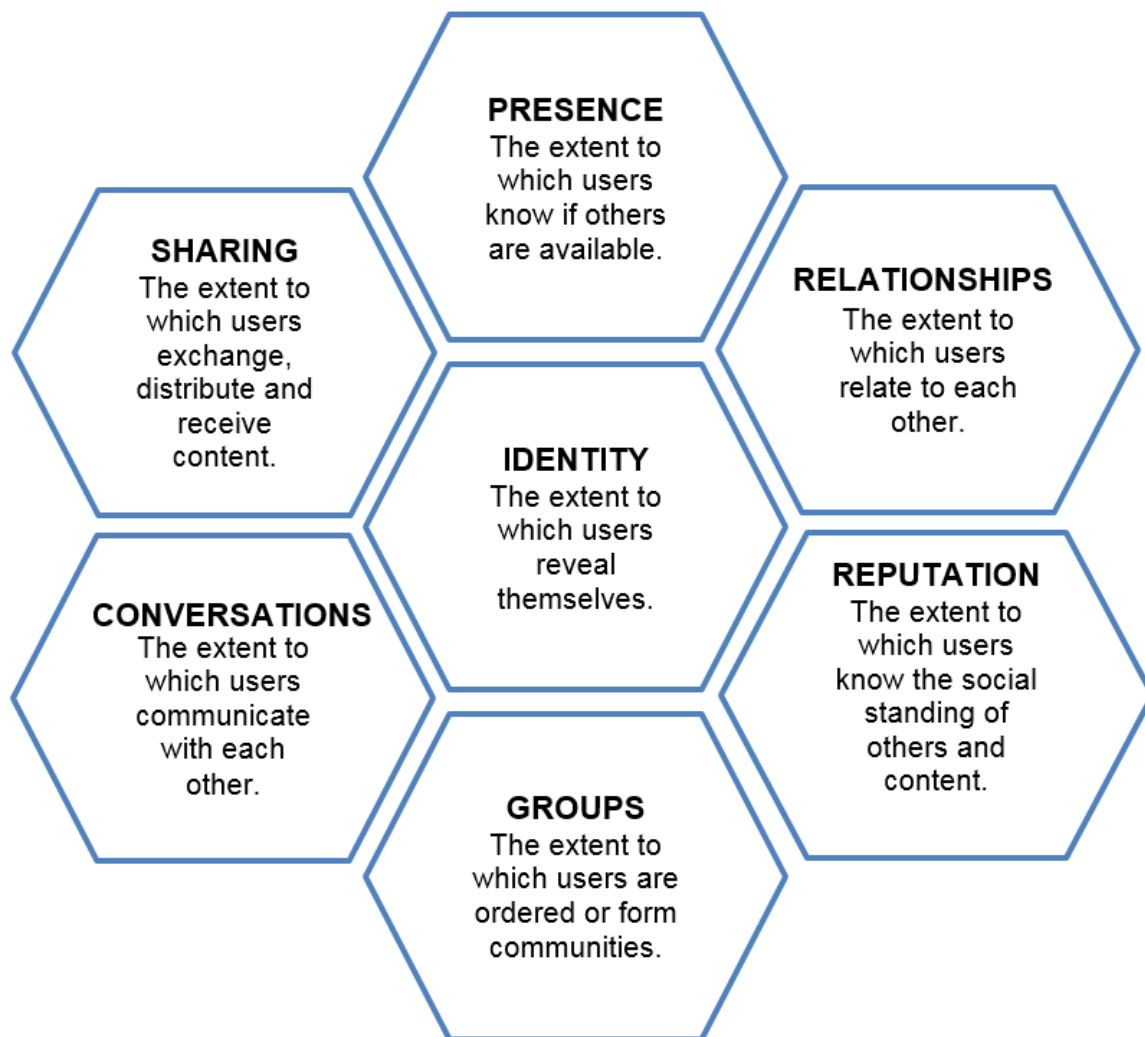
Figure 5 The functional blocks of social media by Kietzmann et al. (2011)

As shown on the model above (Figure 5), the seven blocks are:

- **Identity** – identifying people according to the personal information (e.g. name, age, location) disclosed in the system
- **Conversations** – interacting and discussing with other people through the system
- **Sharing** – exchanging meaningful files (e.g. photos, documents) through the system
- **Presence** – knowing who is online and where
- **Relationships** – connecting/relating users in the system

- **Reputation** – knowing the influence of people in the system
- **Groups** – forming communities.

I believe that the honeycomb framework works best in defining social media tools because they are complex and difficult to define in one sentence. Every social media tool is different and utilizes various functions so the blocks help to identify and interpret the social media ecology and the purpose of existence. Every block shows one function that a social media tools might have. Theoretically, a social media tool could focus on only one block, but practically according to Smith (2007) the tools tend to focus on three or four primary blocks. As an example, Kietzmann et al. (2011) argue that LinkedIn, a business-oriented social networking service, utilizes mostly the identity block but also the relationships and reputation blocks. Figure 6 shows the implications of each block to a company.
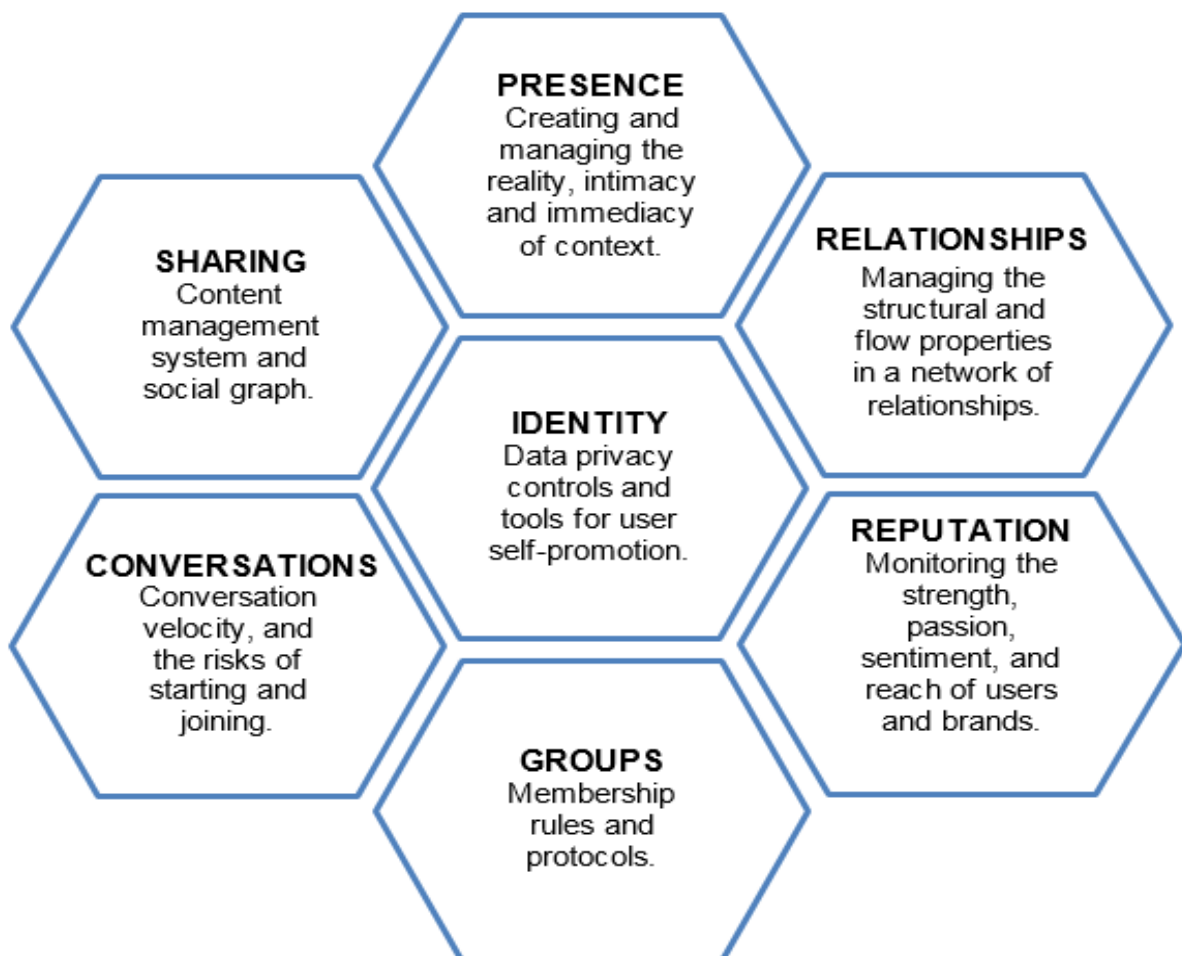
Figure 6 Implications to the firm by Kietzmann et al. (2011)

Kietzmann et al. (2011) also presented a guideline on how firms should monitor and respond to the different social media activities. The implications help a firm to identify what issues it needs to consider when choosing a particular social media tool and what the proper actions are in order to use the social media tool properly and gain proper engagement from the targeted audience.

Furthermore, there are different social media tools and even though everyday new social media tools are introduced and the boundaries of where each social media tool belongs to are usually blurry, they have been categorized. Constantinides & Fountain (2007) classified them into five categories, i.e. blogs, social networks, communities, forums and content aggregators. Few years later, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified them more successfully by including new categories and developing the earlier classifications. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media tools as follows:

1. **Collaborative projects** which empower collective and concurrent content creation by multiple users. Such social media tool is Wikipedia which utilizes wikis, websites that allow users to edit content.
2. **Blogs and microblogs** which enables personal posts in chronological orders that are visible to a defined audience or to everyone. Twitter is argued to be a micro blog that allows users to share messages.
3. **Social networking sites** where people connect to each other by creating personal profiles. The most common social network is Facebook.
4. **Content communities** where users share media content (e.g. images, videos, text, presentations) to each other. An example of such social media tool is YouTube which enables video sharing.
5. **Virtual game-worlds** which are games played in a simulated 3D environment. The users are represented by avatars, e.g. World of Warcraft.
6. **Virtual social worlds** which are actually virtual worlds where people have virtual lives, e.g. Second life.

When thinking about the business world only the first four classifications of social media tools could really be used for business purposes. All the social media tools could

be easily defined using the functional honeycomb framework by Kietzmann et al. (2011).

3.1.2 Why people use social media

It has been clear that social media enables communication. However, Whiting & Williams (2013) in their paper argued that despite the communication possibilities users use social media also for other purposes. Whiting & Williams (2013) provided useful insights with their study which identified ten themes on why people use social media. They are presented below in the order of importance:

1. Social interaction
2. Information seeking
3. Pass time – fight boredom
4. Entertainment
5. Relaxation
6. Expression of opinion
7. Communicator utility – use information retained from social media as topics to discuss
8. Convenience utility – easy to access and use when needed
9. Information sharing
10. Surveillance/knowledge about others – following what others are doing.

It is important to mention that 88% of the respondents said that they use social media for social interaction while 32% of the respondents mentioned the tenth reason knowledge about others while asked about the reason of social media usage. One out of two persons mentioned the first eight themes as reasons why they go on social media. (Whiting & Williams, 2013)

3.1.3 How could companies utilize social media

When social media became popular among people, companies knew that they also had to become active but they were not sure what to do with them. As a result, many

companies rushed into using social media and struggled as they used the same tactics they used for traditional media (Pitt & Berthon, 2011).

From a corporation's perspective, social media can be both an opportunity and a challenge depending how they approach them. Based on the literature findings there are three different ways in which companies could use social media and actually benefit from them. The three approaches are:

1. External communication and customer engagement (Mangold & Faulds, 2009)
2. Monitoring the market and trends (Laine & Frühwirth, 2010)
3. Internal communication and employee collaboration (Zhao & Rosson, 2009).

The three areas differ considerably in the objectives and motives behind them. A company can be active and effectively use social media in all the areas at the same time or concentrate only on one. The important thing is to find the area that the company will benefit most by being active.

Mangold & Faulds (2009) see the new customer-generated media as an opportunity for external marketing communication purposes. They argue that social media should be nowadays a part of the promotional mix and of the integrated marketing communication of a company as it allows the company to talk and engage with its customers while at the same time it allows customers to talk to each other. However, using social media for external communication and generating customer engagement is maybe the most challenging approach because it does not utilize the social media purpose. According to Pitt and Berthon (2011) social media were created for people and interaction among them not for brands. Companies which want to use social media externally, first need to understand social media and how they differ from the conventional media tools used in the past. The main differences in brief are that social media are two-way communication tools, where both parties interact and that the message, or maybe better the content, is not anymore controlled by one party but both parties can influence it. The honeycomb framework by Kietzmann et al. (2011) helps companies to understand social media and how the audience of each social media tool wants to engage in it. The goal behind the use of social media for the external

communication and customer engagement is mainly to build a brand, get feedback and ideas from customers, educate customers and get involved in the conversations.

One the other hand, Laine & Frühwirth (2010) recognize the increase of social media usage as an opportunity for companies to receive much data. In social media the users are the ones who create the content and for that reason they often reveal much information about themselves and their behavior as consumers. Laine & Frühwirth (2010) argue that social media have opened the access to consumers' sentiments and the way market research is conducted for the companies is changing. Social media have given the chance to companies to monitor easily the market and its trend by following the conversations and utilizing the data that consumers insert by themselves in the social media. To put it briefly, the objective of social media monitoring is to conduct market research, spot trends, and identify opportunities and threats.

Additionally, the third approach is when social media are utilized for internal communication. Over the last years the technology changes and social behaviors have influenced our lives, and internal communication challenges seem to be quite difficult to solve using traditional approaches (Sedej & Justinek, 2013). Zhao and Rosson (2009) explored the possibilities of interacting informally at work through social media channels. They argued that Twitter and micro-blogging can impact collaborative work among colleagues as the tools help to share quickly information, feel connected to a group and build common grounds in the workplace. Zhao and Rosson (2009) and Giesen (2009) both state that informal communication, the possibility to speak in a more native tone, is important among colleagues and social media tools can be that medium at work that provides that opportunity even with people who are not in a daily work contact. Internal communication is about connecting with colleagues and sharing mostly informal information. As mentioned before, social media were created with people in mind and how they could connect with each other (Pitt and Berthon, 2011) which corresponds to the purpose of internal communication. Moreover, according to Giesen (2009) the possibilities that social media tools offer for companies, which have a number of disparate locations and face-to-face communication is not an option, are huge. Social media tools enable a two-way synchronous and asynchronous communication among employees without being physically present and without spending extra time. When social media tools are used

internally, the objective is to streamline communication and increase innovation, which in the end leads to improved productivity.

This thesis focuses only on using social media for internal communication and employee collaboration as the objective of the study is to explore if social media could improve internal communication and collaboration challenges multinational corporations face. In other words, this study aims to investigate the use of social media tools only from the perspective of the third approach.

3.1.4 Internal enterprise social media tools in use by case company

At the moment the global marcom team utilizes channels that can fall under the social media classification. Moreover, the channels and tools that the global marcom use for internal communication are defined and presented in more detail below. The honeycomb framework by Kietzmann et al. (2011) is used in order to define the functionalities and capabilities offered by the tools. The strongest blocks/functions within each tool are marked with bolder blue, while lighter blue color indicates the blocks/functions that the tools somewhat support. Whiting & Williams (2013) insights about why people use social media tools is also utilized to define the tools.

Yammer is a social media platform for social networking introduced by Microsoft Corporation as part of the Office 365 product family, a subscription based service that provides business services on a cloud. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorization yammer could be classified as a social networking site and a microblog. It uses familiar features from the already known Facebook (social networking) and Twitter (mini-blogging) but it is a social network designed for internal social networking in a private and secure environment. For that reason, one needs to have an email address from the company's own domain in order to log in and connect with others. External networks are also possible in order to strengthen relations with suppliers or customers but the tool was primarily created for internal social networking. Using the seven blocks by Kietzmann et al. (2011) I can identify Yammer in the following way.
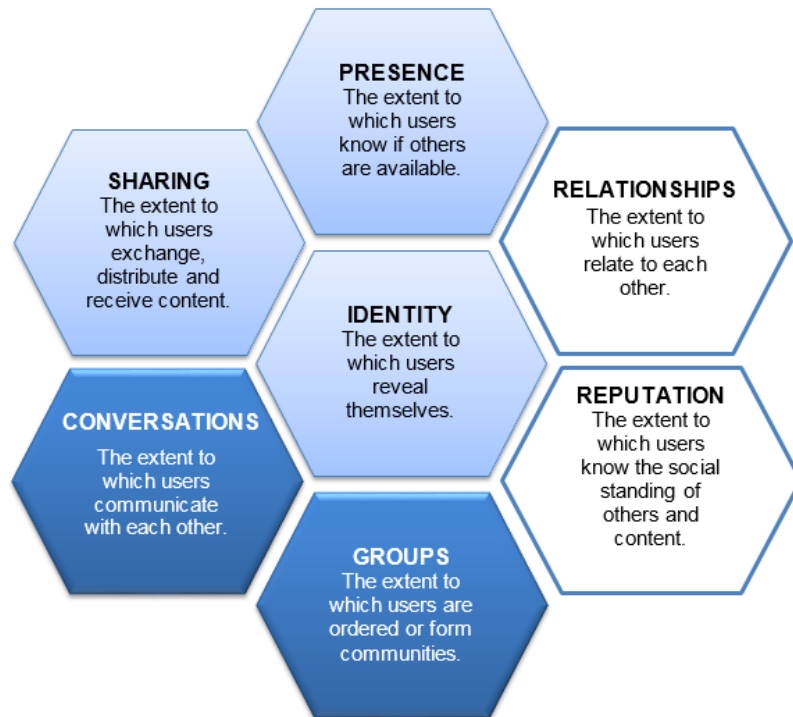
Figure 7 Functional blocks of Yammer

Yammer is mostly about forming groups with people who share the same interest and then discuss and share opinions and thoughts about certain topics. Moreover, Yammer also gives the possibility to insert a profile picture and personal work-related information, to chat with users who are online and share content. Using the results of Whiting & Williams (2013) on why people use social media tools Yammer can be used for social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinion and information sharing.

SharePoint is a web application platform that was created by Microsoft Corporation. It runs also as part of the new Office 365 product family that was recently taken into use by company X and offers a cloud service that is accessible for all the employees. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorization SharePoint could be categorized as a content community. SharePoint allow the users to create sites in order to share information and documents with colleagues. Moreover, SharePoint is a content management system which is basically designed to store and manage data. It offers many possibilities and functionalities including libraries, wikis, lists, blogs and multiple sites which enable effective collaboration among employees. Furthermore,

the sites are only visible to users who have access to a certain site, and in that way groups and teams are created inside the tool. (Microsoft, 2014a)
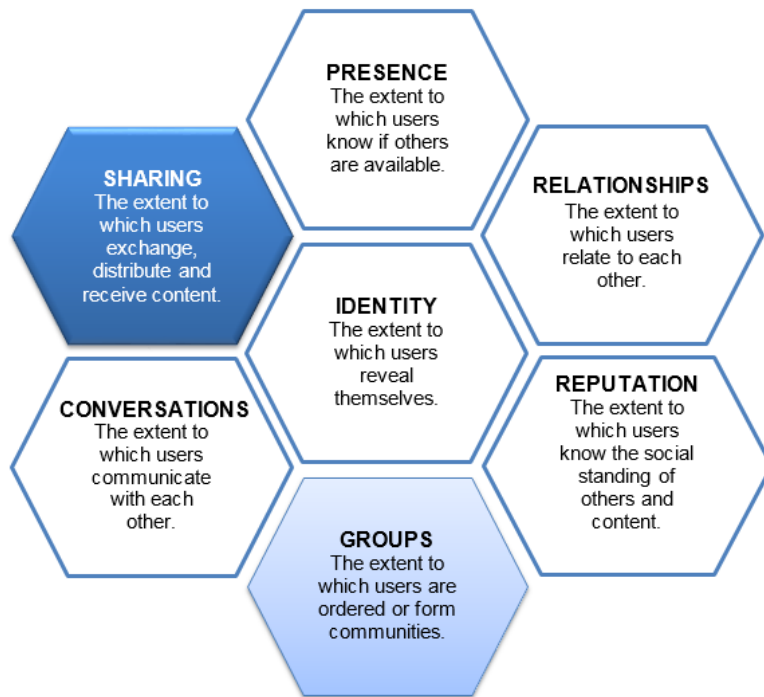
Figure 8 Functional blocks of SharePoint

Figure 8 above shows the functionalities that SharePoint can offer. Even though SharePoint has many possibilities I think that sharing is the most valuable function. The library and wiki functionalities give the opportunity to easily share documents and information among a team or a group. SharePoint also gives the possibility to form groups so that only relevant information is shared with people who are interested. According to the reasons for people to use social media by Whiting & Williams (2013) SharePoint can be used for information seeking and information sharing.

Webinar is a web-based seminar or web conference broadcasted via the web. Webinar is a relatively new and innovative tool in the business world and enables effective communication, collaboration and educational possibilities. According to Taber (2009), webinars as a service enables different conferencing forms to be shared regardless physical locations by utilizing web technologies. Webinars as a method of communication are argued to be the most effective marketing tool in order to increase awareness and educate a group of people. Moreover, because webinars usually require

registration from the participants it is also a great way to collect information and get immediate feedback. Figure 9 below shows the functionality of webinars according to the framework by Kietzmann et al. (2011).
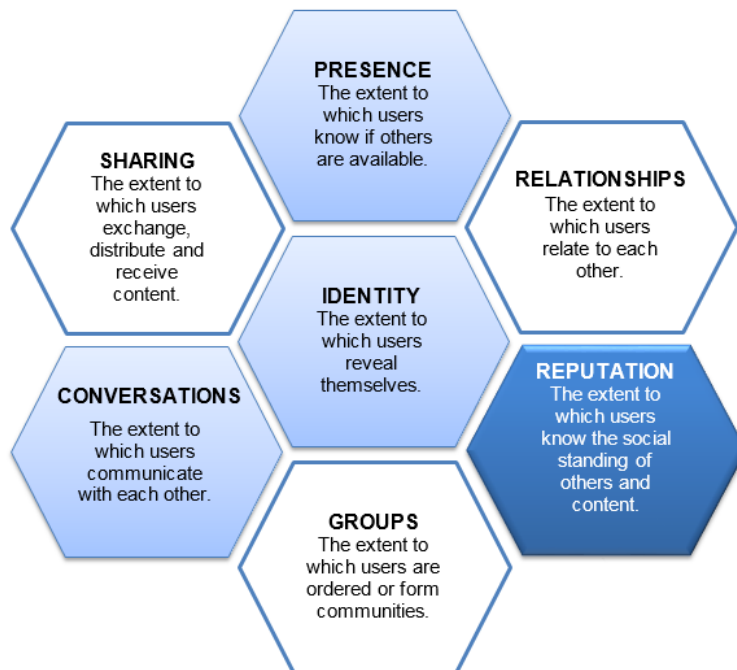
Figure 9 Functional blocks of webinars

Webinar is not a clear social media tool but has some attributes and partly embraces two-way communication and social interaction among the participants. It is tricky to define the tool by using the building blocks but I strongly believe that it supports the reputation block as it gives the opportunity for immediate feedback about the social standing of the presenter, the content and the info. Moreover, it stimulates conversation and gives some information about the participants due to the need of registration. Using the results of Whiting & Williams (2013) on why people use social media tools, webinars could be used for expression of opinion and information sharing.

Hootsuite is a social media management tool that helps a company or a group to track and manage external social media channels. The most compelling reason for a company to utilize social media management system is the possibility to monitor easily and get updates about social media streams all in one place. The user can post for

example the same message into all social accounts easily through Hootsuite. (Hootsuite, 2014)
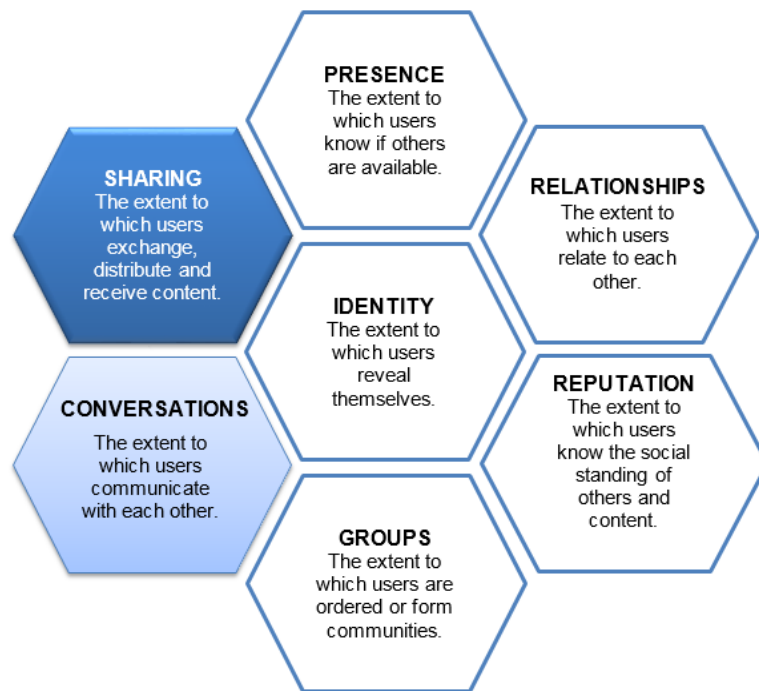
Figure 10 Functional blocks of social media management system (Hootsuite)

Hootsuite gives the possibility to exchange suggested content among the different local marcoms in order to form a unite approach. It also enables communication about the correct time of publishing something and managing all the posts.

Lync is an instant messaging service that was introduced as part of the new Office 365 cloud service and empowers real-time communication and interaction among colleagues irrespective of their physical location. According to Microsoft (2014), Lync enables users to effectively communicate through remote meetings by voice or video conferencing with one or multiple users depending on the need. It also informs whether a person is available to others. Lync can be utilized through the web browser or an application on a computer desktop or mobile. (Microsoft, 2014b) Lync offers the possibility to instant communication and information sharing among employees.

Figure 11 Functional blocks of instant messaging (Lync)

Figure 11 demonstrates the functional blocks of instant messaging. Lync is not a clear social media tool but it could be categorized according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as a social networking site where users create their own personal profiles that are visible to others. The tool offers the functionality of instant chatting. According to the functional blocks by Kietzmann et al. (2011) Lync strongly falls under presence and identity blocks and enables the possibility of sharing and keeping up conversations. Lync is suitable for information seeking (Whiting & Willing, 2013).

Blog is an additional tool that is not used by the global marcom team currently but company X has it available. **Internal blogs** can be described as an online websites where text and multimedia inputs, known as posts, are published by a user. The posts are published and stored in a chronological order and depending on the privacy settings the posts are available to anyone interested in reading and commenting them. The person who keeps updating the blog is called blogger while the activity is called blogging. Blogs are considered to be the technological and social update of diaries or journals that people used to write before blogs came along. Blogs usually focus on certain topics. Commonly the blogger reveals and shares with its audience personal insights and/or knowledge about certain topics. According to Weber (2007) enabling

commenting in a blog is essential in order to empower interactive discussion and communication among the users. This creates blogosphere which stands as a term that describes the blog community which connects the blogs and their interconnections.

Blogs are nowadays also widely used in the business world mostly for social media marketing but could also be an easy and effective way to connect with colleagues and create a united atmosphere. Of course, business blogs are usually not very personal and have more than one blogger who posts on them. Figure 12 below shows the functions that blogs offer using Kietzmann et al. (2011) honeycomb blocks:
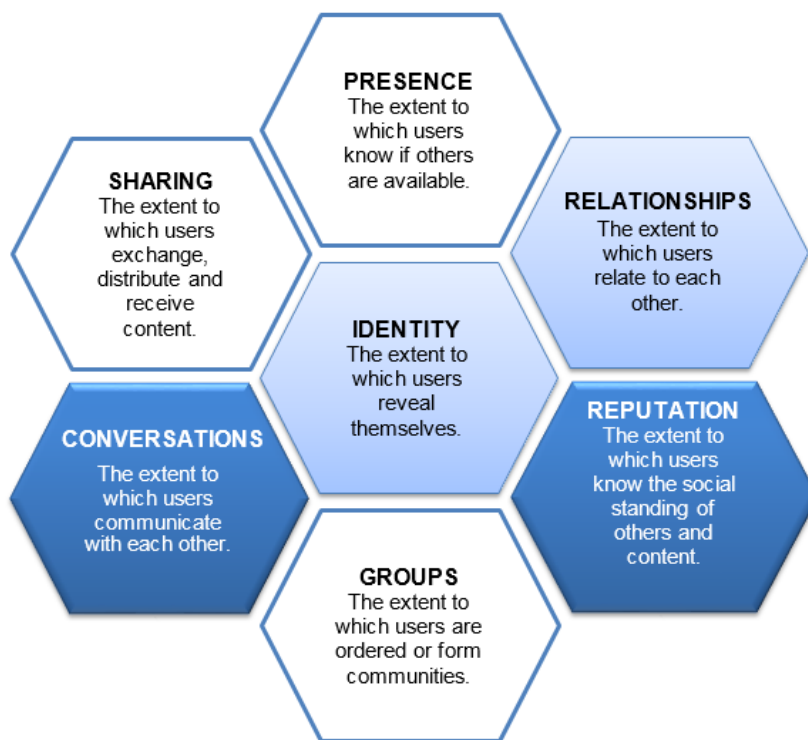
Figure 12 Functional blocks of internal blogs

In business content internal blogging can empower conversation among the blogger and his/ her colleagues. It can provide food for thoughts and create discussions. At the same time, blogs can increase reputation among colleagues as it can increase transparency and trust inside a team or a group. Moreover, even though the bloggers do not so much reveal their personal identity, they do reveal information and opinions of the team or the function they work in. Additionally, in internal business blogs the posts are likely to be read because of the relationship the audience has with the

function that the blog is about, and because of the knowledge they could gain. According to the reasons why people use social media by Whiting & Williams (2013) internal blogs can be used for social interaction, expression of opinion, information sharing and surveillance/knowledge about others (get updated about what is happening in different functions).

Only social media tools available by company X to the global marcom were defined in this subchapter. There are also other enterprise social media tools but they are not discussed in this study.

3.2 Internal communication

In this subchapter internal communication will be defined, internal communication challenges will be identified, communication channels will be discussed and the role of internal marketing will be presented.

Internal communication among white collar employees is seen as a core element for efficient and effective operations for any organization by many scholars and practitioners. Despite the significance, the field of internal communication still has considerable gaps, partly because it is continuously evolving but also because of its challenging nature. At the same time, internal communication covers a wide research area, and with the existence of the multiple synonyms in academic literature makes its definition quite challenging. (Welch and Jackson 2007)

Welch and Jackson (2007) use the phrase "*turn up the same few articles over and over again*" after reviewing earlier definitions of internal communication in their study in order to describe how scholars of internal communication have used the same definition and practices over the years without really developing the issue. In their review they conclude that the definition by Frank and Brownell (1989) still seems to be the most accurate and adaptable one.

"The communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs and to coordinate day-to-day activities" (Frank and Brownell, 1989)

A simpler definition that is easy to understand and, in my opinion, applies to this study and to the bigger picture of internal communication is the definition by Kalla (2005) that integrated internal communication is *"all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organization".* Kalla (2005) bases the definitions on the four major communication territories of the internal communication. Accordingly, she defines it as integrated internal communication as it somewhat combines all the definitions from those domains. The four domains are:

Business communication (Reinsch, 1996) which deals with the practical issues and the interaction among the employees (Bovée and Thill, 2003), the *Management communication* (Smeltzer, 1996) where emphasis is given to the top down communication from the managers, the *Corporate communication* which consists of the formal corporate communication usually practiced only by communication specialists and top managers of a corporation (Argenti, 1996), and the *Organizational communication* where more theoretical issues are discussed (Mumby and Stol, 1996).

Moreover, inter-organizational communication appears to have similar characteristics with any other communication among humans. The better you know someone, the more likely you are to communicate with one another.

3.2.1 Challenges of communication in a multinational organization

The literature review revealed multiple communication challenges depending on the size of an organization. The most common and relevant for this thesis challenges are mentioned and presented below.

Cultural diversity

Nowadays, organization tends to have diverse workforce, which means that companies consist of people from many different cultural and national backgrounds. Cultural issues can challenge internal communication as people may interpret words and gestures in a different manner depending on the culture. Miscommunication is likely to occur among different organization employees even if all the people around a table speak the same language (Peterson, 2004). Cultural differences can create strong barriers in understanding others. According to Sonnenschein (1997) work attitude and behavior, work ethics and communication style may lead to ineffective teamwork and information sharing.

It is important to create a strong company culture in order to overcome the challenges that cultural diversity brings. Moreover, Brief (2008) states that well defined internal communication channels and tools and established rules help to avoid cultural differences and misunderstanding inside an organization.

Distance restrictions

Personal face-to-face communication has repeatedly been proven to be the best communication channel and method, but it is not always possible. Especially in a multinational organization where employees are scattered geographically across the globe and different time zones make a synchronous communication difficult to achieve. These time and location restrictions are a continuous challenge for internal communication inside a company. (Sedej & Justinek, 2013)

Business language

Fugere et al. (2005) in their book argue that business today is using a language that has been created to impress and confuse and not to get the message across. They point out that business communication usually tends to be formal and full of fancy words and terms, also known as jargon. Moreover, also according to Giesen (2009) the possibility to speak in a more native tone is important among white collar employees and empowers better communication.

At the same time, language as a challenge increases in a multicultural community. Even though colleagues might use the same language, phrases could be misunderstood due to limited vocabulary, intonation or accents, especially if the working language is not the first language of the users, which is common. (Peterson, 2004)

Over or under communication

In internal communication especially in a multinational organization with many employees both under and over communication can occur. It is a challenge to find the optimal amount of communication that should be shared inside an organization. It is a process that always needs to be improved and updated. Under communication happens when information do not meet the targeted audiences. Under communication usually happens when the person who sends the message and tries to communicate uses a wrong channel, or when the message in not understandable to the other person. On the other hand, over communication happens when the receiver gets too much information and does not have time or capacity to respond or process them. In the business world today, especially with the new mediated communication methods which bring new communication channels every day into the mix, over communicating is quite common.

According to Juholin (2009) people have the idea that the more communication channels there are, the better the communication is, something that is not completely correct as the ability of a person to handle information does not dramatically increase with the amount of channels. As a result, people forget to overlook the information. In both situations communication is not effective at all. There should be a balance between under and over communicating but it is not always easy to find that middle line.

3.2.2 Internal communication channels and methods

The most important factor in internal communication is that the communicator finds the correct channel and method in order to get the audience to understand the message. There are many different internal communication channels and depending on what you compare them with, they could be classified in many different ways. In the early 1990s, when computer-mediated communication channels where only silently introduced to the broader business word, Zmud, Lind and Young (1990) categorized the communication channels into five groups:

- Face-to-face
- Group (meetings or gatherings)
- Written
- Traditional communication technologies (phone, voice conferencing)
- Compute-mediated technologies (e-mail)

Almost 20 years later, Friedl and Vercic (2011) categorized them into *traditional vs. social media channels* while Al-Ghamdi et al. (2007) classifies the channels into *traditional vs. technology related*. Both have been influenced by the rapid development of communication channels because of technology of the last decades. For Friedl and Vercic (2011) traditional communication channels are the existing well-established corporate channels such as intranets, e-mail, meetings and magazines while for Al-Ghamdi et al. (2007) traditional channels are all non-technology related

channels. It is interesting that Friedl and Vercic (2011) argue that the new communication channels are all related to social media nowadays.

Moreover, channels can also be categorized according to the tone of communication. Meaning that, information exchange and sharing can happen in two different forms; formal and informal. Choosing the proper form depends on various factors such as the channel, the participants, and the relationship among the participants. Formal communication has a formal tone, is commonly only work related and is done via existing well-established channels such as email and newsletters. On the other hand, informal communication has an unofficial tone communication, is about sharing information and is done via unofficial channels, such as social media in a form of conversations and discussions. (Krishnamacharyulu and Ramakrishnan, 2009) According to Juholin (2009), while formal communication has become more complex and complicated, informal communication is gaining ground as people nowadays have the need to not only exchange information but also discuss issues with each other in a less controlled and guided way. Moreover, informal communication comes more naturally to people as the language used is clearer and more understandable.

Another way to categorize the communication channels is to divide them into synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous communication enables real-time communication and requires the participants to be either present or available at the same time. Examples of synchronous communication are face-to-face meetings, video conferencing, and instant messaging. The biggest advantage that digital synchronous communication channels offer to businesses is that they enable instant communication and furthermore immediate feedback possibilities for "same time-different place" situations. On the other hand, the requirement to be present or available at the same time can be also considered as a disadvantage for participants in a different time zone. For example, the time of a meeting or video conference may be convenient for one person but not necessarily for other persons. Additionally, face-to-face meetings tend to be costly and video conferencing not always an option as a lot needs to be invested into the technology and software.

On the contrary, asynchronous communication is not a real time communication and therefore does not require the communicators to be available or present at the same

time. Examples of this form of communication are documents, letters, emails, web posts and databases. The advantages of asynchronous communication channels are that messages can be sent and received when it is convenient for the senders or receivers and that there is always a record of the communication. Having a record is sometimes important especially for sensitive communication which requires approval, references or documentations. Asynchronous communication tools are great for "different time-different place" situations. Moreover, they empower communication and collaboration over a period of time and allow the participants to respond when it best fits them. The disadvantages are that there is no immediate feedback, the language can easily be more formal and it can be considered impersonal.

3.2.3 Importance of choosing the right channel

Sometimes using the proper channel is more important than the actual message. Having a sense of the proper channel to distribute a message is important as a wrong channel choice might lead to communication mismatches or over and under communication. Defining the right communication channels for internal communication in a global organization with multiple receivers who have different business culture is not an easy task.

Based on the literature review, the theory about the selection of the proper communication media that have drawn the attention of the scholars is still the media richness theory by Daft and Lengel (1986). Despite the fact that the theory was introduced almost thirty years ago before even social media tools were an idea, the media richness theory is still relevant as it argues that for the media selection both complexity of the message and richness of the medium should be considered. According to Lengel and Daft (1989) the media in the media richness theory are arranged according to four characteristics:

1. Interactivity – Ability to provide immediate feedback.
2. Multiple cues – Ability to handle many signals at the same time.
3. Natural language – Ability to use simple language, gestures and emotions.
4. Personal focus – Ability to focus on the channel.

Figure 13 demonstrates the media richness hierarchy by Daft and Lengel (1986) and also presents examples of higher and leaner media.
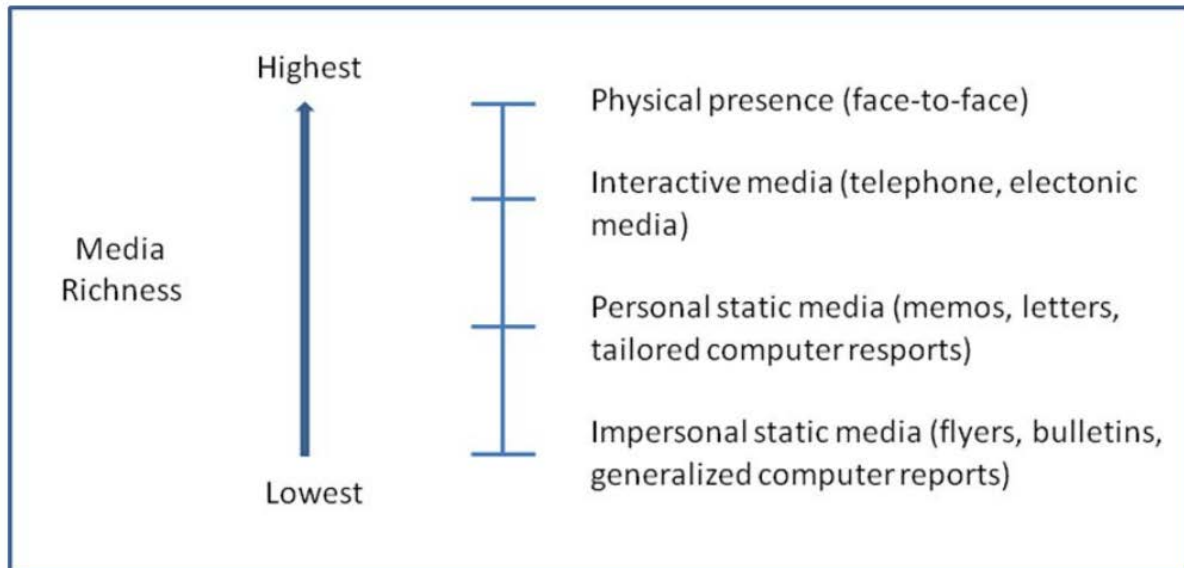
Figure 13 Media Richness Hierarchy (Daft & Lengel, 1986)

The theory has been criticized ever since it was introduced, especially after the use of internet spread in the world. El-Shin away and Lynne (1997) found in their study that individuals chose to send emails instead of using a richer medium, such as voice mail when they had more uncertain information. A decade later, after social media became widespread, Dennis et al. (2008) argued that media richness theory does not take into account synchronicity. They indicate that the capabilities of new media, cannot be categorized according to media richness theory's approach as media synchronization is missing They endorsed the media synchronicity theory by Dennis et al. (1998) which takes into account the multidimensional new media on its suggested framework. The framework includes six dimensions/abilities: transmission velocity, parallelism, symbol sets, rehearsability, and re-accessibility. Taking into consideration the above criticisms, I would still consider the media richness theory in combination with the information complexity to be a good tool for categorizing the channels and tools for this study.

It is important to understand that all the channels can be effective ways of communication, however, depending on the importance of the message. For example,

for a routine issue a leaner communication tool is more proper. As a general thumb rule, we can state that the least possibilities there are for misunderstandings or miscommunication, the leaner the communication channel could be. (Lengel and Daft, 1989)
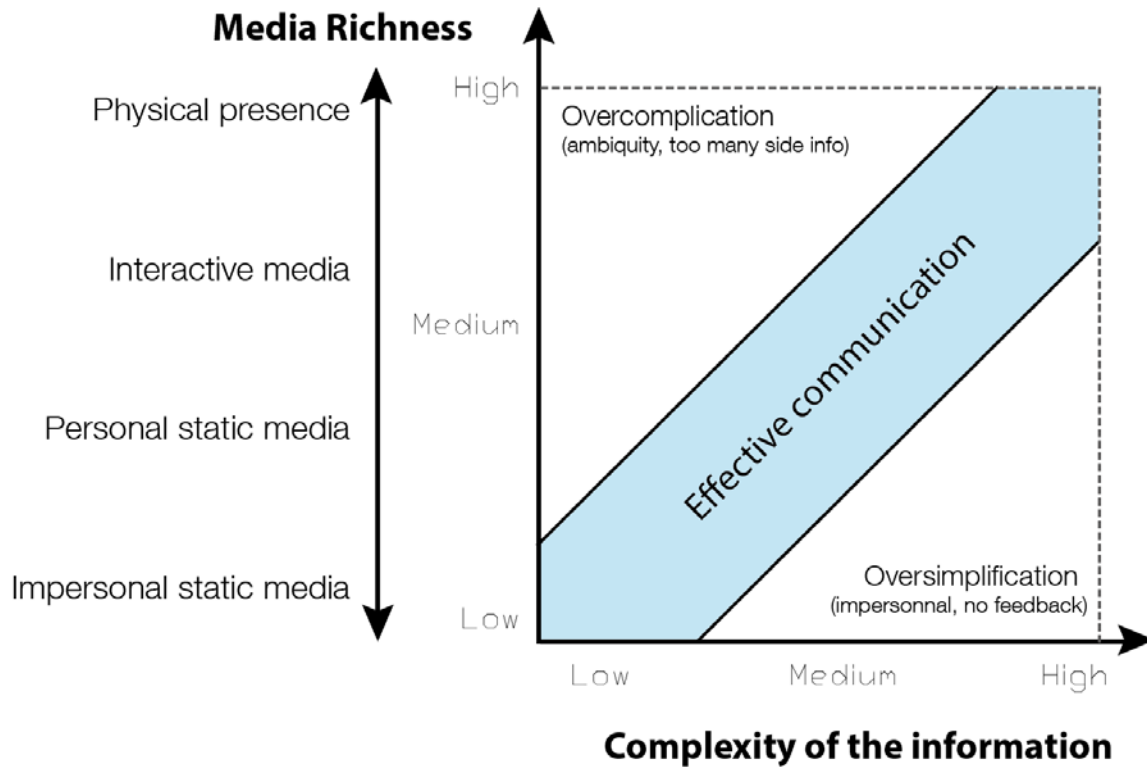
Figure 14 Effective communication (Adopted by Daft & Lengel, 1986)

Figure 14 demonstrates a framework that combines the media richness theory and the complexity of information theories. The channels are ranked on the left of the figure according to how rich or lean media they are following the media richness theory. On the right graph, the complexity of information is divided into low, medium and high while the blue area (effective communication) indicates the proper media to convey certain information. Everything outside the blue area leads to communication challenges and inefficiency.

3.2.4   Role of internal marketing in internal communication

Internal marketing is a function that is practiced in many companies, but it does not have a clear definition or approach because the internal marketing concept can be found also by other terms inside the companies and the literature. Even though the concept is the same, to motivate and empower employees, the following terms have being used to describe it: internal marketing, employee engagement or internal communication.

Internal marketing has been originally developed for the service industry to emphasize how customers are treated by the employees and how it affects the business (Berry, 1981, Grönroos, 1990). The Nordic scholars (e.g. Grönroos, 2000) have argued that the relationship between employees and customers can have big impact on the buying behavior of the client and for that reason internal marketing is very important inside an organization. In the service industries internal marketing refers to delivering better service to the customer in order to be competitive by training and motivating the employees. Nowadays the term has been used more widely in order to describe the process where employees are properly informed and motivated by using effective internal communication. Kotler (1991) has as well defined internal marketing as successfully hiring, training and motivating employees to serve the customers. In order to achieve better operations, grow, and become more profitable, companies started to implement marketing methodologies in external processes, such as sales and marketing, and in internal processes, such as inter-organizational communication and collaboration.

Moreover, Grönroos (1990) and Gummesson (1991) when talking about internal marketing underline the importance of the part-time marketers. Part-time marketers are the employees of a company whose primary role is not marketing activities but who are the ones in contact with the customers. Because they are the ones who communicate with the customers, part-time marketers are the people who can mostly influence customer relations and customer behavior and that is why they are important. Emphases to the part-time marketers should be given by full-time marketers in order to achieve better operations.

3.3 Using enterprise social media tools for internal communication

As the current generation of white-collar employees is the generation that grew up with social media, it is difficult not to acknowledge the opportunities that social media offer for office use. Using enterprise social media tools for internal communication and collaboration seems to fit both the purpose of social media and the need for communication that employees inside an organization have. Moreover, using social media tools for internal communication seems to be the most logical way of usage (De Bussy et al., 2003; Giesen, 2009; Zhao & Rosson, 2009; Sedej & Justinek 2013).

According to a survey made for Microsoft Corp (2013), in which nearly 10,000 people were questioned, nearly half of the respondents reported that enterprise social media tools helped to increase office productivity. The same study reported that one-third of the respondents felt that the benefits of the social media tools are underestimated in the work environment and that 77% would like to try and use new technologies that make them more productive. In addition, Manyika et al. (2012) estimate that white-collar workers spend averagely 28% of their daily work time answering emails, 19% of the time searching contacts and information and only 14% of the time on collaborating with co-workers. So the question is, why people still hold on emails so hard and do not embrace enterprise social media tools for internal communication?

De Bussy et al. (2003) indicated in their paper that the use of new media at work has a positive impact on the internal marketing communication. Moreover, they highlighted the importance of having dialogic communication inside an organization and social media tools offer that possibility easily. Additionally, according to Whiting & Williams (2013) reasons for people to use social media include social interaction, information seeking, expression of opinion and information sharing which are all actions and goals of internal communication.

There are many opportunities that social media offer for internal communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) identified some opportunities in their paper and gave suggestions on how companies could benefit from social media. They suggested that collaborative projects could be used to create internal wikis to keep the employees up

to date as Nokia did successfully by using wikis to in order to inform the 20% of its 68,000 employees about project statuses and updates and to trade ideas. Moreover, they also suggested that companies could use internal blogs and microblogs to update employees about internal issues and increase transparency in the organization. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also recommended content communities to be used by the companies internally in order to share the know-how and other information, avoid double work and reduce time of information searching. Additionally, they suggested the use of social networking sites to build personal profiles so that employees get more familiar with each other and stay easily in contact.

Using social media tools for internal communication is not an easy task and requires time, patience, brainstorming and investments. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlighted five points that need to be considered when using social media:

- Choosing carefully the right media depending on the target group,
- Deciding whether an existing application or platform covers the need or a customized application should be made,
- Ensuring that all the social media activities are coordinated,
- Integrating social media in internal communication and do not replace traditional media completely, and
- Giving assess to all the employees.

According to the literature review social media fit impeccably for internal communication inside an organization but extra attention should be given when choosing the different social media platforms. Moreover, there have been several examples of successful integration of social media tools for internal use and collaboration.

3.4 Theoretical framework of the study

In this subchapter, the theoretical framework of this study which is based on the literature review made in this chapter is presented and explained. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to direct the research process and help to answer the research questions. The interview matrix presented on chapter 4.3 utilizes the themes used in this framework. The theoretical framework is presented in Figure 15.
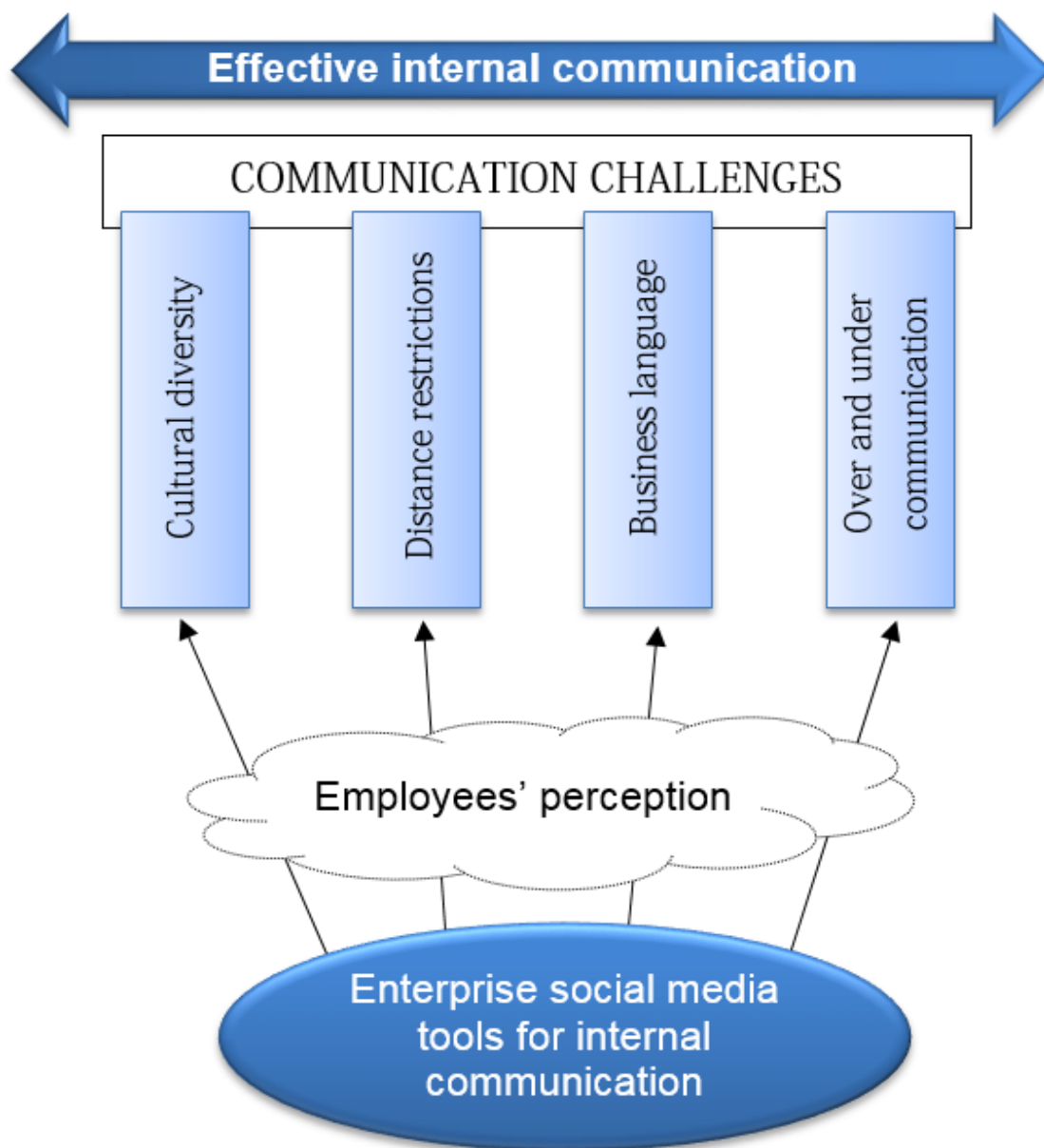
Figure 15 Theoretical Framework of the study

As can be seen in Figure 15, on the top there is a two-way arrow that shows the importance of having an interactive internal communication. The core of every effective communication is based on interaction. In this study the interaction is among the employees inside the company. The two-headed arrow in the theoretical framework represents the process of internal communication inside a team or a group.

Then, the communication challenges that big multinational companies face and could be identified through the literature review are presented under the two-way arrow of effective internal communication. The communication challenges presented in this study are the most significant challenges acknowledged during the literature review. They have a clear impact on the effectiveness of internal communication and are met inside the communication process. The identified challenges include

- **cultural diversity** which is very common in a multinational corporation that has offices located all over the world,
- **distance restrictions** which refers to the limits employees face because of time differences and of scattered locations,
- **business language** which refers to the unnatural language business people have adapted in recent years in order to impress, and
- **over and under communication** which points out the importance of using the correct channels and sending the right message through the chosen channels.

The first supporting sub-question of the study is to examine the existing internal communication process and identify the communication challenges that multinational corporations face. On the theoretical framework the question is seen in the form of communication challenges as described above.

Afterwards in the figure, arrows from enterprise social media tools used for internal communication are drawn to each communication challenge. The objective of this study is to explore if enterprise social media tools can contribute to the improvement of internal communication in a big multinational organization. Furthermore, those one-headed arrows indicate the possible contribution that is examined through the empirical data of the study on the following chapters. The enterprise social media tools

primarily include those social media tools that are available from the case company which were presented in subchapter 3.1.4. However, the tools should not limit them.

Moreover, on the top of the arrows from the enterprise social media tools used for internal communication purposes is a cloud that represents the employees' perception about using social media at work. The perception is presented as a cloud as it is important to highlight that employees' perception about social media use at work has an impact of the effectiveness of using the tools to improve internal communication. Even though the perception cloud is not often visible or addressed it exists. The second supporting sub-question of this study is about probing the impact that employee's perception about social media and it is present in the theoretical framework in the form of the cloud.

Additionally, the third sub-question of this thesis is to investigate how personal relations affect, positively or negatively, internal communication. In the theoretical framework the question is present in all the communication challenges as it can affect each of them. Moreover, the third sub-question would be also investigated through the empirical data.

The main research question of this study of how enterprise social media tools can support inter-organizational co-operation and information sharing is answered and identified on the theoretical framework as a whole.

To conclude, in order to justify the use of social media internally this chapter has examined past literature that is relevant to this thesis and then it included in the theoretical framework of this study. The covered issues include; enterprise social media and how companies should utilize them, internal communication and internal communication challenges, communication channels and the importance of choosing them and internal marketing communication.

After the literature review was presented a new coherent theoretical framework was developed in order to be used in this study. The framework will be evaluated again after the empirical findings.

4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This chapter introduces the reader to the empirical research of this study. First, the research approach and methodology are explained and justified. Then, the validity and reliability of the study are discussed. Afterwards, the data gathering and data analysis are described.

4.1 Research approach and methodology

In order to answer the research question and contribute to the research phenomenon I have chosen to do a single case study as the qualitative research method. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) qualitative research is relevant when the research subject does not have many insights from previous researches, and so the study is exploratory. Also, Bryman & Bell (2003) argue that to explore a subject were little is known and the goal is to understand the participants, qualitative method is appropriate. This study follows the qualitative approach in order to gain understanding and explanation of how the employees of company X perceive the usage of social media tools as tools for internal communication, and how the social media tools could actually contribute to a better collaboration and internal communication.

Case study is a research strategy that should be chosen in order to understand single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989). A single case study approach will help narrow down my study and provide concrete results to the selected case company. A single case study method also fits this study as it is a suitable method to study phenomena that are not well studied and seek in-depth information in order to provide results. According to Snow & Thomas (1994), case study method is one of the most used research methods when examining not only complex processes but also social phenomena in big organizations. Yin (1994) also claims that case study methods help a researcher to come closer and understand a complex social phenomenon in an organization.

Moreover, Yin (1994) lists three criteria of deciding if a case study is a proper method for a study. The first criterion is the type of the research questions as case studies point to answer mainly questions such as *how* and *why*. The second criterion is that the

researcher does not have or has little chances to control the events, and the third criterion is that the studies' topic should be an existing real-life problem.

This thesis study meets well at least two of the three criteria by Yin (1994), as the research questions are "how questions" and the study tries to understand why something is happening, and the topic is a present real-life challenge of company X. The only concern might be the level of control of the author as the author had a role in the organization while the study was conducted. Thus, to eliminate the concern I did my best to take as neutral and objective role within the organization as possible, thus, I evaluated the events and the collected data as an outsider.

Furthermore, as this study is commissioned by a company and it is a single case study focused on company X with a goal to develop concrete suggestions to a real practical problem, I believe that a managerial perspective with a realistic paradigm approach is the most suitable.

4.2 Validity and reliability of the study

A clock can be used as a metaphor to explain what validity and reliability are. When a clock displays the accurate time, then the clock is both reliable and valid. However, when the clock is constantly five minutes early, then it is not valid. At the time it is incorrect but it is reliable because it is always the same five minutes ahead of the correct time. Moreover, a clock that is every now and then five or ten minutes early or late is not valid, as it does not show accurate time, neither it is reliable, as it is constantly out of sync.

Validity is the most essential criterion of a study as it questions whether the study is measuring and delivering what it promised to measure and deliver. According to Yin (2003) the validity can be assessed on three types, i.e. the construct, the internal and the external validity. The construct validity refers to the collected data, while the internal validity refers to the causality during the analysis. The external validity refers to whether the findings and implications can be generalized. At the same time,

reliability is also an important criterion as it questions whether the results of the study are likely to occur again at other times. It is most significant during the data collection. Moreover, the application of those criteria for the qualitative research as the one done in this study is challenging as they are more applicable to a quantitative research. However, Yin (2003) claims that the earlier mentioned criteria have been used in case studies in order to measure the quality of the study, and will thus be further used in this study. (Yin, 2003)

For this study the validity and reliability concerns were tackled with the following manner. In terms of construct validity the data was collected using multiple sources, personal interviews and focus groups, as well as secondary data such as previous researches and discussions. Additionally, all the terms were made clear to the respondents and the respondents were carefully selected with the help of a company representative. The internal validity was undertaken by going through the recordings and the transcribed data at various times. The analysis was made by identifying common themes and classifications. As far as external validity is concerned, in qualitative research generalizable findings are challenging to produce as the study focuses on certain population and social behavior. In this case the findings can be generalized for other groups inside company X, as many challenges are similar. Finally, reliability is achieved by having similar personal interviews and focus groups, as well as by having the same interviewer, the author who has conducted and analyzed all the interviews and focus groups. (Yin, 2003)

To conclude, all the needed actions were made in order to increase the validity and reliability of this qualitative study.

4.3 Data collection

According to Yin (2003) there are six possible types of data for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Additionally, Eisenhardt (1989) emphases the importance of using multiply data collection methods in order to strengthen the grounding. For this study at least three of the suggested types of data were used. Using more than one source according to Gillham (2005) is a key characteristic of case study research, and can enrich the results.

Both primary and secondary data were utilized to obtain the research results. As secondary data both archival records and documents were used. For instance, a study conducted one year ago inside company X about internal communication and collaboration. For that study both, quantitative and qualitative methods were used in a form of a survey and interviews in order to find ways to encourage employees to collaborate more using available online tools and channels. Moreover, also existing materials, tutorials, internal blogs and virtual comments about the introduced online collaboration tools were used as secondary data for this study.

In order to collect the primary data I conducted personal interviews and organized focus groups. To all the participants' confidentiality and anonymity was promised. The interviews were conducted from February till April 2014 via conference calls or video conferences, while the focus groups took place in March 2014 in Helsinki, Finland. Mix methods were used in order to get variety of data and gain validity and reliability to the study (Eisenhardt, 1989). The personal interviews gave good personal insights into the issues and during the focus groups discussions about issues among the different target audiences appeared to be quite active.

For the primary data collection persons from the internal customers groups of the global marcom were selected. For the focus groups employees with global responsibilities were chosen (the global sales, market and product managers and global marketing communication specialists). The participants of the focus groups have very different backgrounds and ways of thinking and operating which made the

focus groups interesting and full of usable data. For the personal interviews employees with local responsibilities (local sales and product managers and local marketing communication responsible) were picked. Both, personal interviews and focus groups are explained in more detail in the following sub-chapters.

For both, the personal interviews and the focus groups, an interview question matrix was used to guide the conversation and discussions. The interview question matrix includes topics that were created with the help of the literature review before the interviews and focus groups were conducted. The topics of the interview matrix derive from the theoretical framework (see page 44) created after the literature review.

All the four communication challenges (see page 34) are present on the matrix:

- *Cultural diversity* is visible in the form on intercultural challenges.
- *Distance restrictions* is seeable on the topics of interactivity and possibility to participate and on the internal communication challenges and problems.
- *Business language* is apparent on both topics, the current internal communication process and the intercultural communication challenges.
- *Over and under communication* is mostly present on the current internal communication process topic but also on the internal communication challenges and problems topic.

Additionally, the *employees' perception* about social media tools is also present on the interview matrix under the enterprise social media usage and perception topic. The interview matrix is presented in Table 1 below.

It is notable to mention that after the focus groups were conducted some small additions were made to the matrix to include sub-topics/questions that have arisen during the focus group sessions. Every topic has some suggested sub-topics/ questions that were used to guide the discussions and conversation into the right direction. All the topics were more or less discussed in every interview and focus group. However, depending on the interviews and the flow not all the questions were asked, as the most important thing was to listen what the respondents had to say and how they connected the issues.

Table 1 Interview questions matrix

Main topics	Interview questions
Current internal communication processes	• Communication and interaction with colleagues • Channels of internal communication • Collaboration with other organizations, including Global marcom • Role of internal communication in the company • Databases and tool
Interactivity and possibility to participate	• Direction of communication flow, interactivity • Feedback, does it lead to concrete actions, is it welcome • Possibility to participate in planning and contributing to marcom materials • Keeping colleagues up-to-date with marcom • Information sharing (too little or too much communication)
Internal communication problems and challenges	• Easiness to communicate internally • Differences in effectiveness of communication within teams and between organizations • Consideration of message relevance to recipients
Intercultural communication challenges	• Challenges from language used • Attention paid to cultural issues and challenges • Easiness to express yourself
Enterprise social media usage and perception	• Importance of social media on private life • Usage of the official social media tools introduced by the company (yammer, SharePoint, blogs, wikis) • Way of usage • Reasons of none usage
Improvement suggestions	• Concrete ideas and suggestions • Example of a successful internal communication process • Most effective channels • The ideal internal communication • Dedicated internal marketing communication specialist

4.3.1 Personal interviews

The personal interviews were conducted during February, March and April 2014. They were semi-structured and followed the interview matrix presented in Table 1. A semi-structured personal interview method was chosen because it gives emphasis on the ideas and views of the chosen interviewee, and because they are recognized as most suitable for answering *how* questions such as the ones in this study. (Bryman & Bell, 2003) All personal interviews were conducted in English and an understandable terminology was used. All the terms were explained when necessary. The interviews varied from 25 to 55 minutes depending on the interviewee. On average, each interview lasted for 40 minutes.

All in all, 14 personal interviews were conducted with selected persons from the local marcoms, local sales or local product management. The interviewees were from Argentina, Brazil, China, Germany, Poland, Russia, Turkey or South-Africa. The countries and the interviewees were selected with cooperation of a company representative and during the selection the size of the market, the importance of the market and the size of the local structure of the business were taken into consideration. Table 2 below show the number of interviews and the different roles that the interviewees hold at the company.

Table 2 Data collection: Personal interviews

"Local" responsibilities Personal interviews	
Role type	No of interviews
Marcom	7
Sales	4
Product	3
Total	14

Statistically, six of the participants were females and eight were males. All the interviewees had been working within the case company for several years and were

familiar with the processes. It is notable to say that a couple of interviewees had to be changed as they had left company X by the time they were contacted, and the new responsible were not yet familiar with the job.

The 14 interviewees were more than enough to collect the needed data as the information started to be saturated after the 9th interview. In other words, after the 9th interview adding one more personal interview did not provide any additional value or new information to the study. Moreover, all the information gathered from the interviews was usable and provided useful insights.

4.3.2 Focus groups

The focus groups were organized in English in March 2014 in Helsinki, Finland. Participants with global responsibilities from marketing communication, sales, product, and market management were invited. Initially, only two focus groups were planned to be organized, but later it was identified that more useful data could still be collected from a focus group. In total three focus groups were conducted and I acted as a facilitator. Every focus group lasted approximately one hour.

For each focus group, two persons from the marketing communications, two persons from global sales, one person from product management and one person from market management were invited. Some of the persons cancelled their participation last minute and were not replaced, but it did not affect the sessions as in every focus group at least one representative of each internal customer mentioned above was present. Statistically, eleven of the participants were males while only four were females. All the participants had been in the case company for several years and furthermore are familiar with the processes. Moreover, every participant is an expert in the field of business that he or she represented.

 In the table below, the number of participants of the focus groups and the different roles they hold in the company are presented.

Table 3 Data collection: Focus groups

"Global" responsibilities Focus groups	
Role type	*No of participants*
Marcom	5
Sales	6
Product/Industry	4
Total	**15**

The focus groups gave the chance to raise the topics that were not thought of before-hand. As the majority of the personal interviews were conducted after the focus groups, some of the themes and questions that arose in the focus groups were added in the interview matrix. From the beginning focus group was selected as a method to collect data with the purpose of feeding questions and information for the personal interviews. All the data from the focus groups were usable.

4.4 Data analysis

All the primary data, both the personal interviews and focus groups, were recorded and transcribed to ensure that all the details will be preserved through the analysis phase. As Eisenhardt (1989) points out the volume of data can be a drawback to a case study analysis and for that reason with-in case analysis is suggested.

I familiarized myself with the data by reading the transcriptions and by listening to the recordings. Afterwards, I created notes and writes-ups for all the data separately and then combined all the data in big posters. Therefore, I identified common themes, patterns and expressions and coded them accordingly. The data from the interviews and the focus groups were combined if they were similar, and compared when the data were different. (Eisenhardt, 1989)

In order to define the media richness of the existing channels used inside the case company, a workshop was arranged. In the workshop, members of the global marketing communication team, who are local marketing specialists around the globe, were first guided through the media richness theory and then instructed to rank the channels. At the same time, some content themes that are usually used inside the group were also given and asked to be ranked according to the complexity of information. Figure 14 (see Chapter 3.2.3) was used for the workshop. The results will be presented and analyzed in the next chapter.

All the other data were solely analyzed by me, and after a constructive interpretation of the empirical findings the results are presented and analyzed in the next chapter.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the study are analyzed are discussed. Furthermore, first the empirical findings are presented. Then, the sub questions of the study are answered and then the research question is approached and discussed.

5.1 Empirical findings

In this subchapter, the empirical findings of the interviews and the focus groups as well as the information from the secondary data are presented. The themes of how the findings are presented are inspired by the main topics of the interview matrix in use. Some of the topics provided data that was of little value for this study, thus some topics were combined, while other subtopics were brought in as they gathered useful insights and comments. First, an overview of the findings is given. Next, the challenges on the current process and the communication channels are presented and then the internal marketing and content sharing topics are discussed. Afterwards, the feedback culture is addressed and then the enterprise social media tools and respondents perception of them are demonstrated. In the end, the intercultural challenges are mentioned. The improvement suggestions made by the respondents will be included in the analyses phase in the next chapter.

5.1.1 Overview of the findings

To start with, the findings from the interviews and the focus groups indicated that internal communication is sufficient and functional but there is room for improvement. The respondents were always able to collaborate and communicate with the global team when needed but that created extra noise. The findings showed that extra time and resources are used while communicating internally, and the majority of the respondents worked with the global marcom in a reactive mode. Moreover, the reactive approach makes communication sufficient but not effective. A proactive approach was something that both parties would like to adopt when it comes to

communication and collaboration but the findings showed that no one was ready to take active role and improve it. The respondents understood that for active communication both parties need to be active and admitted that they had not taken as active role as they should. Moreover, the findings indicated that there is a mismatch when it comes to what global marcom communicates to the internal customer groups and what the internal customer groups actually receive and understand.

5.1.2 Challenges on current process

The empirical data made apparent that there are major challenges in the basis of communication among the functions. Both, the communication process and the roles and responsibilities of every function when it comes to internal communication and collaboration are not obvious.

The process of how the information is communicated from the global marcom to its internal customers is not clearly definite in the mind of the respondents. Even though two approaches could be easily identified from the data, the direct and the indirect, the respondents were not sure which one is the official and which they should follow. It is also partly because the respondents have not taken an active role in communication. Direct communication occurred when the global marcom communicated the message directly for instance to the local marcoms. Indirect communication occurred when the information came to the end-receiver from somewhere else, for example from the global sales to the local sales and then to the local marcom. According to the respondents because the process has not been clearly defined and conveyed to the internal customers of the global marcom team, the functions were not clear to them as for from where they should receive the messages. For that reason the some proactive messages from the global marcom team apparently got lost on the way.

A few respondents highlighted the problem by arguing that for a person who has been long enough in the company the process is not a challenge as he or she has learned from where to find what he or she needs. The problem is visible when new employees join the company and the process needs to be explained. In other words, the process

is not simple or systematic but manageable when someone has been in the company long enough. The problem becomes apparent when a new employee comes and needs to be introduced to the process, as it seems that the communication process defined by the global marcom has not been effectively communicated or understood by the internal customers.

Additionally, the roles of different functions are not clear to the majority of the respondents with local responsibilities. It was surprising that few respondents with local responsibilities did not know the organization structure of company X and how marketing communications of different divisions and business units operate inside the company. In addition, according to some respondents with local responsibilities from small markets, the global marcom seemed to have not taken into account much that the marketing communication department of every country has different roles and responsibilities depending on the local structure. In a big multinational organization responsibilities and roles might not be clear if they are not properly communicated. Moreover, it was apparent that the most of the respondents did not know the members of the global marketing communication team. If they knew at least one of them then that was the person who they were in contact with when they needed something. Furthermore, few said that they were able to find who to contact from the global marcom team when needed while others admitted that they did not know from where they should seek contact info of the person in question. The better a respondent knew someone from the team the better informed they seemed to be about what is happening in the global marcom and what is available or not. Additionally, the personal activity of every interviewee was also reflected on how well he or she knew the roles of every function.

Furthermore, the global marcom has somewhat failed to communicate its role, mission and vision, clearly. Respondents seemed to have had different views of why the global marcom team exists and how it blends with other functions. Thus, the roles of global marcom, local marcom, sales and product/market managers when it comes to marketing communication were uncertain and undefined according to the majority but with an extra importance to the sales.

According to the recordings, for the local marcom, the global marcom should hold the role of a coordinator among the local marcoms and a supporter among all the other functions. They expected to have a constant backup support on their own activities, especially when it came to technical info in the materials. Some respondents highlighted that the global marcom should provide the technical knowledge that they do not possess but need in order to market a product with proper marketing materials to the local markets. However, the technical support is not in the role of the global marcom and that highlights the misunderstanding of the role of the global marcom team. It is also notable to say that the smaller the local marcom team was the more support they required from the global marcom. Having said that, the importance of building a strong personal relationship among the marketing communication teams was strongly approved by the respondents.

For the sales, the role of the global marcom was somewhat blurry and strongly dependent on who was asked. Sales people seemed to not know what is expected from them and what they should expect from the marcoms. They had the least interaction with the global marcom team and that is why they were not familiar with the global marcom function or organization. There were few exceptions among the respondents who seemed to be more involved with the marketing communication team and thus more informed about the marketing activities and responsibilities. According to the interviewees from sales, the global marcom at that moment had the role of a supporting function of sales which creates marketing materials. However, they wanted global marcom to take the role of an "interpreter" between the too technical product and market people and the customer oriented sales. In other words, they wanted the global marcom to make more sales oriented materials. At the same time, global sales saw themselves as customer experts and content providers and hoped for more interaction with the global marketing team. The believed that getting them involved will make the material more sales oriented as at the moment the global marcom uses only product and market managers as primary content providers. The local sales considered that the connection between the global and local marcom is more important than them being more involved with the global marcom.

For the global product and market respondents, the role of the global marcom team was more familiar as at the moment they hold a key role in providing content to the

marketing materials and the global marcom team often interacts with them. On the other hand, for the local product respondents the global marcom team was completely unknown as a function and they had thought too little interaction was normal as the global marcom was never in contact with them. It is notable to say that there were again two interviewees who clearly had a personal connection with a global marketing specialist and were more aware than other about what is happening and got their ways and wants easier through.

5.1.3   Communication channels

Another barrier for effective communication is the channels used by the global marcom to communicate. In general for all communication, the most used channel appeared to be email among the respondents not because it was recognized as the most sufficient and effective but because everyone is using it and knows how to use it. When the respondents were asked about effective channels the majority was not completely happy with the current tools but thought that they were sufficient enough. The most effective way of communication seemed to be face-to-face interactive personal communication with a small disfavor to meeting with many participants. It is notable to say that personal interaction in big organizations is not always possible due to location restrictions. In the survey made by company X in 2013, 80% of the respondents thought that in-person tools such as meetings and personal conversations are the most helpful tools. The same became evident in the interviewees where personal interactive tools were favored.

Additionally, the plurality of the respondents first stated that the channels are too many and overwhelming and because they are so many it creates confusion and frustrations. This coincides with the results of the survey made by company X in 2013 which indicated that almost 30% of the respondents thought that there are too many channels and tools inside Company X. Moreover, a couple of interviewees with global responsibilities could not identify any particular channels that the global marcom is using to reach them. Later, after we went dipper on the subject of the variety and number of channels the respondents seemed to have acknowledged that the problem was not so much in the number of channels, even though in their opinion they were

numerous, but that the channels and tools were not properly defined or explained. In other words, the respondents did know what kind of materials and information should be retrieved from which channel or tool. Most of the respondents were familiar with all the channels used by the global marcom team but could not say why each channel was used. The above challenge appeared to not be only a problem of the global marcom team but also of other functions of the company X as tools are usually introduced from the corporate level and the corporate is responsible to brief people properly about every new tool introduced.

Furthermore, there was a clear gap between the respondents who had local and global responsibilities for the channels. For people who had local responsibilities the number of channels was literally overwhelming as in most of the cases they had to deal with other products, too, as well as other channels and tools. At the same time, the respondents with global responsibilities seemed to be the ones who were not familiar with the channels that global marcom team tried to reach them with. Moreover, a few respondents also commented that the channels used at the moment were not supporting a two way communication that would boost internal communication and collaboration.

In addition, the secondary data also gave the impression that the channels inside company X were too many to handle. Following some discussion and threads on the company's intranet and internal social media network people are supporting the multi-channel approach but at the same time require definitions and reasoning for every tool. Characteristically, when a user was asked which tools he or she finds more efficient on a thread and had a list of options to choose from, they chose to respond in the following way:

"Depend on position/age/personal approach/functionality/what would you like to share and who would you like to hit... From my point of view is better a multi-channel approach...". (Yammer user, 2014)

The post was rather interesting as in two simple sentences it summarized how difficult it is to find the right channel especially when using variables such as position and age. The discussion went on and on and many opinions came forward. As a general

observation I would say that almost all favored an interactive two-way communication tool but no one brought up the topic if they use the possibility of interaction. Many times the possibility to respond and interact is there but nobody bothers to use it. Additionally, another worth mentioning posts even though it was an exception is the below:

"I'm only familiar with email…its powerful but relative slow. That can improve since my colleagues now have smartphone. Personal I like whatsapp. Simple, fast and powerful. And my colleagues know how to use it too!!! More communication channels does not mean better communication…..". (Yammer user, 2014)

A fairly interesting approach and different from the one previously mentioned. It is interesting that even though the user recognizes the downfalls of emailing he or she is still hanging on it but at the same time embraces new technology and finds whatsapp, an instant messaging application for smartphones, as a powerful tool. Interestingly, he or she but does not recognize other instant messaging tools provided by company X, such as Lync, as a tool that can be used for the same purposes as whatsapp. Maybe, that happens because he or she is just not well informed about the tools available from company X or just because old-habits die slowly cannot stop using emails. Then, his or hers last statement about the number of channels comes into conflict with the multi-channel approach that most users seem to somehow favor but gives some great food for thought to the next commenters. The conversation of course went on and multi-channel approach had both supporters and haters.

5.1.4   Internal marketing and material content

The majority of the respondents found the content in the material and tools provided by the global marcom to be sufficient enough while many admitted to not know what was available because they were not in their opinion properly informed. The internal marketing seem to not be the strongest activity of the global marcom team as there were respondents, especially from sales, who said that they did not get any information from the global marcom and did not know what was happening in the marketing department. However, the above statement also shows that some respondents were not active at all from their part when it comes to being informed about what is

happening. Global sales somehow expected that marcom is represented in some of the monthly sales meeting where info about new materials and updates is communicated personally which is an activity that occurs but not to the extent global sales would like.

Additionally, when the interviewees, excluding the product and market managers, were asked if they feel that they can participate in the production process of the materials the majority was skeptical and only few said that they could if they wanted but some did not even want to get involved because they had no extra time. This is in line with the internal survey that was conducted inside the company X in 2013 and showed that employees do see collaboration as a smart way to work and see the added value but no one is actually ready to get out of their comfort zone and start implementing collaboration among functions, and that is why most of the times it only stays as an idea. The takeaway from the survey when it comes to collaboration was to make it actionable and not wait for others to do it, which also seems to be the issue of being active on the production process of new materials, when no one takes the initiative.

When it came to the distribution of the available materials, numerous responses pointed out how difficult it was to locate any new or old materials in the channels. Characteristically many respondents said that a "google-button" which will search throughout all the company's channels and tools, which are numerous, would have been the most useful function that could be added inside company X. Some local marcom respondents underlined the priority of having an ecosystem with only high resolution marketing materials accessible easily. Additionally, during one of the focus groups the importance of dedicating resources to do internal marketing and having more internal materials and on-time came up. The participants argued that the companies branding guidelines do not support quick internal marketing activities as the production of the materials naturally need to be in an official format and that takes too much time. Moreover, they believed that if people were better informed internally it would be easier to do sales and use the materials more effectively.

5.1.5 Feedback culture and collaboration

Effective internal communication is about two-way communication and requires at least two active parties. All the respondents understood and supported the importance of feedback in order to improve, but the same time, most of the respondents admitted that they did not give feedback to the global marcom team neither they had received feedback from the global marcom team about not providing feedback. Moreover, feedback was mostly perceived as a negative approach about something when they were not satisfied while they needed to be reminded that feedback can also be positive and constructive. The feedback culture did not appear to be very strong.

The empirical data showed that the respondents expected that the global marcom team regularly monitors and controls how satisfied the internal customers and they are with the provided marketing materials and the processes in general but they did not feel that such action exists. The respondents were also expecting to be asked to give feedback by the marcom team in a form of a survey, for example, or another more effective method. Monitoring what happens to the marketing materials after they are released and how sales people are using them was also an issue that according to the participants of the focus group global marcom is not handling at the moment. Even though the interviewees thought that monitoring is very important to improve practices.

Additionally, the majority of the interviewees did not know how to give feedback if they wanted to. They argued that they did not know through which channel or who to contact in order to give feedback. For the people who had a personal contact with someone in the global marcom team it was easy to pick up the phone, for instance, and call to give feedback. However, the people who did not know the global marcom team had no idea how it should be handled and that is why they just did not proceed.

Moreover, the survey about collaboration inside company X identified that employees needed to be motivated in order to start collaboration even though they saw the great potential of collaboration for the company they also needed to see a personal benefit. For instance, if collaboration means extra workload or is too complex then they would

rather not participate and do what they have been used to do. Collaboration should be in the roots of the company, in the management and the culture.

5.1.6   Intercultural challenges

Even though language did not seem to be a challenge to most of the respondents some said that they prefer written communication such as email because it provides time to read what is said and understand it better. At the same time, a few of the respondents highlighted the importance of using simple English language when communicating as well as in marketing materials as for the majority of the respondents and their customers' English language is the not their first language and local translations are not always available, especially if materials are updated very quickly.

Another matter that becomes apparent is that in some counties the business culture does not embrace two-way communication as traditionally the communication is still one-way and comes from the management. In those countries it might be important to rethink how everything is communicated according to an interviewee.

All in all, there were no any significant cultural challenges that influence internal communication and how the global marcom team communicates with its internal customers.

5.1.7   Enterprise social media tools and perception

When it came to the use of social media tools and channels at work there were mixed perceptions among the respondents but a clear potential that was admitted by almost all the respondents. The results of the survey about collaborating tools conducted by company X showed that even though half of the respondents were open in using new tools, respondents still gave priority to traditional tools such as email. Thus, 72% of the respondents thought that traditional tools are very helpful in comparison to 34% who thought that new tools, meaning social media tools, are very helpful. To the same question 15% of the respondents responded that social media tools were not helpful at

all which is relatively low taking into consideration that the social media tools are something completely new and people are still adjusting to their existence in the work environment.

The interviewees saw that social media tools such as Yammer are becoming strong inside the company but were not yet active users for various reasons. There were many considerable reasons why they were not using so much social media tools in their communication but the most common excuse that came as a first answer was the lack of time. During the personal interviews I asked about four social media tools, i.e. Yammer, SharePoint, blogs and webinars if not mentioned by the interviewee and on the focus groups usually the attention was mostly drawn to Yammer and SharePoint. The respondents who actively used social media tools on their personal lives had a more positive attitude towards the use of social media tools at work but they also were a bit hesitant. The active users tended to be the younger respondents who were more familiar with social media tools. The respondents were underscoring the importance when explaining how and when a new tool and channel is introduced and expected to be used. At this point, it is evident to say that corporate communications have not introduced potentially great tools to the employees in the most proper way and global marcom could not really influence that.

Also, some of the secondary data showed that there has been confusion about how and why the new tools have been introduced in company X. Following the comments on the intranet after posts about the new enterprise social tools, dating back in spring 2013 when a new tool was introduced inside company X, people at first required more information about the tool from corporate level in order to understand it and then asked practical questions about how to use it. Following the comments and the responses users seemed to be confused and when confusion hits then comes frustration and then they just stop using it. The strength of social media tools are its users and the content that they generate so if there are no people using the tools the tools gradually fade away. That is an issue that was addressed also by the interviewees of the empirical study as they sometimes said that they were not active users because nobody was. Moreover, returning back to the comments in intranet, there were also positive comments on the usefulness of the new tool and how it has already helped to solve some internal challenges but those comments seemed to be shadowed by the how

and why questions. In addition, while reading the comments I got the feeling that corporate was not really ready to introduce the tool to the public as the most common questions were about finding more info and instructions. A year later, after the tool was officially adapted by the company as an official communication tool, a new post about the tool was out and there were fewer comments, however, more on the positive side this time with fewer questions, which triggers the question if users finally knew then how and why to use the new tool or did they just gave up on it. It is notable to say that the first year the tool was not an official tool but was rather used for piloting which seem to have confused the users even more. Moreover, when the tool was made official it was moved to a new server which meant that everything written got lost, which frustrated users. The conversation about enterprise social media tools at work is still going on inside company X and employees seem to be still trying to figure out how to implement the new tools in their daily activities.

When considering every tool that is used by company X separately and comparing what the interviewees thought, Yammer was a tool that everyone recognized and was familiar with. Yammer was introduced to the company in spring 2012. Despite its rocky start in June 2014 the network had more than 50,000 users and over 2,600 groups. (Company X reports, 2014) According to the company's briefs about the tool, Yammer is the place where the employees can have real time project collaboration across the organizational silos. The global marcom team is using Yammer to engage in two-way communication. In the empirical data, the perceptions were divided. There were respondents who were very active and knew how to use it and get the benefits out of it and respondents who had a negative attitude, either because they had some bad first experience and impression or because they did not know how to use it properly. As a result, they just ignored it because they did not see from the beginning any added value in it. The no-added-value was the most common reason why respondent did not use it actively. Moreover, the majority of the respondents saw a potential but were frustrated as they did not know why and then how to use it. It was also clear that the majority of the respondents did not understand why global marcom uses it and what information they should retrieve from there, which is a part of a bigger channel challenge that came along through the interviews. At the same time, the active respondents reminded that in order for a social network to work people need to be online and that there should be regular updates, otherwise eventually nobody would

use it. The respondents really wanted to know the best practices and hear stories of how Yammer could make their daily work less and help them be more productive. By spending few minutes searching the company's intranet one can find many materials created by the corporate communication on why and how to use Yammer but the respondents did not seem to be aware of those. That indicates both, that corporate communication has not communicated those materials properly and that the respondents have not been active themselves in finding more info about the tools.

When asked about SharePoint, it appeared to be a controversial tool. There were respondents who were not familiar with it, respondents who were forced to use it and respondents who saw a great potential but did not know how get to its benefits. The global marcom team uses SharePoint as a database tool where content is shared and contributed to. As mentioned also earlier, SharePoint is mostly used inside the global marcom team and some access is given to the local marcoms. SharePoint in general was used as a second library from the people who used it but all of them identified some major challenges, namely, it is disorganized, confusing and unstructured. The interface is not user friendly and for that reason it is not easy to use or manage. Respondents used it only through links that where sent to them and were helpless if the links got lost. Most of the SharePoint functionalities were unknown to the majority of the respondents and only few have gone through a very basic training session. Moreover, because of all the confusion the majority did not see the added value and did not want to lose precious working time searching for links, so the collaboration and sharing potential of the tool got lost on the way.

Webinars, a new social tool that was taken into use quite recently by company X, was in general perceived positively. The respondents who had participated in at least one webinar in general were very satisfied with its functions. Additionally, the ones who had not participated yet had mostly heard positive comments about it. Currently, the global marcom team utilizes webinars to inform and increase awareness mainly marketing messages of a new product among local marcoms. The global marcom had arranged a couple of webinars in the past years and invited only local marcoms to participate, but only few of them knew about it and even fewer participated. It appeared to be a communication mismatch about who was invited to that webinar as many of the persons who were invited said that they did not receive an invitation which

indicated also low level of interaction with the global marcom team from their part. All the respondents saw generally a great potential as it is a tool that is synchronous and somewhat interactive, depending on the presenter, but at the same time asynchronous as it is recorded and can be viewed later as well. A technical challenge that was mentioned by some respondents with local responsibilities is that everyone does not have the proper equipment, headphones and microphones, in order to participate in webinars. Another challenge for some of the respondents was that there are nowadays too many webinars produced every day and the employees do not have so much time to dedicate to webinars so webinars should be monitored and filtered and only important information should be communicated through them.

Moving on to blogs, only few respondents in general actually read blogs and even less wrote blogs because most of them said that they did not have time to do so. Blogs were recognized as a good source to get familiar with an issue and a great way to inform many people with a more personal approach. Some interviewees mentioned that best practices were best communicated through blogs. The global marcom does not utilize blogs. In a search of secondary data I read few blogs on the company' intranet about social media tools and it seemed that there was quite an audience and people were inspired with the blogs and even commented on them. However, taking into account the population of company X and the number of comments, the turnout is not great but blogs is a great way to target specific population.

To conclude, employees have mixed perception about the use of social media tools at work and at the moment a somewhat negative attitude towards them even though the majority recognizes the opportunities in using them.

5.2 Current internal communication challenges

The first sub-question of this study is about exploring the current communication challenges that a multinational corporation faces while communicating internally. The literature review suggested four major challenges that multinational organizations face, i.e. cultural diversity, location restrictions, business language and over and under communication.

Cultural diversity refers to the challenges because of different cultural backgrounds among colleagues. The empirical data showed that cultural differences do not really challenge the internal communication of the multinational organization of company X. Even though localization is an important part of the marketing activities and some felt that more attention should be given to the local needs of every country, the internal communication and collaboration is not affected by cultural diversities on a notable scale. The only issue that can be somewhat related to culture is that some people are not very used into providing feedback and feedback should be asked separately from them.

Location restrictions refer to the challenge for not being physically close in order to communicate. Company X has offices around the world in different time zones so the problem does exist inside the company. For example, when the US employees come to work European employees finish the workday. The empirical data showed that due to location differences traditional face-to-face personal communication which is the most effective way of communication is not possible and that synchronous and asynchronous channels, such as social media tools, could and should be used to compensate the distance. However, even though company X provides some equipment for video conferencing the technology is not yet efficient enough inside the company to achieve real-time communication with many participants.

Business language is a factor that can create confusion and frustration when communicating internally. Moreover, the literature argued that business people nowadays choose not to use natural clear language when communicating but difficult terms and concepts in order to basically sound sophisticated and important. That leads

to confusion as the audience does not fully understand what has been said and what they are supposed to do. The empirical data showed that business language does exist to some extend when people communicate through formal channels and especially when the message comes from corporate level. Looking closer to the communication of the global marcom the empirical data indicated that the global marcom has eliminated the use of jargon in the marketing materials and has embraced informal and natural communication among the internal customers.

Over and under communication refers to not delivering right the information to the receivers either because of overexpose or underexpose to the information as the literature suggested. This seems to be the biggest challenge that the multinational organization of company X faces. The empirical data showed that there is an issue with the communication channels that global marcom uses in order to communicate content. The data indicated that the channels are too many and most importantly that no clear instructions have been communicated about why the specific channels are used and what kind of content is conveyed through them. For the above mentioned reasons, the internal customers are quite confused and do not know what is expected from them. At this point, it is notable to raise the question if the confusion about the channels is because the global marcom team has failed to define them or because the internal customers have not being active when it comes to marketing. There seems to be a misconnection about what global marcom had communicated to its internal customers and what they have actually embraced. Moreover, as mentioned earlier active communication requires two active parties in order to successfully exchange information. As the literature suggested, because the internal customers of the global marcom are either full time marketers (local marcom) and part-time marketers (global and local sales), it is important to find the proper channels to convey only the relevant and necessary information but at the same time it is important that the receivers spend time in order to get familiar with the defined processes and channels.

In order to classify the channels used by the global marcom, and some other channels that participants suggested, a workshop was arranged with local marketing communication specialist around the world and the results are presented in Figure 16.
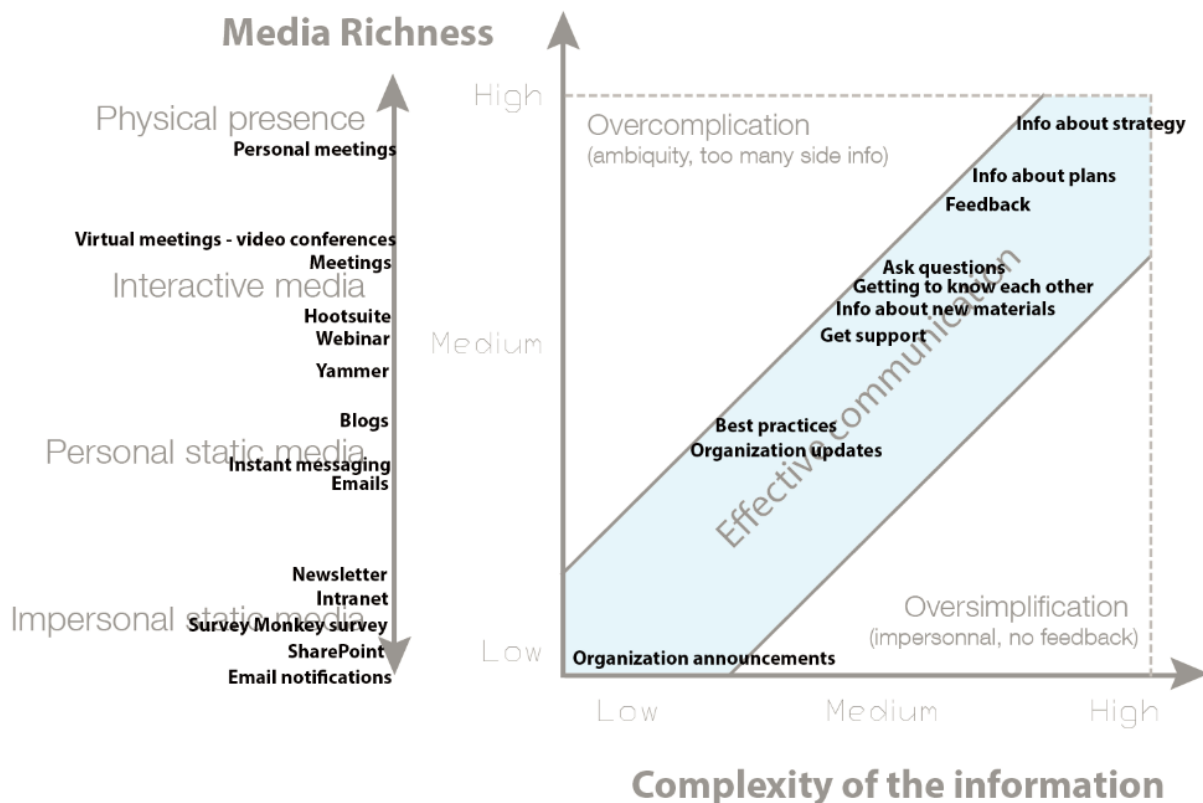
Figure 16 Classification of media and content topics

Figure 16 demonstrates how local marcoms classified the channels using the media richness theory and the complexity of common content themes in a workshop that took place in June 2014. Figure 14 (see chapter 3.2.3) from the theory was used as a basis and the participants were asked to place both channels and content themes on the scale accordingly after discussion. The classification is subjective and the results might slightly differ depending on the workshop group but in this case as the workshop group is one of the most important target groups, the results will be taken as guidelines for this study and discussed accordingly.

It is interesting to see that even though the majority of the content themes are placed above personal static media the majority of the channels actively used by the global marcom team are placed around the impersonal static media. Such channels are newsletter, SharePoint and intranet which brings questions if the global marcom should rethink the channels it is using and for what purposes it is using each channel. Furthermore, maybe more interactive channels should be used in order to actually interact and communicate information to the internal customers. Moreover, also

provocative is that email, at the moment the most used channel, is identified as a quite linear channel, between personal and impersonal static media, while all the content themes are considered to be more complex than what email can handle leading to possible oversimplification and furthermore probably to under communication. Additionally, the figure reveals that social media tools like Yammer, blogs and webinars could be used in order to handle the majority of the themes that were classified during the workshop. However, social media tools were not very popular tools among the respondents who basically chose to not be active. In my opinion the results show that the participants somewhat know that social media tools have great potential for internal communication but the threshold seems to be big in order to just start using them.

The empirical data also suggested two more major challenges classified as foundation and anonymity in this study. By the theme foundation I mean the challenges that occur due to not having a good base of communication. The empirical data showed that the process of how global marcom team communicates is not clear to its internal customers and moreover what was supposed to be expected was blurry. It is vital that certain game rules are defined by the global marcom in order to have effective internal communication and internal marketing actions. Additionally, the internal customers should be probably prioritized and different kind of internal communication and internal marketing plans should be developed in order to maximize collaboration and information sharing. For example, part-time marketers (global and local sales) who actually interact with the customers should be approached in a different way than fulltime marketers (local marcoms) who have information about the local markets but do not know the customers directly. At the moment global and local sales are not one of the target audiences for inputs for materials as global marcom collaborates with global product and market management for that purpose. However, I believe that this study theoretically and empirically pointed out that global and local sales should have a more active part as part-time marketers.

Anonymity refers to not really knowing your colleagues and the people inside the organization. In a big organization people change in a fast rate and do not physically sit close to you so not getting familiar with and not being up to date with who is who is quite common but at the same time a drawback for the organization. During the

interviews I came across a couple of marketing specialists who had left the company but nobody was informed about it which showed that the global team is not always in the loop of what is happening and information can be lost for that reason. However, the global marcom cannot single handedly manage the whole global organization and the people in it so active participation from the countries is required. Moreover, also the empirical data indicated that interviewees did not know who was responsible for what and what roles everyone had when asked about the global marcom team and vice versa. In a big organization it might be more important to know from where you can find contact information of a person when needed that actually knowing everyone because as mentioned before persons change in a rapid rate. Having a synchronous organizational chart of the global team would help to identify who is who, build relations and ask for help or support when needed. According to the global marcom team such a chart exist but the respondents did not seem to know its existence which emphasizes the communication mismatch among the global marcom team and its internal customers.

To conclude, the multinational organizations and company X in this case, do face some major challenges when trying to communicate internally which should be addressed.

5.3 Employee's perception of the use of social media at work

The second sub-question was about how employee's perception of the use of social media at work could affect the digital change. Interviewee's perception of enterprise social media tools and their use at work for internal communication purposes were mixed. It was clear that only few could claim that they are active users and do utilize enterprise social media tools on their daily work life.

Most of the respondents had a negative attitude towards using social media tools either because they did not know how to use them or because they did not understand why to use them or because of both. Somehow all the confusion in my opinion is justified first because we live in the time where the way people communicate and interact has changed. Some respondents could recognize that internal communication is transforming and big changes are happening and will continue to happen. Moreover, the majority saw somewhat potential in enterprise social media tools and some even predicted that they will be growing stronger in internal communication irrespective of whether employees like it or not. All the respondents seem to need some guidance and explanation when it comes to enterprise social media as it seems that they were caught off-guard and then were just told to start using them. The discussion in the academic world and on the internet about using enterprise social media and its benefits for the companies is also blossoming even though the area is still under-researched.

I could identify four major cases that support the formation of a negative attitude towards enterprise social media tools and their usage for work. The four cases are also interrelated at some level and in my opinion are caused by insufficient briefing. The four cases are change resistance, generation issue, time excuse and under- informing. The cases are explained in more detail below.

Change resistance

It is known that change and getting out of one's comfort zone is never easy and without resistance. The findings suggested that change resistance is one of the reasons for employees to form a negative attitude towards using social media at work. Moreover, because the current tools are still somehow sufficient enough and the work is done

people do not see the reason to change their own ways of doing. It is easier to do nothing and use the same old. Additionally, if social media are not used in personal life the threshold to use them for work is even bigger. This challenge is usually overcome by using time to explain how the new tool will benefit the user. The *why* is very important in order to get started but then the *how* will actually make or break the deal. Information on the use, training and best practices are important for people who are resistant to change. Giving time is also important, nobody changes overnight. Additionally, for some cultures giving the message through the management will help speed up the process.

Generation issue

Social media has been introduced widely to the world in the last decade which means that people are still adjusting to them. For the younger generation who are only now entering the business world social media have been part of their personal lives and they grew up using them. For the older generation, on the other hand, social media tools are a new technological invention which they do not necessary feel comfortable using. Both the literature and the empirical study showed signs that the younger generation has a more positive attitude towards using social media tools at work simply because they are more familiar. There is a clear generation conflict when it comes to perception of social media tools. It is important to give time to the older generations to adapt to the new tools but also to guide them through the process. Even though using a social media networking tool for the younger generation is self-evident that is not the case for the older generations. They need to be guided through the *why* and *how*, trained and shown the best practices. It is also notable that the younger generation is the future so introduction of new ways and tools should not be limited just because the old generation is not familiar with them, even though the management who usually decides upon it belongs to the older generation. Anyone could learn know practices if proper briefing and time is invested.

Time Excuse

During the empirical interviewees and focus groups the first response to why you do not utilize social media tools was that "*I don't have time".* Nowadays, employees are overloaded with work and even thinking about getting to know new ways is considered waste of time. Some of the interviewees actually took the time to get familiar with some

of the enterprise social media tools but the moment they faced some functional difficulties they just turned down the tool and formed a negative attitude towards it. People need to be conveyed that the new way that it introduces, in this case the social media tools, will make their work easier and simpler. For that reason, it is important that everything functions before people try something new as first impressions last. In this case, the empirical data indicated that company X rushed into using enterprise social media as there were many functional problems on the way and people felt lost. Also providing best practices, hints and tips about best usage is a must.

Under-informing

Not seeing the added value of social media is probably the most common and solid reason why people do not use them. It is very important to know why something exists and why to use it. Most of the respondents claimed that they did not see the point of using the new tools as they did not help them anyway, while they mentioned communication challenges such as location differences or non-interactive tools which could be easily overcome with usage of social media. They just could not see the connection due to lack of knowledge. At the same time interviewees claimed that they are not informed about the new tools properly even though great briefing materials were provided by the company and were available on the intranet with a bit of search. It is important to provide the employees with all the proper information about new tools through the right channels and make sure that they have received it, read it and understood it. This is something the corporate communication failed to do when it came to introduction of the new social media tools according to the empirical findings. Training and information and instruction distribution is vital to avoid under communication and convince people that a change is for the best.

All in all, at the moment the attitude towards using enterprise social media tools at work I would say is somehow negative mostly because of the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, even though there is a negative approach at the moment the majority actually see a great potential but are not yet convinced that the practical and functional parts of enterprise social media are solid and that is why I can conclude that everyone is waiting to see what will happen in the near future. Additionally, the perception of social media is not an issue that global marcom could solve by itself as it is mostly an issue of the corporate communication and how they managed the introduction of the

new tools. What the global marcom could do is to choose the most suitable social media tools for the purposes they have and then introduce them to their internal customers, state the reason for using them in a global marcom perspective and what benefits they bring.

5.4 Personal relations in a multinational organization

The third sub-question of this study was about examining if personal relations have impact on internal communication among colleagues. It was quite self-evident from the literature review and the empirical findings that personal relations make communication easier.

The literature suggested that natural language which is usually between people who know each other and do not need to be formal is a factor that improves internal communication. In the literature this might be referred to as relationship marketing or internal marketing. People respond differently to people when they have met them at least once in person and have shared a conversation. By personal relation I do not mean that the persons are friends but at least know how each other looks and have exchanged a conversation.

The empirical findings indicated that the more familiar the interviewee was with one or more members of the global marcom team, the more interaction and contact they had with the team and further the more informed they were about what is happening. Moreover, communication comes more natural when you know the person you are talking to.

In my opinion, the results strongly suggested that personal communication is what builds a good relation and from that point the way internal communication and collaboration would be improved.

5.5 Enterprise social media tools and internal communication

This study argues that to certain extend enterprise social media tools can contribute to the improvement of inter-organizational internal communication and collaboration. Having said that, it is important to mention that traditional personal communication and traditional channels are still very important and enterprise social media should be an addition to those.
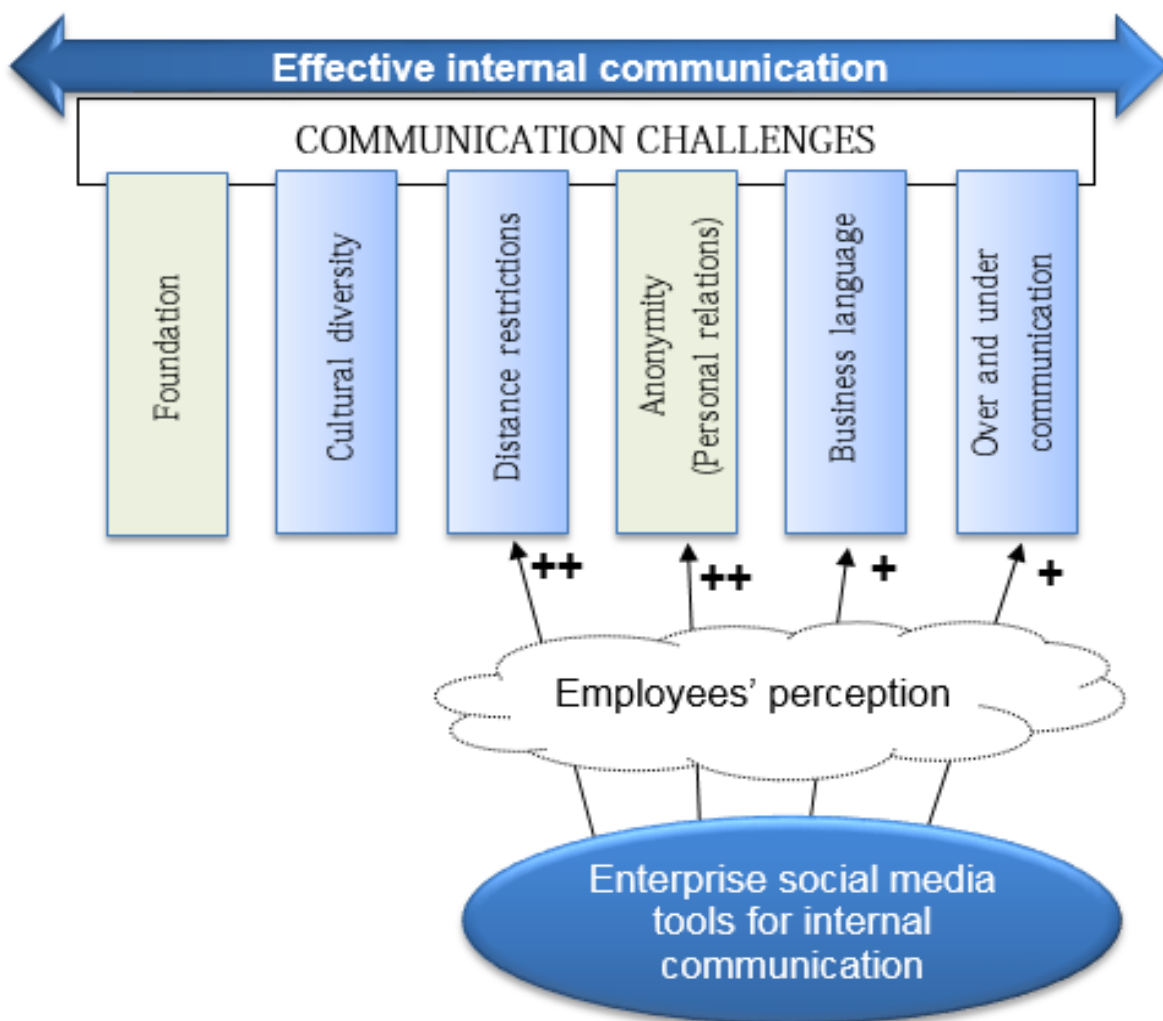

Figure 17 Study framework after the empirical findings

Figure 17 presents the modified theoretical framework (see the original framework at p.44) after the empirical findings and briefly answers to the research question. From the framework it is visible that not all of the communication challenges can be improved with the help of enterprise social media tools and also other methods should

be implemented in order to achieve effective internal communication. After the empirical findings two changes occurred on the framework. First, two more communication challenges were added and then the challenges that could solved with the help of enterprise social media tools were marked with a plus size. Thus, the communication challenges which cannot benefit from social media were left out.

Enterprise social media tools bring people close even though physically they are far away. The web and social media tools enable interactive communication over the internet. In order to eliminate the challenges created by location restrictions interactive synchronous and asynchronous tools should be used for communication. For example, virtual video conferences and webinars can be used for instant communication while Yammer and blogs can be used as asynchronous tools to keep in touch, ask questions and communicate with each other. Social media are an excellent tool that brings people closer to each other and is one of the reasons people choose to use social media and social media exist.

In addition, enterprise social media tools can be used to get familiar with colleagues and build personal relations which strengthen internal communication. It is important to remember that personal contact in the beginning of any relationship is important and for that reason meeting in person at least once is vital and makes the difference. Yammer, Lync and blogs are a great way to get familiar with people and with what they do inside the company. Nowadays, the social media tools usually include a profile picture of the user which automatically creates a better understanding as the name is connected to a face. Social media networks can keep you up to date with what is happening and with who is who and makes connecting with colleagues easy and convenient.

Moreover, informal language can eliminate the threshold of internal communication and promote the initiative in order to get in contact. In the literature it was argued that informal simple natural communication is more productive and enterprise social media tools enable informal communication at work not only by helping to build relations and keeping in touch but also with the possibilities they offer for instant communication. Instant messaging like Lync is a good way to ask questions quickly and give immediate feedback when something comes up without having to think how

to formulate the question or the feedback in a formal and business-like form. Additionally, yammer empowers informal and natural language because of its nature and structure.

Furthermore, enterprise social media tools can influence the over and under communication challenges. It is important that all channels are used properly for the purposes that they have been created for and that they are defined as to what they offer to the sender and the receiver. Enterprise social media channels should be integrated in the channel mix that the global marcom team is using. Moreover, the opportunities that they offer such as synchronous communication, virtual interactive communication and networking should be turned into strengths and advantages. Yammer can offer the possibility of having everyone who is interested about a topic in a group which will result in everyone's immediate awareness of a certain issue and will be given the possibility to give feedback and interact. This, however, requires everyone's active reading and probably participating in the discussion which means being present in the social network. Moreover, SharePoint could be used in order to create communities where information is available and accessible easily.

Continuing, the employees' perception of the use of enterprise social media tools at work has an impact on how the tools can contribute to the improvements. At the moment there is a slightly negative attitude towards social media tools and four main reasons for that were identified through the empirical data. Even though the negative perception has an impact on the digital change that is occurring I believe that the reasons behind the negative attitude are easily resolved because they are based on actions that can be made. Additionally, because the potential of the tools could already be recognized by the majority of the interviewees with proper investments of time and resources in order to educate them about the benefits and the use of social media tools the attitude can change.

To conclude, I would say that the study provided useful insights and was able to answer the research question and sub-questions successfully.

6. CONLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how enterprise social media tools can help to improve inter-organizational internal communication and collaboration. A case company was used in order to collect the empirical data.

This chapter sums up the findings of the study and provides the case company with practical implications and recommendations. Moreover, it considers the theoretical contribution and the limitations of the study and further suggests topics for further research.

6.1 Main findings

The main finding of the study was that enterprise social media tools could be successfully used to improve internal communication as it fits the purpose they were created for and the reasons people choose to use them. Both the literature review and the empirical findings showed that the use of social media could have a positive impact on the internal communication. Furthermore, the tools could contribute to some extent to the improvement of inter-organizational internal communication and collaboration. Consequently, even though enterprise social media can solve some of the communication challenges it does not mean that traditional ways and channels should be replaced rather that enterprise social media tools should be integrated in internal communication processes.

The study identified six major communication challenges that multinational organizations face while trying to communicate internally efficiently and effectively. The challenges are presented in Table 4 below among with a short description and social media tools suggestions that could contribute to the elimination of the challenges. Two out of the six identified challenges cannot really be improved with the use of social media tools and other ways should be adapted.

Table 4 Summary of the findings

Communication challenges	Definition	Suggested enterprise social media tools
Cultural diversity	*Different cultural backgrounds and ways of doings.*	Social media could somewhat help improve personal communication and reduce possibilities of misunderstanding but social media tools cannot really contribute to cultural diversity issues.
Location restrictions	*Scattered physical locations of employees and time-zone differences.*	Virtual meetings (Lync) – interactive communication from anywhere Yammer – asynchronous discussions and express of opinions Internal blogs – information about what is happening Webinars – sharing know-how
Business language	*Usage of formal business-like language that is not human friendly and does not embrace communication.*	Instant messaging (Lync) – informal language to ask questions and give feedback Yammer – networking, informal discussions and express of opinions
Anonymity (personal relation)	*Not having personal relations and not knowing the people in the organization.*	Instant messaging (Lync) – keep up personal relation Yammer – get to know people, networking Internal blogs – information about what is happening
Over and under communication	*Getting either too much or too few information about an issue commonly because of not proper communication process and channel.*	Yammer – create groups for idea sharing and discussions Instant messaging (Lync) –ask questions and give feedback Internal blogs – information about what is happening SharePoint – manage content and information sharing
Foundation	*Undefined communication processes and function roles which create problem on the basis of communication.*	Social media cannot contribute to this challenge but it is an important problem that needs to be addressed.

Additionally, the study explored the perception of employees of the use of social media tools at work and how it impacts change towards more digital and social tools used at work. The study indicated that at the moment there is a negative attitude towards social media and of course it affects the role of social media tools in internal communication improvement. Thus, four reasons were identified as causes for the formation of negative attitude. In general findings allow us to assume that people have negative attitude because the introductory briefing on the new tools was done inefficiently without proper planning by the corporate communication. The identified reasons are themed as follows

- **Generation issue**, which refers to the generation gap between the younger generation who grow up using social media and the older generation who needs to get used to new technologies,
- **Change resistance**, which refers to not feeling comfortable with changes and opposing them,
- **Time excuse**, which refers to the hectic workload and the scarcity of time that employees face at work, and
- **Under-informing**, which refers to not being properly informed about enterprise social media tools.

Employee's perception has clearly an impact on the digital change, especially when the perception is negative as employees are reluctant into using the social media tools. However, the perception can be changed. Furthermore, those challenges can be overcome by showing the benefits that enterprise social media could offer to the business environment. The finding showed that employees want time in order to get familiar with the tools and that they should be provided with materials that define why to use them and then how to use them. Best practices are also a powerful tool that should be used in order to change the attitude of the employees.

Moreover, personal communication and meeting people in-person are still the most effective way of communication. In order to build some kind of personal relation and then being more open for collaboration, personal communication is vital. Both the literature review and the empirical findings showed that personal relations have an effect in internal communication inside a multinational organization. Furthermore, the better the relation among colleagues the better the communication and collaboration among them.

6.2 Practical implications and recommendations

This study has several implication and suggestions for the global marketing communication department of the multinational corporation who commissioned this research. The implications and recommendations are presented below.

Before considering how the enterprise social media channels can contribute to the internal communication it is vital to address the problem that became apparent during the collection of empirical data. There seems to be confusion among the internal customers about the process of internal communication and internal marketing that global marcom team utilizes. There is a communication mismatch as the internal customers seem to not know the process even though according to the global marcom the process has been defined. It was one of the biggest reasons why the interviewees felt that they are not properly informed and why the internal communication has not been as effective or interactive as they would hope for. My suggestion would be to clearly communicate again the defined communication process and construe the communication and information flow.

The primary process that I would suggest after the findings would be to promote a direct communication process only to local marcoms and global sales and product/market managers. Furthermore, they would then be responsible for communicating the info to the local sales and local product managers. Of course, indirect communication to the local sales and product managers from the global marcom in form of a newsletter or Yammer posts for example, is always a great addition to boost information flow and communication but it should be addressed as a secondary process. The communication process should be written or illustrated, as well as presented to the internal customers, reviewed and updated on a regular basis and stored in a place available to all. In that way if the internal customers claim that they are confused or uninformed about the communication process the responsibility will fall onto them and their passive actions.

More emphasis should be given to global sales as they are the ones who primarily use and promote the marketing materials to local sales and furthermore to the end-customers. Global sales should be engaged in the creation of the materials.

Continuing the topic of the communication channels, I would also advise to redefine which channels are used by the global marcom team and for what purposes. It was clear from the empirical data that people need to be told what kind of information can be retrieved from which channel or tool and for what purposes. It is vital to remember that enterprise social media tools should be integrated and utilized as they can enhance internal communication. However, they could not be the only channels through which information is distributed as they are not sufficient enough and the employees are not ready for it.

As for trying to make the people change the somehow negative attitude towards social media use at work, the global marcom cannot exclusively reshape the attitude. I suggest that the global marcom needs to first inform the corporate communication about the findings and then collaborate with them in order to inform employees more about the benefits of using enterprise social media by showing best practices and giving tips and hints. The above is a long-term process. For a short term, I would advise that global marcom redefines and clearly communicates the chosen enterprise social media tools to its internal customers so that any additional confusion is eliminated.

Moreover, it was apparent that the local marcom specialists required more interactive communication for several issues while the majority of the channels that global marcom utilizes currently are more static (see Figure 16, p. 73).   I propose the following enterprise social media tools that can be utilized in a bit different way by global marcom than they are currently used to improve internal communication and collaboration.

Yammer is already somehow used but it is advisable to clearly communicate what Yammer is about and what is distributed through it. The existing global group that is public to anyone should be promoted as a channel for news feed about materials, processes etc. and also as a channel for creating ideas and feedback. Another, private group should be created where only global and local marcom specialists are invited and where more direct feedback, idea sharing and best practices are shared and practical and technical questions are asked. In that way information that also other local marcom specialists might have been searching for would be easily available.

Moreover, the internal group will help to keep all the local marcom in the loop and give them a voice. Additionally, it will also keep the global marcom team informed about the bigger picture of who belongs to the global marcom organization from the leading product team. In order for such a group to work an active participation by everyone is required.

At the time intranet is a place where all the information is available according to the global marcom. However, I would also suggest to use also the functions of SharePoint in order to make everything more accessible. SharePoint offers great customization possibilities, something that is not the case with the existing intranet. SharePoint is a great tool to store documents and information that need to be updated every now and then. For examples, wikis can be used to store information about certain customers or markets or even competitors which could be updated by anyone who has access. The tool should be available to both the local marcoms and the global sales and product and market managers. It was clear that SharePoint site should be structured and user-friendly in order for the users to use it. Moreover, the SharePoint link should be promoted and stored somewhere where it is easily accessible. For example, it should be stored on the external Yammer group as a link in the more info section of the group. The empirical results showed that for sales persons it is almost impossible to find updated sales presentations with proper imaging. SharePoint could be the place to store recent marketing materials (etc. sales presentations) so that they are easily accessible.

Additionally, SharePoint should also have a section where the global marcom team introduces itself, includes all the instructions and guidelines about the communication process (e.g. how to contact them) and the channels, explains briefly what the vision and mission of the team are and generally describes the global team and how things are done to any potential new employee.

Webinar was a channel that was warmly accepted but it should be pointed out that it should only be used for educational purposes or to explain complicated content. Webinars should be limited so that the targeted audience has time for them. The possibility to add some marketing messaging in other product webinars should be evaluated as it will be the most efficient and effective way to do it.

Additionally, I would suggest that the global marcom starts writing an internal blog about what is happening in the team in Helsinki and what is coming up. That way anyone who is interested can follow what is happening and that will also bring more transparency to the global marcom team. The posts should be regular and should follow a defined flow. There could be more than one blogger in order to have diversity on the posts.

Lync could be used for instant communication. I would suggest that the global marcom establish a "customer service hour" every month so that anyone from the internal customers could get in touch, ask questions and give feedback to the global marcom. The "customer service hour" would mean that one hour per month one or more global marcom specialists would be available on Lync in order to connect with anyone who wants. In practice that can be implemented in several ways but the main point would be that there is always a defined time every month that has been communicated to the internal customers and there would be at least one person from the global marcom team available to respond. The best way to do it should be discussed within the global marcom team. Moreover, before deciding how to do it time differences should be taken into account so that everyone no matter where he or she physically situated has at least every other month the possibility to participate.

Additionally, personal relations seem to have a positive impact on the internal communication and collaboration and the reality is that even though social media can keep up a personal relation they can rarely create it from a scratch. For that reason, I suggest the following actions in order to build better relation inside the organization.

Many local marcom specialists pointed out the need of belonging to a team and for that reason I propose that a bigger global leading product marcom team should be created and kept. That requires that both the global and local marcoms are active and update the team info and keep the discussions on. The team can communicate through an internal Yammer group that was mentioned before but it is vital that they either meet in person every year or every second year or have video conferences every year or a combination of both. Moreover, I feel it is important that when a new member joins the bigger global team that he or she visits at least once the global marcom offices

in Helsinki. The suggestions above are not always possible mostly due to money and equipment restrictions but as it was said from the beginning a change demands time, patience and investments. Additionally, all the above require effort also from the local marcoms which should actively update the global marcom team about what is happening in their organizations and teams. They will be responsible for briefing the local sales about what is happening in the global marcom so it is important that global and local marcom collaborate.

As far as global sales and somewhat product and market managers are concerned, it is important to understand that even though they are not part of the global marcom team they are part-time marketers. Part-time marketers are important because they meet the customers and know the markets. From the data it was evidence that at the moment the relations with the global sales are not very strong and vary from person to person. In order to build better relation and make the global marcom team known I suggest the following actions.

The voice of global marcom needs to be heard and sending an email is not very appealing when sales people get tens of emails every day. As many mentioned they would like that a marcom specialist shows up on their sales meeting or other gatherings and in person presents what is happening in the global team. That is an action that according to the global marcom also currently occurs. However, the empirical data indicate that it should be continued in a bigger scale and the content communicated from the global marcom side to the global sales should be evaluated. Since, it became apparent from the finding that the global sales were not aware about the materials and did not know from where to get what. In the beginning the personal visits would be more often so that global sales people start to recognize the global marcom team but then they should be just regular.

Furthermore, I recommend that global marcom holds marcom info sessions to global sales, product and market managers once or twice a year. The info session should be short and tease the people to ask more about materials or what is coming in marcom. At the same time, the team can be introduced so that they know what everyone is doing so they will become confident who to contact when need it. Moreover, direct feedback can be asked from the participants from the last year's activities, for instance. Info

sessions are important. Nevertheless, an informal interaction and network of marcom specialists and global sales and product and market persons after the session with a cup of coffee is not of less value. Personal relation is crucial for effective communication and at the moment the empirical data indicated that the global marcom team is not well-known.

Last but not least, in order to achieve a better internal communication, the global marcom specialists should devote more time for internal marketing and internal communication among the internal customers. Internal marketing should be improved and prioritized as the findings indicated that at the moment no extra attention is paid to it. Furthermore, if the workload of the global marcom specialists does not allow more focus on internal issues I would suggest adding human resources and hiring a dedicated person to do the coordination of internal marketing and internal communication and bring the global marcom and its internal customers closer.

To conclude, adopting and adjusting new techniques is not effortless, and it demands time and money investments, patience, brainstorming, collaboration and positive attitude.

6.3 Contribution to existing literature

This study from the beginning was intended to be more empirical oriented. The study took a real practical problem and sought understanding and explanation from the existing literature and the empirical study in order to provide concrete practical implications. However, despite the practical implications the study also contributes to the existing literature to some extent.

Firstly, the study argues that social media tools can somewhat contribute to the improvement of employee collaboration and internal communication which agrees with previous studies (Reinsch, 1996; De Bussy et al., 2003; Kaplan & Ashley, 2003; Sedej & Justinek 2013) that state that new media channels commonly enhance communication. Secondly, the literature review argues that social tools are better used by companies for internal communication rather than external communication because of the tools nature and purpose. That comes with an agreement with previous existing literature (Giesen, 2009; Zhao & Rosson, 2009, Sedej & Justinek 2013) while also challenge other existing literature (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Laine & Frühwirth, 2010; Pitt and Berthon, 2011) that suggest utilization of social media tools by companies for other purposes. Finally, the study contributes to the existing research by bringing new insights about the perception that employees have about the use of social media at work. Moreover, it gives light into why employees are too reluctant into using new tools at work even though they can recognize their potential. Until now more emphasis has been given if enterprise social media tools can improve productivity at work and less attention has been paid to what employees feel about using them at work. This study provides new understandings into that research field.

6.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

As with all academic research, there are also some limitations related to this research. First of all, the study investigated if enterprise social media tools can help to further improve the internal communication and collaboration of a certain group of employees. As a single-case research the findings of the study cannot be generalized and directly used outside the case company. However, the findings of this research can still be utilized to some extent by companies with similar traits and by other organizations inside the case company.

Another limitation is the constant development of the field of social media. This might affect the relevance of previous research when conducting the literature review and the theoretical framework. Additionally, it could be questioned if the people selected for the interviews and the focus groups were a good sample even though they were selected methodically and after consideration. Moreover, the personal interviews were conducted mostly though conference calls which is not the ideal way of conducting interviews as it lacks the human element of seeing others' reaction and furthermore limits the researcher's ability to interpret emotions. However, face-to-face interviews were not an option due to location restriction and video conferences were not available to all the interviewees.

The present study suggests at least three directions for further study. After defining the channels it would be interesting to explore what kind of information employees want to receive from the different channels. Moreover, the nature and the frequency of the shared content through enterprise social media tools can be further examined. Additionally, it would be interesting to follow if the perception of the employees change in a course of a year after proper actions of introducing social media tools at work take place. Finally, the study showed that there is a clear gap between what global marcom communicates to its internal customers and what of those information actually reach the internal customers. The truth is that both parties need to be active in order to get the information across. It seems that the internal customers chose to not be very active when it comes to marketing and that is an area that definitely needs more research

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