Intra- and inter-organisational actors preference of internal corporate communication and its influence on strategy implementation

WESLEY GEORGE & ANNIKA ANDERSSON STENMARK
Abstract

In the constantly changing business environment, it is increasingly important that organisations utilise internal corporate communications to implement strategies. This thesis aims to investigate how intra- and inter-organisational actors needs and preferences of internal corporate communication influence strategy implementation. The study also examined how the communication channel can be used to meet their needs.

A single-case multi-pronged approach incorporating qualitative technique and document analysis were conducted within the Swedish University Computer Network, SUNET. The exploratory data of eight semi-structured interviews probed how strategy implementation information disseminated via rich media (interactive multimedia) can meet the preference and needs of the actors. The influence of internal corporate communications in this process was examined by a conceptual model developed from the literature.

It was found that one-way internal corporate communication contributed to increasing the strategy implementation knowledge of the actors resulting in unified understanding and shared meaning. In general, the findings indicated that a complex relationship exists between the inter-actors and the organisation. The findings suggest that effective internal corporate communication can impact strategy implementation through interactive and directed dialogue with the actors.

The implication of the findings is that organisations need to address the gaps in their internal corporate communications by investing significant resources, and using rich communication channels as it was favoured by the actors in this study.

Keywords: Strategy communication, Internal communication, Corporate communication, Strategy implementation
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Wesley George & Annika Andersson Stenmark

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Wesley George
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1 Introduction

The emergence of internal communication as a critical function of organisations has merited the status of an indispensable and valuable management tool (Verčič et al., 2012). Not only is internal communication a critical factor in ensuring that the best of strategies is implemented but it also recognised as promoting and sustaining long-lasting inter-organisational (across organisational borders) relationships (Paulraj et al., 2008). Consequently, this situation has made the need for internal communication (van Riel, 1995) an important facet for organisations when seeking to implement strategies.

Even though business communication researchers such as Christensen and Cornelissen, (2011) have recognised the importance of corporate communication to an organisation, research on its role in implementing strategy is scant. While literature into communication exists, there is still a need for additional scholarship on the internal communication perspective (Verčič et al., 2012). In a similar vein, adopting the stakeholder approach and the internal communication matrix (Welch and Jackson, 2007), the link between internal corporate communication (ICC) and the organisation’s ability to implement strategy has not been thoroughly explored. Further, the preferences and need for communication media and content by internal stakeholders were identified for areas of additional research by Welch and Jackson (2007). Furthermore, relative to inter-organisational communication less research has been conducted to investigate its role in strategy implementation. Therefore, the emphasis of this thesis is to understand the relation between internal corporate communications and how the needs and preferences of the intra- and inter-organisational actors can be met with regards to communication of strategy implementation information.

Despite the critical role that communications play, many organisations have admitted that they are struggling to effectively communicate critical strategic information to key stakeholders (Walker, 2012). Is it so difficult to communicate strategy? How can organisations communicate to meet the
needs of its stakeholders? From the aforementioned aspects, the researchers’ interests were triggered to investigate how internal corporate communication can help to facilitate effective strategy implementation by meeting the needs and preferences of the actors.

1.1 Research Background

This master thesis is based on a case study of SUNET (Swedish University Computer Network) which is the National Research and Education Network (NREN) of Sweden. The purpose of SUNET is to provide computer networks to support the needs of 90 organisations from the public sector where the Swedish universities and university colleges that are engaged in higher education and academic research are in majority. However, SUNET also provides services to for example the Swedish institute of Space Physics and museums. SUNET, as an organisation, is directly accountable to the Swedish Research Council (VR) for research infrastructures. The organisational framework within which SUNET operates is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Organisational framework

To provide services to research databases is one of the core functions of SUNET. The organisation is also a part-owner of NORDUnet who is the Nordic infrastructure for research and education and is an association by the five Nordic national research and educational network in Denmark, Finland,
Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Through NORDUnet SUNET has access to the international research databases and network.

Universities and university colleges are undergoing transformation; therefore new strategic initiatives are needed to promote innovative research and collaboration across boundaries and the strategic plan for SUNET therefore has to be continuously updated and implemented.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, communication management among Information Technology (IT) partners has been regarded as the underpinning factor that determines the success of a project (Müller, 2003). Indeed, communication across organisational boundaries, like SUNET and the universities and university colleges, adds another layer of complexity to communications because of their different positions in the community. To overcome this complexity, the work of internal corporate communications must demonstrate that it can meet the preferences and needs of the intra - and inter-organisational actors to successfully implement strategy.

A review of past SUNET documents indicated that numerous initiatives were undertaken with a fair measure of success. However, the dialogue between SUNET and the universities and university colleges have sometimes resulted in non-acceptance of some services offered. This is due to the issues surrounding the lack of communication and consultation between the strategic intra- and inter-actors. In addition, SUNET offered services that some of the universities already had in place. In light of this, the organisation has initiated a drive to improve communications. However, several factors can be considered to ensure that the communication environment is improved. Such factors can be the preferences and needs of the actors that can help the organisation to implement internal corporate communication programmes effectively to implement its strategy.

Emerging from a review of internal documents one-way communication was the most frequent form of communications among the intra- and inter-organisation actors. A communication plan was developed in 2012. However,
the ability to effectively communicate its strategy to the actors was hampered by a non-existent process for internal communication.

This generates the level of complexity that SUNET currently encounters and the challenge it faces in trying to communicate successfully. Therefore, to address this present situation in the case company, critical attention to the nature of internal strategy communication is needed to reduce the present underlying difficulty.

## 1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the thesis is to investigate how the intra- and –inter organisational actors preference and needs of *internal corporate communication (ICC)* influences the strategy implementation. The main argument within this research is that in order to understand the importance of communication in strategy implementation, it is crucial to consider the preferences for content and communication methods of the strategically relevant actors. Therefore, this thesis draws on a case study of SUNET to investigate the communicative climate among the actors and how it shapes strategic communication.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the actors’ preferences of internal corporate (strategy) communication?
2. What communication channels could be used to increase the actors’ knowledge of the strategy in the implementation phase?

The first question concerns the type of *internal communication* content that the actors prefer to receive to increase their understanding of the corporate strategy.

The second question attempts to shed light on the intra- and inter-organisational actors who are directly involved in the implementation of the strategy and what type of *internal communication* channels that best contribute to their increased strategy implementation knowledge.
The unit of analysis would be the *internal corporate communication* (ICC) channels which is the conduit for relaying strategy.

### 1.4 Delimitations of the Study

The research finds itself within the domain of internal communications and the current conditions and needs and preferences for the future. Considering the close relationship of the intra- and inter-organisation actors, knowledge can be extended in the domain of preferences of internal corporate communication in relation to implementing strategy. The intra-organisation in this research is defined as SUNET and VR. The inter-organisation is the stakeholders/customers receiving products and services from SUNET. The research results do not involve the end-user (student, researchers, and teachers) of SUNET.

By the research a greater understanding can be achieved on the actors need and preferences of communication in the rapidly changing communicative environment. The research can also make a contribution to the organisation by assisting in strategic corporate communication and internal communication management. An improvement within these areas is likely to create a positive impact of the organisational effectiveness and engagement of the actors.

As this juncture, the time limit of ten weeks can be considered a major factor affecting the feasibility of implementing an improved internal communication framework. Furthermore, since the research is limited to a single organisation, this in turn affects transferability of the results. Nevertheless, the research provides information for management to focus on directly addressing the issues of internal corporate communication and doing what is crucial to communicate the implementation strategy effectively.

### 1.5 Structure of thesis

*Chapter 1 (Introduction)*: Provided the background information to the research combined with the aim, objective and scope.
Chapter 2 (Research methodology): Discusses the research strategy and adopted methodology that was used to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter 3 (Theoretical Frame of Reference): Examines the existing literature on strategy implementation and its link with internal communication.

Chapter 4 (Empirical Findings): Provides a descriptive analysis of the findings from the qualitative data and document analysis in an attempt to answer the research questions.

Chapter 5 (Analysis and Discussion): Discusses the findings pertaining to the literature.

Chapter 6 (Conclusion): Comprises of the concluding remarks, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for further research.
2 Research Methodology

The chapter identifies and justifies the selected methodology for the study. First, the purpose of the enquiry is outlined. Second, attention is given to the research approach chosen to study corporate communication. Third, the rationale for selection the single case study design is discussed. Fourth, the research process is explained taking into consideration the selected case. Finally, an assessment of the thesis in terms of credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability and limitations are discussed.

2.1 Purpose of enquiry

Considering the ‘what’ context of the research questions, and seeking to understand the actors’ preference of content and channel within the phenomenon of interest and investigation, exploratory research is the favoured choice (Robson, 2002; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

2.2 Research approach

Gill and Johnson (1997) contend that researcher’s experience combined with the research aim influences the selected approach. In the literature, three approaches are commonly cited (Creswell, 2014); qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The qualitative approach was chosen as it was quite relevant based on the research questions and gathering a particular perspective of the complex social context (Yin, 2003). The qualitative approached allowed for the researchers to be active agents in the research process and involving the interviewees as key informants for sources of data collection via interviews and communicating directly with participants. The quantitative approach was deemed unfitting for such purposes as it is meant to seek an analysis of objective data, hypothesis testing and to determine relationships between variables (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Furthermore, considering the research questions and the concept of internal corporate communications as a system within organisations, qualitative research is advantageous. This allowed for the researchers to consider the interviewees viewpoint and see the problems through their lenses.
Additionally, the flexible nature of qualitative research allows for surprise elements to be studied as new information is made available (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). However, qualitative research has its disadvantages where it is sometimes difficult to replicate, being too subjective and sometimes lack transparency (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Daymon and Holloway (2002), in particular, contend against such by articulating the chosen point of approach is what matters and taking into consideration validity and reliability as an ever-present responsibility for integrity of the findings.

The deductive (literature) and inductive approach were utilised where the deductive was used as a guide for the inductive process of analysing the empirical findings (Saunders et al., 2012).

2.3 Research strategy: case study

Given the aim of the thesis to investigate the preferences of internal corporate communications – a contemporary issue in a complex environment, a single case study strategy was most suitable. Yin (2003) identified the single case study design as a method of generating rich judgment from a phenomenon with various sources of data and variables. The combination of the multiple methods to collect the empirical material is known as triangulation. This approach also provides a medium to guide the data collection and analysis thus facilitating exploration of how questions and testing of existing theory (Yin, 2003). Despite the limitations cited by (Eisenhardt, 1989; Pettigrew, 1990) with reference to lack of material for comparison, the researchers content that this approach allows for the unique understanding of SUNET's internal corporate communication processes.

2.4 Data collection methods

The research design included document analysis and semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. A multi-pronged approach was used because it allowed for triangulation and the need for validity of the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).
2.4.1 Research process

The research process started with a literature study of the strategy implementation and internal communication topic. Once permission was given from KTH and SUNET to conduct the research, a complete systematic evaluation of the documents received was done.

At the start of the process, contact was made with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organisation to gather some background on their communication system. An evaluation report of the organisation conducted by an international panel was shared with the researchers among other key documents. Information was gained from the public website such as the strategy document, and directives for the various working groups. The documents were in Swedish and had to be translated as one of the researcher’s native language is English. These documents allowed the researchers to become engrossed with the organisation’s background and to understand the communicative dimensions of strategy used by the organisation- valuable additions to researchers’ knowledge base.

An official letter introducing the researchers and the purpose of the study was then drafted and sent to the CEO for validation to use the organisation as a case. The letter was then sent by mail to the interview participants, and can be seen in Appendix B. Discussions soon followed with the informants to schedule interviews and communicating the aim of the study.

2.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Open ended, semi-structured interviews were the main mode of data collection in this thesis. At the outset, the participants were informed that the interview would be recorded for transcript purposes and confidentiality was re-iterated. A breakdown of the participants interviewed can be seen in Appendix C. The use of the open ended questions allowed for flexibility and proved to be valuable as it allowed for adjustment from participant to participant. The open ended questions helped to minimize the bias of the researchers and gave the participants time to reflect. This also helped in generating more conversation and facilitated the researchers to probe the
phenomenon of interest. An interview guide (see Appendix A) was used to help focus the interview within the period of time outlined in the letter. During the Skype and face-to-face interviews, the researchers maintained active participation by engaging in active listening. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes. After each interview, the interview guide was filled out for each participant, along with the time and date.

2.4.3 Data and analysis

The sampling of the interviewees was based on their key level positions (university chief information officers (CIOs), SUNET employees and SUNET board members) and their perceived knowledge of the inter-organisational communication. Five of the persons were male and three female (n=8). The interviewed participants from the intra dimension has worked with the organisation for about 1-4 years, and the inter dimension for about 3-6 years.

The data were analysed inductively. Two types of analysis were performed on the collected data. First, the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to which references were made to in the findings. Second, a thematic method was used to categorise the data. This allowed for the researchers to draw out and report patterns (themes) from the transcript of the interviews. The data analysis also involved the search for different views on the strategy implementation and communication. This allowed for the data to be described and compared to the conceptual framework and allow for a deeper appreciation of its content, and hence analysis.

2.4.4 Ethical considerations

A consent letter to participants (see Appendix B) was sent outlining the specific details of the research and about the data being treated as confidential. Each interviewee was again asked at the commencement of the interview for verbal confirmation to the interview being recorded and the data being used for educational purposes. Furthermore, the data is at the researchers’ disposal.
2.4.5 **Credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability**

In evaluating the quality of case study research the issue of credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability are key criteria to consider (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Credibility focuses on ensuring the subject of interest is accurately described. As such, credibility was achieved through the triangulation of multiple sources; document analysis and semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample and open ended questions. The documentation of the research process provides a chain of evidence (including audio recordings, transcripts and interview guide) and helped to strengthen this criterion.

Transferability, concerns the study being generalized and transferred to another setting. This aspect would need to be tested in other NRENs to confirm this. Additionally, the results from the present study are subject to the specific organisational context. Nevertheless, the theories used in the research helped to improve the transferability of the research.

Conformability and dependability is concerned with the research process being reliable (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). A case database was adopted to ensure this aspect along with the documentation of records to reduce any errors and biases in the research to ensure objectivity.

2.5 **Limitations of the Methodological Approach**

First, one of the limitations of the chosen approach was the selection process of interviewees. On the other hand, due the position of one of the participants, a wider view of the communicative climate was obtained. Second, some of the interviewees were contacted and given a brief overview of the questions. As such, some bias may exist, but the researchers endeavoured to be as objective as possible. Third, the limitation of using the telephone and Skype as qualitative methods to collect data may result in missed non-verbal signs and where the technology can result in problems. However, both telephone and Skype interviews are regarded as realistic substitutes to face-to-face interviews (Hanna, 2012; Holt, 2010).
3 Theoretical Frame of Reference

The preceding chapter provides an overview and examines the main issues concerning strategy implementation within organisations. Considering the role that good quality communications play in strategy implementation, the current literature on internal communications and internal corporate (strategy) communication is discussed with reference to the gap of enquiry. It further explores communication channels along with its attributes followed by a summary of the literature review. Finally, a conceptual framework is developed to guide the research process.

3.1 Strategy implementation

The interest of strategy implementation in strategic management literature has emerged. Both management scholars and practitioners indicate that strategy implementation severely impacts organisational performance (Hrebiniak, 2006), is vital to organisational effectiveness (Heide et al., 2002) and is a fundamental aspect in the formula for success in an organisation (Paroutis and Pettigrew, 2007). It can therefore be argued that the organisation’s ability to robustly successfully implement its strategy will give it a competitive advantage.

The present business environment that organisations operate in is unstable (D’Aveni, 1994). This can be attributed to environmental developments such as increased competition warranting frequent strategic changes in order to survive (Thomas, 2002). Therefore, in such unstable environments, the ability to implement new strategies effectively is likely to be the defining factor between failure and success for an organisation (Johnson et al., 2003). Previous research has indicated that many strategies fail, due to poor implementation (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). Hrebiniak (2006) points out that formulating a comprehensive strategy is a difficult process and even more difficult when trying to implement it into action. It appears that a hazy line exists between formulation and implementation which has resulted in the frustration of many organisations. Further, Li et al. (2010) argues that
strategy implementation is considered a complex reality because of the coordinated efforts required by different individuals across the organisation.

The literature by Hoon (2007) found that management used efficient communication activities to overcome the implementation phase. Therefore, in order for the intra-actors to claim and grasp the implementation initiatives, the organisation must commit to enhancing its communication (Roy, 2001). Yates (2001) also highlights that effective strategy communication enhances business performance and lowers employee turnover. It is therefore crucial to note, that the absence of effective strategy communication negatively affects financial performance and organisational stability, culture and values (Stein, 2002).

The implementation of strategy requires a change in the interactions, behaviour and priorities of the employees in their daily routines (Ray et al., 2004). This dynamic process of strategy implementation is defined by Noble (1999, p. 120) “as the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans”. Therefore, strategy communication is about communicating vertical and lateral, oral and written to employees in the implementation process. Hence, the emergent character of communicating strategy is primary in the implementation process. This communication constitutes the collective information needed to fulfil strategy and can help to magnify employees’ voices and reception of the strategy message (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011).

From a strategic point of view, communicating the strategy to other stakeholder groups which can comprise of supply chain partners, environmental authorities, local community, customers (Jones, 2008), and as brand parody to competitors (Jean, 2011), is of itself a sensible idea. On the other hand, Zerfass (2008) points out that some companies neglect the critical element of communicating to staff but will do to the market and society. However, this study addresses the internal corporate (strategy) communication (ICC) with emphasis on the intra - and inter-organisational
actors, and how their preferences and needs can influence strategy implementation.

Recent studies on strategy implementation yielded a key framework by Aaltonen and Ikavalko, (2002) which was conceptualised from previous studies (Mintzberg, 1978; Noble, 1999; Pettigrew, 1987). Figure 3.1 shows the conceptual linking of the key aspects.

![Figure 3.1: Strategy implementation as a link between planned and realizing strategy (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2002)](image)

The implementation factors pointed out by Aaltonen and Ikavalko proposed the aims to be achieved (adoption & actions) and the certain tasks to be undertaken (communication (iterative two-way) and interpretation) during the formulation process to ensure that the planned and realised strategies match to accomplish the vision. They further contend that the four segments though distinct from each other are inseparable in relation to having a successful implementation. At the same time, they are not required to occur in sequence. It stands to reason that multiple factors are at play when it comes to implementation.

The issue of strategy communication has been known to be the predominant task of top management (Cornelissen, 2011). However, a crucial determinant to ensure that strategy is successfully implemented is the support and
reinforcement of midlevel leaders, who also possess the potential to sabotage it (Huy, 2011). Huy further points out that they are known to wage consensus among employees and their willingness to support the new strategy. Therefore, their role in communicating strategy is critical and helps to raise the odds of success. In the same vein, the strategy message should be so clear that the recipient should be able to carry a unified and coordinated message and translate it in their own words. To do such may require special skills by the middle managers. On the other hand, Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) contend that communicating too much information does not ensure an increase in understanding. Nevertheless, it is clear that communication is critically aligned to strategy dissemination, therefore requiring added attention and emphasis on its communicative dimensions.

Strategy implementation and communication is viewed as the most difficult operational experience which is plagued with various barriers (Allio, 2005). Implementation is viewed by many as a relatively easy process whereby resources are just assigned to carry out the plan and tweaking the organisational layout (Cannella & Monroe, 1997). This perspective therefore emphasizes the reason why many strategies fail because it neglects to acknowledge the degree of complexity that implementation entails. Table 3.1 sums up the list of implementation barriers identified in the literature.

Overall, Table 3.1 explicates the strategy implementation problem and highlights the need to consider the importance that communication plays in communicating strategy to employees as well as inter-organisational actors. This highlights the need to consider internal communications which the following section will highlight its nature.
Table 3.1: Summary of barriers to implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation barrier</th>
<th>Scholars attributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor communication of strategy</td>
<td>Alexander, (1985); Beer &amp; Eisenstat, (2000); Giles, (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding the planned time</td>
<td>Alexander, (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient executive time given to implementation</td>
<td>Jauch &amp; Glueck, (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient leadership by line managers</td>
<td>Eisenstat (1993); Galpin, 1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Internal communication

Communications by employees has been asserted as the defining element that constitutes an organisation core process (Cooren et al., 2011). It is suggested that internal communications has ascended on the agenda of many executives because of the business value and success it brings (Quirke, 2008). Arguably, this is particularly due to the fact that it results in workplace inefficiency and is a dire concern for managers (Hultgren and Cameron, 2010). This communication can be either formal managed communication or informal ‘chit chat’. It could therefore be argued that technology have made this process even more complex, challenging and ambiguous as the source, message and receiver have gotten more complicated. However, Yeomans (2010) argues that despite the fact that internal communication is seen as the vehicle for expressing strategic information, it has received scant attention in the literature.

Internal communication contributes to establishing an organisation’s identity because of the knowledge and information transactions that happens among the people in the organisation (Cornelissen, 2011). Further, with the fast pace of the changing business environment and the changing social structures
(resources and rules), internal communications is paramount (Balmer and Greyser, 2006). From the viewpoint of organisational leaders and managers, it has emerged as a decisive function and tool in employee engagement (Verčič et al., 2012). Not surprisingly, the argument that internal communication, especially ICC, results in increased commitment and ultimately better performance has been argued by Welch and Jackson (2007). Smith (2005) points out that it is produces better results and highly engaged employees and increases market share (Yates, 2006). Invernizzi et al. (2012) further highlighted the strategic role that internal communications play during organisational change management. Against this prevailing view, a new initiative by the Commission on Public Relations Education has emerged with increased investment and education focus on internal communications (Welch, 2013).

However, a debate exists with present researchers on defining internal communications because of the various keywords used interchangeable across the field (Verčič et al., 2012). Within this thesis the term internal communications is adopted based on its preference of use by corporate communication theorists (Foreman and Argenti, 2005; van Riel, 1995). A few of the synonyms used include: employee relations (Argenti, 1996; Quirke, 2008) internal relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) employee communications (Argenti, 1996; Smidts et al., 2001) internal communications (Cornelissen, 2011) and staff communication (Stone, 1995). Clearly, the different theoretical perspectives of internal communications depict the confusion and potential tension on its definition.

Whilst there have been some contributions to the field of internal communications, a single definition has not been agreed upon as useful. A definition that researchers have quoted throughout their studies is the one by Frank and Brownell (1989): “the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialisation that are intended to design and redesign organisations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-today activities” (p. 5-6). This definition was cited by van Riel, (1995) to be more aligned with
organisational communication. Against this background, Welch and Jackson (2007) sought to review existing perspectives on internal communications and re-construed its definition as:

*The strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders within organisations across a number of interrelated dimensions including, internal line manager communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication* (ibid, p. 193).

It is significant here to note that internal communication and external communication exists, where the former is used for communication within the organisation and the latter with external parties such as customers to facilitate cooperation (Oliver, 2007). However, this apparent divide is debatable due to the changing organisational environment which blurs the communication lines to audiences thus making the separation difficult. This view is shared by Cheney and Christensen, (2001) which recognise them as integrated and intertwined. This constructive logic is however refuted by Verčič et al. (2012) based on evidence from practitioners. However, it thus becomes clear that this apparent distinction may not be relevant with emerging technologies (social media tools and blogs). Critically, if an email is forwarded outside of the organisation, it can be argued that it has now become external. Nevertheless, within the context of this thesis, the external aspect would be in the periphery with the internal perspective at the forefront considering the inter-organisational dimension.

Based on the above discussion, the internal communication matrix with its dimensions by Welch and Jackson (2007) is explained.

### 3.2.1 Internal communication matrix

After their review of the literature, Welch and Jackson (2007) adopted the stakeholder approach and break down internal communication into four interrelated dimensions: internal line manager communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication. This approach appears to bring clarity and make a distinction between ICC and the other dimensions of internal
communications. This structure provides an explicit backing to not treat employees as a single audience (L’Etang, 2005) but segments them into groups while simultaneously targeting all employees in their relevant local contexts.

Given the stakeholder theory by Freeman (1984), he defined “a stakeholder in an organisation is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives” (p. 46). This somewhat broad definition seems to include virtually anyone was fused together with internal communications to frame the groups of people within the organisation at different levels: project teams, work teams, day-to-day management, strategic management and all employees (Welch and Jackson, 2007). From a management context, this conceptual shift claiming to pool the four possible internal communication dimensions together, the internal communications matrix was constructed as seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Internal Communication Matrix (Welch and Jackson, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Internal line management</td>
<td>Line managers/supervisors</td>
<td>Predominantly</td>
<td>Line managers-employees</td>
<td>Employees’ roles Personal impact, e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>two-way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Internal team peer communication</td>
<td>Team colleagues</td>
<td>Two-way</td>
<td>Employee-employee</td>
<td>Team information, e.g. team task discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Internal project peer</td>
<td>Project group colleagues</td>
<td>Two-way</td>
<td>Employee-employee</td>
<td>Project information, e.g. project issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internal corporate</td>
<td>Strategic managers/top management</td>
<td>Predominantly</td>
<td>Strategic managers-all</td>
<td>Organisational/ corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>one-way</td>
<td>employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 3.2, the management of internal communications include the content of communication, participants, direction and organisational level. A basic assumption here is that the stakeholder grouping determines the kind of the communication that takes place.
The four aspects of the internal communication matrix are addressed in sequence. First, line management communication occurs between the employees and the line manager based on the hierarchical structure. This conversation deals with the roles of the employee and is a two-way process (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Second, team peer internal communication concerns team information data and occurs between employees or team members in a two-way process (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Third, internal communication at the project relates to project issues, occurs in two-way between project peers. The marked difference between project and team is that the project has a wider scope whereas the team is at a departmental level (Welch and Jackson, 2007). Fourth, ICC strategic information is transmitted one-way, top-down approach from top managers to members of the organisation (Welch and Jackson, 2007). In this thesis, ICC would be explored as the other dimensions have been addressed by several writers (Argenti and Forman, 2002).

### 3.2.2 Internal corporate communication

The preoccupation with internal corporate communication entails that of establishing a clear communicative environment between top strategic managers and all stakeholders (Welch and Jackson, 2007). This implies that the boundaries of limited communication with employees have been taken into consideration. However, internal corporate communication prevalently assumes a one-way process and encompasses strategy, objective and goal issues. Accordingly, ICC is referred to as:

*Communication between an organisation’s strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organisation, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims* (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 186).

Figure 3.2 presents the nature of ICC. At the central point are the strategic managers who convey corporate messages to the internal environment where all of the employees are situated. As these messages are sent, the concept of internal corporate communication is portrayed by the one-way arrows with the goal of achieving understanding, belonging, awareness and commitment.
Considering the circumstances, this can be regarded as a flaw in the framework. Nonetheless, Welch and Jackson (2007) point to the fact that two-way communication takes place via the other dimensions, and argue that managers can adapt to the employee needs. Moreover, adopting a consistent ICC strategy coupled with actions would be a proactive approach in achieving the goals. Implied in the two-way arrows between the external micro environment and internal environment is that of two-way communication between the other three dimensions discussed earlier. The external macro-environment is taken into consideration. This observation is probably due to the fact that the modern organisations face in having to listen to public authorities. However, it begs to question whether or not integration of communication deserves greater emphasis.

Figure 3.2: Internal corporate communication (Welch and Jackson, 2007).

With reference to the goals stated earlier, the understanding aspect of the changing objectives is addressed in this thesis. In contemporary organisations, where stakeholders are searching for a connection with their organisation, it has become important for them to be updated with the rapid
changes in the environment and its impact on the organisation (Cheney and Christensen, 2011). These rapid changes result in strategy implementation projects which may necessitate a conscious decision to inform employees of the intended changes. This may encompass management’s capability to communicate with all stakeholders and their ability to develop a quality internal corporate communications plan and to organise the channels and tools to do such. By doing so, stakeholder’s necessity and need to be informed of organisational changes are achieved while giving them a voice to be part of the organisation.

Considering the call for research of the communication channel preferences and content (Welch and Jackson, 2007), the next section will discuss the channels.

3.2.3 Communication channels
Since channels and content represent crucial issues during strategy implementation, it is important to consider their latitude because they represent the media for communication (Quirke, 2008). As an example, the varied types of channels used for internal communications could be categorised into electronics, written and oral (Klein, 1996) or technology related and traditional or (Al-Ghamdi et al., 2007) or into social media and traditional channels (Verčič and Verčič 2013). Arguably, additional channels like mobile phones, internet, videoconferencing and teleconferencing have evolved due to the emerging technologies.

Among the media identified as traditional as it relates to internal communications, employee meetings and magazines, face-to-face meetings, emails and intranet news are the ones most used (Friedl and Vercic, 2011). Further, new technology like social media has widened the scope of channels such as instant messenger, discussion forums video-conference, wikis and blogs (Friedl and Vercic, 2011). In the 1990s, Zmud et al. (1990) took a similar approach to classify communication channels into: traditional communication technologies, written, group, face-to-face and computer-mediated communication technologies. They further went on to assign typical
company channels to each group as depicted in Table 3.3. The different choices available add complexity for managers in selection the right media that satisfies the parties involved (sender and receiver). Furthermore, the line of authority should be taken into context as line managers bear most of the responsibility in ensuring the information is communicated effectively (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997).

Therefore, selecting a rich medium would aid in transmitting the sufficient amount of correct information which should be able to be processed with clarity by the one receiving, thus promoting efficiency (Sun and Cheng, 2007). The richness of media is based upon the following four criteria: (1) capacity for immediate feedback; (2) capacity of the medium to have a personal focus; (3) capacity to transmit multiple cues, and; (4) language variety (Daft et al., 1987). Thus, selecting the proper medium has a significant impact on receiver's acceptance and perception of the message (Otondo et al., 2008). In this case, proper medium selection is crucial for the organisation to disseminate its message to stakeholders.

Taking into consideration the dynamic process of communication, based on the message being sent, selecting the proper channel may help simplify the process enabling managers to predict the behaviour of employees (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011). However, it would also be important to consider the preference of the receiver which may actually allow for greater assimilation of the message. This view was recently echoed by Welch (2012) who argued that the acceptability and usefulness of the chosen channel should be determined by the employees based on their evaluation of the message content. Notably, Lewis (2000) contends that until the vision and mission statements, implementation plan and the medium used to convey them are understood, difficulty would arise in assessing the efficiency of internal communication to ensure that the needs of the stakeholders are met.
### Table 3.3: Communication channel groups (Zmud et al., 1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping</th>
<th>Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional communication technologies</td>
<td>• Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Voice conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• facsimile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>• handwritten notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• type or printed memos or letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• printed documents or reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• charts and graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• computer reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>• group meetings (formal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• group gatherings (informal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>• one-on-one consultations (formal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• one-on-one chats (informal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer-mediated communication technologies</td>
<td>• electronic mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• voice messaging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3 Inter-organisational communication

Previous studies have highlighted how inter-organisational communication influences supplier-buyer performance (Cousins and Menguc, 2006; Prahinski and Benton, 2004). The above studies only looked at the importance of communication relating to a specific context. However, to date research in the area of inter-organisational communication has not received any strong theoretical focus (Paulraj et al., 2008). The extent to which communication between inter-organisational actors influences the strategy implementation has not been explored. As such, an investigation of their needs and preferences would be considered in relation to strategy implementation.

### 3.4 Conceptual framework

The constructs of the framework is informed by the literature reviewed in the previous section, particularly the ICC concept from Welch and Jackson (2007). Figure 3.3 illustrates the framework and its underlying constructs to probe the research aim and questions in section 1.4.
Figure 3.3 depicts the main arrow as the primary theme, which represents ICC as the unit of analysis and as a process with the outcome being the intra- and inter-organisational actors increased strategy knowledge for implementation (Welch and Jackson 2007). It is suggested that strategy managers play a key role in ensuring that several factors are met in the implementation process to realise the outcome (Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990).

Top management typically assumes the role of formulating the strategy implementation initiatives which can assume either the planned or intended strategy perspective (Mintzberg, 1978). Cornelissen (2011) postulates that it is critical to communicate the implementation plan by developing a communication plan to support the process. However, if this is not done it can have a negative impact on the implementation process (Johnson et al., 2003).

The communication of the implementation plan by top management is crucial, especially its content (Quirke, 2008). Strategic managers may adopt several channels to do such. As highlighted earlier, the channel selection should be carefully considered to match the actor’s information needs (Daft et al., 1987). The medium selected should also be a rich one as most strategy messages tend to be complicated with a time constraint (Lengel and Daft, 1989). This is particularly useful to ensure that the actors develop a coherent understanding of the message (Klein, 1996). Given the one-way dimension of strategy messages, selecting the richest medium may not be feasible due to absence of the feedback loop, which may lead to communication ambiguity and loss of meaning (Welch and Jackson, 2007).

However, although the message is transmitted via the communication channels, others aspects should be considered as they are likely to affect the dissemination of the strategy implementation message (Zmud et al., 1990). These are: the accessibility of the channel by the actors and how many can be reached via the channel and information quality which relates to the content of the information and preference (Zmud et al., 1990). As the implementation message has been disseminated via the various media to the actors, they have
the power of choice in choosing which medium to retrieve the message from (Daft et al., 1987). Their preferences and needs come into play based on their predefined ways of communicating. Reflecting on the success of the ICC ability to convey strategy implementation via its one-way process, it is crucial to investigate the preferences and needs of the actors. Here, it is assumed that the ICC one-way process is operating effectively.

Figure 3.3 further shows the other three dimensions of the matrix as two-way arrows protruding from the intra- and inter-organisational actors. As communication take place between project peers, project team members, and line managers, shared meaning, increased strategy knowledge, unified understanding and the satisfaction of preferences would be met (Daft et al., 1987). In essence, the communication among these parties would help expand the initial one-way process of ICC. The immediate feedback can be seen in Figure 3.3 between the strategic managers and line managers who play a decisive role in help convey critical feedback from the actors to the strategy managers. This feedback gathering serves as evaluation function for the strategy managers which are crucial for implementation issues (Jones, 2008).

Aided by the other three dimensions, ICC can result in shared meaning, increased strategy knowledge, unified understanding and the satisfaction of preferences of the actors leading to successful implementation and the actors being agents in the process (Welch and Jackson 2007). As agents and recipients in the process, their increased understanding of the organisational vision can result in them being key conduits for implementing the strategy (Cartwright and Holmes 2006).
Figure 3.3: Conceptual model
4 Empirical Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the study based on the semi-structured interviews and document analysis are presented. Throughout this chapter, data from the interviews is presented in the different sections to elucidate and answer the research questions posited earlier. However, the findings should also be viewed within the context of the organisation under study.

4.1 The organisation’s strategy implementation and internal communication

The highlighted parts of Figure 4.1 illustrates that the strategic managers are disseminating the strategy implementation messages across IC channels and in the progress result in increased strategy implementation knowledge, preferences and needs being met, unified understanding and shared meaning achieved.

Figure 4.1: Content section of the theoretical framework

Based on the content of the implementation message, some respondents gave the following comments:

The lack of strategy communication content affects our prioritisation against the agenda of what SUNET want us to do. This prioritisation process from different universities against SUNET is a bit where we are at the moment where we don’t see and understand how this could be done in a very effective manner so that it could satisfy any strategy. (Interviewee 1)
Yea, unless you look for it yourself or you call the organisation. It was more of a presentation of this is what is happening now and this is what we are planning. (Interviewee 2)

Maybe SUNET could facilitate a bit more on providing more content. It should be communicated in the way to gain more confidence and be efficient in what the universities need. (Interviewee 5)

This is the first time that SUNET has developed an organisational strategy plan. Before, the communication was mainly based on technical topics. (Interviewee 6)

Regarding the internal corporate communications, a communication officer has been hired to deal with the communication strategies for the actors, but is working minimal time due to maternity leave.

As regards to the amount of information they receive and how much should be communicated, some of the respondents had varied views. One respondent made this comment:

That is the first part of the communication that has been difficult for us... How do they actually choose, and what they base their decisions on? That is the first part of the information on how they proceed when they are developing their offering. Which kind of targets they have and as well as more operational data. The kind of information that the board sometimes get but outside of the board it does not reach us. (Interviewee 2)

To deal with the growing research needs of the universities and university colleges in Sweden, the organisation’s board updated the strategic plan in 2010 for the period 2012-2014. As such, the board sought to involve the inter-organisational actors in the process of developing the strategy. Two of the interviewees stated:

Yes, I was in a working group when we decided on the strategy...Let me see, maybe we spent half a year. I was part of a small group that represented the general needs of universities and had two or three workshops and then we ended everything with a big workshop with all the IT managers and CIO’s from all the universities and high schools in Sweden. (Interviewee 2)

Not actively in the core group but I was active in revising and giving feedback as it was developed by the board. (Interviewee 7)
The elements of the current strategy include the following components: mission, strategy and thirteen principles. Through the strategy, the organisation aims to provide cost effective services and to the universities through its thirteen principles which outline the business concept. These were expressed in clear statements. However, one key aspect that is not vividly outlined is the vision of the organisation. Some respondents perceived this to be an element that is not properly understood:

What I never quite understand is probably what is not too much elaborated is actually the vision of SUNET. What could be expected from SUNET to be? What is the framework and the actually restrictions. It is kind of interesting to talk about the vision and goals for the organisation because that’s an ongoing discussion. (Interviewee 1)

We currently don’t have an official vision. But we will have one soon. The Swedish council made an evaluation of SUNET and wanted the strategy updated but we felt that a vision statement was missing. (Interviewee 8)

After the strategy was formulated, a communication plan was developed to convey the implementation message, and a temporary communicator hired to assist in the process. However, various comments were voiced with regards to the challenges of communicating the strategy for implementation:

I have looked through the strategy and what is not clear is how the strategy could be implemented or what would be good or the ways to do that. (Interviewee 1)

I don’t think the strategy is so concrete as to have a communication plan out of that strategy. (Interviewee 2)

No I wasn’t involved in the process. After the plan it went a little bit quiet... So it seems like it was more after the new CEO arrived one year ago it was more talking about the implementation. (Interviewee 3)

No, it has not been communicated internally very clearly. (Interviewee 5)

But as a board we were involved and have the possibility to engage ourselves but as for my personal situation, I don’t think I have the time to do it. (Interviewee 7)

An implementation plan... That is something we haven’t done. I have seen some of the work that has been done in communication the
strategy. My perception is that it felt like a bit of one off thing rather than a continuous dialog. The communication was like this is SUNET’s strategy and this is what we are going to do. (Interviewee 8)

On the other hand, some of the interviewees reported a need to improve strategy implementation communication:

*That should be improved when we have done the next update. Yes the reason for this is that SUNET has now employed a PR person which we never had before.* (Interviewee 8)

*We have a new communicator now because we felt the big need of better communication. And I know that this is something we have been working on quite a lot with. How to collect the info in strategy to actually deliver what we need and what a lot of the users want and need and ask for and how to collect their needs.* (Interviewee 7)

The interviewees at different levels discussed the internal communication issue from their (intra and inter) viewpoints and one difficulty which was mentioned:

*It is not exactly clear what is external and internal communication...you have to establish the exact relationship.* (Interviewee 5)

### 4.2 The organisation’s internal communication channels

A variety of IC channels are utilised by the organisation to communicate. The list is outline below:

- Newsletter
- Website
- Email
- Mailing list (Listserv)
- Board meeting
- Strategy workshop
- SUNET day
- E-meeting (SUNET Connect)
- Working group meeting

Out of the nine listed channels, the website and emails serve as the significant channels used to convey strategy implementation information. The information on strategy implementation is drafted by the board and sent via email by the secretary. The different actors receive the information by email. The different line managers and project group colleagues who are responsible
for the different communities may adjust the message to the specific needs of that community.

The newsletter on the other hand, is a quarterly publication that highlights what the organisation has done for the period and its upcoming plans. The newsletter endeavours to keep all actors up to date with what is happening in the organisation.

The organisation has done a massive redesign of the website some years ago and a great deal of information can be found there, along with the strategy documents. One respondent commented on the website:

*It is like a library or an archive where you can go and look up things. We need to have a strong presence on the web.* (Interviewee 8)

Email is one of the primary medium of contact to all actors. A few respondents said this about the channel:

*I still think that email is one important one for base notification and information.* (Interviewee 1)

*You need to receive some emails because you never have time to tell yourself, yea I should just go to the organisation website.* (Interviewee 3)

Even though a project to migrate the listserve and the newsletter has started, using an external e-mail marketing tool (APSIS), the mailing list is a key medium for the line managers to push information out to their communities to keep them informed. The list was gathered based on contact information with the different universities. One interviewee commented on the mailing list:

*The mailing list is fairly successful. Those people that are on the mailing list receive good information.* (Interviewee 8)

The board meetings take place at least once a month. Both intra- and inter-organisational stakeholders are represented in those meetings. This event provides a voice for them to speak about their needs. Two interviewees commented on the strategy implementation discussions in board meetings:
The parts of the strategy are discussed at the board meetings but not as an explicit discussion of the strategy. Discussion is about the implementation of the strategy. (Interviewee 4)

Of course we were discussing it during board meetings and the whole board was involved giving suggestions when the workgroups have been producing something. (Interviewee 7)

The strategy workshop is a relatively new channel to communicate with the actors. The workshop presents what the organisation is currently doing to implement its strategy. This sometimes provides them with the opportunity for dialogue. One respondent commented on this new channel:

We have a workshop now soon where we would discuss future needs. But that is something that we haven’t done in a systematic way before. So that is something new. It hasn’t been a dialog with us before saying this is what we need and what we as IT managers need (Interviewee 1)

The SUNET day is also a relatively new channel where the CEO and other line managers travel to affiliated organisations. This allows the CEO to directly communicate with some of the line managers and provides an opportunity to exchange experiences about the strategy implementation process.

E-Meeting is also a relatively new channel. It is utilised to communicate with the line managers, internal peer team and internal project team. Due to the geographic dispersion of the team, it is utilised as a suitable replacement for face-to-face meetings. One respondent commented on the usefulness of the E-meeting:

I think there should be possibilities to participate in the strategy discussions and there I think it’s good to book Adobe Connect meetings. (Interviewee 3)

Finally, a channel used is the small working group meetings formed to discuss and develop certain topics concerning the organisation. Interviewees expressed the following:

I was part of a small group that was represented for the general needs of the universities... (Interviewee 2)

Six month back we had a business development group...it is cancelled or formed in another way. (Interviewee 3)
In order to ensure that the strategy implementation messages are disseminated to the actors, SUNET utilises several channels. In Figure 4.1, the internal communication channel elements from the theoretical framework are boldly highlighted. Additionally, the media attributes are also presented in the Figure 4.1 taking into account all ICC and the other three dimensions. Reference to the comments from the respondents on the channel’s ability to relay the strategy implementation message in terms of richness, quality, accessibility, and preference are presented.

**Figure 4.2: Media section of the theoretical framework**

### 4.2.1 Rich media (interactive multimedia)

The respondents’ evaluation of the different channels ability to communicate via a number of ways (cues), ability to provide feedback and personalisation, seems to vary. However, the website was regarded as the channel that best provides a variety of cues as were echoed by the respondents:

*Web has to be there, it’s more like I need an answer for this, and you can go get it.* (Interviewee 1)

*I think that the web is a good one. It is working fine and provides different information in various ways.* (Interviewee 2)
We have done quite a lot to the webpage lately. I think that was first thing that happened when we started to work with communication. (Interviewee 7)

With reference to feedback and strategy implementation communication, the channel that the interviewees identified was email. This is reflected in the following statements:

*But when it comes to the channels, I believe emails keeps us informed and provide for quick feedback.* (Interviewee 2)

*You need to receive some emails because it’s a quick way to respond to queries.* (Interviewee 3)

*Emails are our push and pull system at the moment.* (Interviewee 8)

With reference to the ICC channels, the strategy workshops were viewed as the best channel for feedback due to the face-to-face element of it followed by E-meetings. This is supported by the statement below:

*It hasn’t been a dialog with us before, but the workshops have kind of changed that.* (Interviewee 2)

*I think that Adobe Connect is more structured and allows for interaction.* (Interviewee 3)

As it regards to the personalisation of the strategy implementation message, the respondents felt the newsletter met that need. This is apparent from some of the responses:

*I think that one is good. It is working fine with a telling us what is going to happen.* (Interviewee 2)

*I know we have this newsletter which is like a more general information thing on what is taking place.* (Interviewee 7)

*So I think it’s good with a newsletter and then you can go to the website.* (Interviewee 3)

The channel that appears to have a strong impact on the stakeholders’ evaluation of receiving the strategy implementation message when the three elements of a rich media are combined together is the strategy workshops. This notion is shared based on the responses below:
When we meet in real life meetings we give each other a hug, and we actually go through what needs that we have and try to help SUNET prioritising them and choosing the right services. (Interviewee 1)

This is as result of workshops the IT managers had together in trying to understand the strategy implementation initiatives of SUNET. (Interviewee 2)

4.2.2 Preferences for receiving strategy implementation information

The participants provided responses as it pertains to their preference of channel with reference to its strength to carry the strategy implementation message. Table 4.2 presents their varied responses.

Table 4.1: Channel preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>First preference</th>
<th>Second preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strategy workshop</td>
<td>E-Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strategy workshop</td>
<td>E-Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Web with push notifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Web with push notifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Web</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strategy workshop</td>
<td>E-Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Web</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Accessibility and information quality

In order to understand how accessible the communication channels are and the quality of information conveyed via them, the respondents were asked their satisfaction level. Given that the respondents have different preferences for receiving information, their answers also varied in terms of these two aspects. This is reflected in some of their responses:
Umm...from an IT manager's perspective, it’s been not good. (Interviewee 2)

I don’t know it is difficult to say. You always want more information but when you receive more information you don’t tend to read it all. I think the level is on a good level, short and structured. (Interviewee 3)

I would prefer more personalized information from the web with push notifications. (Interviewee 3)

Interestingly, many of the respondents commented on the web being the most accessible and providing good quality information followed by the newsletter.

### 4.3 Additional findings

In Table 4.3 below, some suggestions are presented by the participants are listed and categorised according to their specific dimension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy implementation</td>
<td>I think there should be possibilities to participate in the strategy discussions to develop an implementation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would say that they should really not try to do it on their own. There is a lot of expertise out. These strategic discussions should be mixed up and there should be a dialog for how this process is realised. Use expertise to help in making it happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialog with the universities to find out what kind of strategy services they are developing to prevent competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The CEO should try to get more CIOs from the universities included in the board meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have active discussions on how to develop future offers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find out who are the stakeholders and the people you need to communicate with at the universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>I think it’s good to book Adobe connect meetings and physical meetings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simplify the communications
Update the newsletter more frequently
Do no communicate directly with end users such as students and teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future preferences</th>
<th>Utilise different channels as blogs or closed Facebook groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think the day to-day informal meetings scenario is necessary in order for the organisation to work fluently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of the website and make it less technical combined with some kind of active notification of an update</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Analysis and Discussion

This chapter analyses and discusses the research findings in relation to the research questions, but the analysis and discussion should also be viewed within the context of the organisation under study.

5.1 Strategy implementation and internal corporate communication (ICC)

The findings from the qualitative data reveal that internal corporate communication is not tightly connected with the strategy implementation initiatives. It can be deduced that a ‘white space’ (Rummler and Brache, 2012) of the communication process has been inefficiently managed. Furthermore, it was discovered that problems exist with defining the actual vision of the organisation. Judging from the findings, the communication of the link between the vision and the future direction of the organisation to the actors need to be clarified. According to the information collected from the interviewees, the management has a perception of what the vision should be, but it seems to exist as only a virtual concept. This missing crucial element seems to have affected the respondent’s perception as it relates to the future developmental needs of the organisation. This is at variance with the literature which suggests that communicating the vision is essential for building reputation and potential (Chun and Davies, 2001). There is evidence by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) to suggest that the organisation should recognise the significance of creating a vision that is meant to reflect the creative aspect of the business strategy with potentially far-reaching impact.

In terms of the communication channels, the organisation utilises several for communicating the strategy. According to the findings, some respondents seem to understand the strategy and feel that being involved is vital for the future progress. Some interviewees report a lack of communication of the

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1. Q1 What are the actors’ preferences of internal corporate (strategy) communication?
2. Q2 What communication channels could be used to increase the actors’ knowledge of the strategy in the implementation phase?
strategy, while some interviewees feel that the information/communication is sufficient. It seems likely, given some of the interviewee’s relationship with top management, their response of the information being sufficient could have been influenced by such. According to the study conducted by Proctor and Doukakis (2003), poor communication by management is considered a bad driver for strategy implementation. However, according to O’Reilly et al. (2010), in implementing strategy, leaders must involve all employees in the communication process due to its complex nature. In this case, it would be considered a necessary asset for the organisation to establish a map of the relevant actors that need to receive the strategy implementation message to gain interest and support (Jones, 2008).

However, if the information is not communicated to line managers, team colleagues and project group colleagues, their ability to properly inform their community of the actual contents can affect their commitment in execution. This lack of communicating the strategy implementation runs counter to a study by Steyn (2003) which suggests that such corporate communication should be deliberate and can contribute to organisational effectiveness. Moreover, evidence shows that if organisations recognise the gaps in their internal corporate communication process, receive support to address these gaps, and apply their enhanced knowledge to communicate effectively, the process can be successfully navigated (Hoon, 2007).

5.2 Strategy implementation knowledge

From the findings, some interviewees linked the issue of lack of their strategy implementation knowledge to communication, which has proven to be true in a study by Peng and Litteljohn (2001). However, some respondents seem to be familiar with the overall strategy in general, but it appears that a unified understanding of the strategy implementation knowledge was limited. Also emerging was the fact that top management was not reactive in sharing this information, which was a concern of the interviewees. The work of Yang et al. (2010) posit that if inter-organisational actors are to embrace the plans of the organisation, the internal corporate communication should be able to share
critical and sensitive information as it pertains to strategic and operational issues that are likely to affect them.

It is possible to argue that the organisation’s lack of sharing is related to it trying to protect its image to deliver services that the universities have not already implemented. Given the role that the inter-organisational actors play in the strategy implementation process, it is important to exchange information on strategic implementation initiatives. This practice of sharing has been argued by Huy (2011) to foster greater confidence and knowledge development in organisations. Further, Anderson and Weitz (1992) found that this frequent exchange builds trust and collaboration. Arguably, the indications from the inter-organisational actors suggest that the importance of keeping them well informed through efficient communication will result in a greater understanding and shared meaning of the implementation initiatives. Paulraj et al. (2008) recommend that such inter-organisational communication will result in relational competency and a strategic advantage.

However, what emerged from the interviews is that the strategy implementation knowledge of some of the inter-organisational actors is not too deep. This might suggest that the strategic managers are resistant to include the inter-organisational actors in the strategy implementation. Evidence from the literature suggests that including stakeholders such as inter-organisational actors in the implementation process, often results in increased development of an organisation (Regner, 2003).

Furthermore, goals and objectives of the process need to be defined as they are important elements of implementation phase. The findings reflect that no process exist for this matter at the moment. According to the literature, it does not deny the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that an investment in enhancing collaborative communication is necessary to ensure increased implementation knowledge (Floyd and Lane, 2000). Therefore, it seems as if the kind of strategy implementation knowledge that should be gained by the actors is not met. As such, the actors could feel disempowered by the lack of detailed knowledge.
A finding is significant, where the CEO today is tasked with being the best reporting structure for internal corporate communications. The organisation have identified the lack of structured communication management and hired a communication officer. The complexity of the organisation makeup indicates that its ability has been hindered to communicate the implementation plan with a clear message to the inter-organisational actors. This gap can be addressed through a well-defined process which is recommended in the literature by Zerfass (2008).

In light of the answers collected from the interviewees, it could be argued that a set of communicative competencies may be necessary to communicate the strategy implementation message which is supported by Johannessen and Olsen (2011). Processes are important especially for building up an organisation that wants to adapt to the changing business environment (Rummler and Brache, 2012). As such, the constitution of a formal communication process to define what should entail the communication activities and the linkages between the different actors can be beneficial (Quirke, 2008). For example, one interviewee commented:

_There is a lot of expertise out there on dialog expertise on how do you get people to understand each other better on what we would want to accomplish together. I think that they should rely on those experts and find those people and make them do this process._ (Interviewee 1)

The findings reflect that the organisation needs to develop a set of communicative competences to forge a connection between the current and future strategic implementation initiatives as recommended in the study by Frahm and Brown (2006).

### 5.3 Internal corporate communication (ICC) and intra- and inter-organisational actors

The findings described in the previous chapter suggest that the process by which ICC has aided strategy implementation is of a contextual nature. However, the argument of its importance is supported in the study by Sharma and Kamalanabhan (2012) in realising high internal branding results.
The findings also suggest that both intra- and inter-organisational actors identified the need for better internal corporate communication. This correlates with earlier literature by Sengupta et al. (2000) which argues that good quality communications can result in a desirable outcome. Further, as argued by Homburg et al. (2004), providing as much information via ICC can positively impact on the actors being agents in the process of implementing the strategy. However, information overload can occur and become an impediment for the actors to carry out their work. This reflects the needs to implement ICC as a functional instrument in disseminating information to both intra- and inter-organisational actors.

Emerging from the interviews with the inter-organisational actors was the need for a communicative system or process between the organisation and the university CIOs to ensure proper dissemination of the information. In so doing, a strong communication relationship between the organisation and the actors can be developed to ensure communication effectiveness which Gudykunst and Nishida (2001) support. This is reflected in the findings where the actors agreed that the more dialogue they have in the process can lead to their unified understanding and satisfied needs. This finding is significant as ICC is predominantly a one way process (Welch and Jackson, 2007). This does not necessarily contradict its concept. It could be that actors want to be so involved in thinking through and formalising the plan before it is disseminated. This study can therefore concur with Hendry and Seidl (2003) that the inclusion of key stakeholders in strategy operation routines is likely to build strategic advantage.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the complex nature of the organisation may require unique expertise to develop ICC strategies to help communicate effectively. It is important here to note that this should be done by integrating both the intra- and inter-organisational actors, which can yield a comprehensive communication implementation strategy plan.

With regards to the future of ICC and strategy implementation within the case company, the findings suggest that the elements outlined in the
conceptual model (see Figure 3.3) would be of necessity in the future. The perception was that the organisation when conveying strategy implementation information should adopt a proactive method (Beer and Eisenstat, 200). In effect, this process whereby the organisation collaborates with the actors can prove to be beneficial in disseminating and communicating the strategy implementation message. Based on the data from the interviews, ICC as the means of communication with the actors could shape or derail strategy execution.

5.4 Preferences of information content and channel

The picture that emerged from the analysis of the findings revealed that before communication, the information shared with the actors had not been analysed with respect to their needs, demands or preferences. This is not consistent with past research by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002) which suggest that the information content of strategy implementation should be in relation to “what the actors need”. Therefore, emerging from the findings the information content it proved to be unsuccessful in creating shared meaning of the implementation process and meeting the needs of the actors. However, Forsyth (2008) argues that understanding such preferences of information content requires an ‘art’ to determine the most effective ways for sharing information and ideas.

The findings also suggest that if the implementation message is clear and detailed, the needs of the actors would be met with regards to content. It seems likely, given the top management lack of proactivity in sharing detailed plans for implementation, the actors would need to outline the kind of information they require that they can translate into actions. The engagement of actors in the internal corporate communication (ICC) process can lead to organisational success and interactional competence (Yates, 2006).

The findings also indicate that the organisation uses different channels to communicate with the stakeholders. Five of those channels can be regarded as ICC as strategic managers use a one-way process to convey the message to all actors. The other four are regarded as internal line management
communication because the line managers are engaging in conversation with more than one stakeholder about issues and their role in the implementation process. The respected channels coupled with their IC dimension are shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Specific channels and dimension of internal communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICC</th>
<th>Non-ICC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Internal Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Internal Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Internal Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing list</td>
<td>Internal Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy workshop</td>
<td>Internal Corporate Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board meeting</td>
<td>Internal Line Manager Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNET day</td>
<td>Internal Line Manager Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Meeting</td>
<td>Internal Line Manager Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workgroup meeting</td>
<td>Internal Line Manager Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason behind the choices selected appears to be based on practicality, tradition and preference of the organisation. However, the findings suggest that the actors prefer ICC channels which are rich (interactive multimedia) such as the strategy workshop which is face-to-face and the website which is electronic. As it relates to their second preference, the E-Meetings (non-ICC) and Web (ICC) are ranked at the top. Moreover, when considering the first preference of channel, all of the respondents favoured the ICC channels as the preferred communication channel.

This is in line with studies by Burke (1996) and Tourish and Robson (2006) of internal corporate communications whereby employees preferred face-to-face as the most personal and efficient way to communicate. More recently, Woodall (2006) study refers to a strong preference for face-to-face followed by the information on the website. It can be argued that the face-to-face method satisfies the actors’ need of belonging as they are made to feel a part of the organisation and involved in the strategy implementation process.
The findings in this study support both the contention but with a minor difference. The actors preferred the website or internet with added features that allowed for active notifications, opportunity to provide feedback, push features and the message being repeated via multiple non-ICC channels, which are significant findings. The comment by one respondent strengthens this point:

*What could be an option here is to have some kind of more interactive website, for not everyone in the university, but for the contact persons at the organisation where you could have a more interactive discussion of the IT needs.* (Interviewee 2)

Woodall’s finding is further supported where the electronic methods are listed as preferred channels. With regards to the rich medium of communications, the workshops with actors create a forum for strategy implementation debate and dialogue. This also demonstrates the richness of the ICC channel in comparison to the non-ICC channels. However, being a (rich) face-to-face media does not simple imply that it should be chosen as the top channel to disseminate the strategy implementation message. However, this interactive multimedia can allow for emerging ideas (Hodgkinson et al., 2006) of the universities future needs to be evaluated and considered when formulating and the implementation strategy.

Further comparison of the findings was made with reference to the preference of channel to an earlier study by Al-Ghamdi et al. (2007) which evaluated communication channels preferred by employees with regards to receiving strategy information. The nature of the earlier study was on internal communication channels as opposed to ICC which this thesis focused on.

The findings in this study compared with previous findings in terms of channel options, indicate that the actors’ preferences have emerged as they want to interact with top management and hear about the strategy and its implementation from them. However, this could be attributed to the cultural differences in the context of the studies conducted. The study by Aggerholm et al. (2009) posit that such involvement in management conversations is essential for establishing good stakeholder relationships.
The findings also indicate that the preferences of channels differed among the interviewees which could be attributed to the following reasons:

1. The medium attributes such as message personalisation and the ability to provide immediate feedback.
2. Their varying desires of information content.
3. Their individual attributes such as personal interest and personal traits.

However, it seems as the predictive scope of the preference and richness of the channel may need to be extended to provide more information and may require further study.

5.4.1 Quality and accessibility

From the findings, the interviewees’ assessment of the quality of information provided seemed to vary. This inconsistency between the respondents highlights the subjectivity of their answers.

Those in support of the information quality being good can be the ones who are satisfied. While on the other hand, those that oppose can be the ones who are not satisfied and are willing to express their opinion for the need for clearer information. Possible explanation might be due to the actor’s personal preference based on professional knowledge. Sengupta et al. (2000) address the issue of information quality and point out that only when the content of the communication is received and understood by the receiver then the target is met.

The information made available via the ICC channels of the newsletter and the website allows for pulling of information and is viewed by the interviewees as being quite accessible and providing valuable information. The accessibility aspect of the website seems to provide the respondents with some level of control (Welch and Jackson, 2007) which could influence their preference for the electronic method. Further, there is an indication that the accessibility of the channel can affect the actor’s ability to translate the implementation message into action.
It is clear from the findings that the prerequisites for a dissemination of the strategy implementation message to result in the successful implementation of a realised strategy according to the literature and conceptual model are not yet fulfilled.
6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will summarize the research findings in relation to the research questions and provide some conclusions and recommendations for future actions to the case organisation.

6.1 Conclusion

Taking into consideration the preferences of the actors and the channels that should be used to increase their strategy implementation knowledge; the ICC dimension was explored by Welch and Jackson (2007) to address the research gap. Considering that the ICC concept was new, and no study was identified to have researched its role in strategy implementation, this thesis sought to explore this area.

In order to examine the research questions, the literature by Welch and Jackson (2007) on ICC was used to create a conceptual model to guide the research. SUNET was selected as the case organisation considering how the preferences and needs of the intra- and inter-organisational actors for internal corporate communications influence strategy implementation. Utilising a multi-dimension research methodology, the findings indicates that ICC is very influential to strategy implementation, but the company needs to make adjustments to fully exploit its benefits.

Based on the findings, the strategy managers are not efficient in using ICC to relay the implementation message. This is evident in the fact that the strategy implementation knowledge of the actors is low. Although some of the media used to disseminate the message contain rich attributes, the information quality and accessibility does not allow for a unified understanding and shared meaning by the actors. Concerning research question one, as it relates to their preference and needs being satisfied differed. The actors preferred information that was clearly defined, highlighting their roles and easily accessible. Concerning research question two, there was a higher preference for the strategy workshop - face-to-face communication and the website with interactive push features - electronic method. Arguably this difference suggests that individual preference’s is at play but could also be attributed to
the pitfalls of communication at the organisational level. This is further reflected in their comments in terms to lack of inclusion and unclear roles in the strategy implementation process due to a weak and ineffective internal corporate communication process. There is, however, evidence to show that the preferences and needs of the actors influences strategy implementation. Clearly this raises the issue of involvement of the actors in the process and giving considerable importance to internal corporate communications as it is likely to determine the success of the strategy implementation.

The findings further confirmed that there is not yet an official and formal implementation and strategic communication plan for SUNET. Upon these analyses, the findings reveal the challenges of internal corporate communication (ICC) and the associated issues when trying to implement strategy as indicated in previous findings by Beer and Eisenstat (2000).

The findings also reveal that the case organisation communication environment is a complex one. It also suggest that the extent to which the organisation will want to implement its strategy successfully would be determined by its involvement and interactions between the actors to learn more about their needs, which in turn can be exploited to enhance the communicative environment. On the basis of such evidence, internal corporate communication (ICC) needs to be one of the guiding principles to gather strategic consensus within the organisation.

6.2 Recommendations

In practical implications, for 2NRENs and organisations that depend on inter-organisational collaboration to drive performance, the following can be considered:

- To consider investing time and resources in ICC as it relates to strategy implementation communication. The use of ICC channels can act as an

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2 National Research and Education Network
enabler when developing and executing the strategy implementation plan.

- In order to meet the needs of the receivers, the strategic managers should communicate using rich channels to all actors while simultaneously ensuring they are easily accessible and that the information quality is good.

Evidence (Goczol and Scoubeau, 2003) indicates the mediating role of communications as a decisive factor for successful strategy discussions, as was realised in this study. As such, it is therefore recommended that the organisation develop a communication map of the relevant intra- and inter- organisational actors that play a decisive role in ensuring the success of the strategy. This will be conducive for developing a collaborative environment to clearly identify more of their needs and how they would be able to satisfy them.

Based on the above, it is also recommended that this new knowledge should be transferred into developing a comprehensive communication strategy and process. The process should be assigned an owner who would be responsible for maintaining and continuously updating the methodology relative to the political and social environment.

### 6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Constraining factors of the research are attributable to 1) the chosen sample of interviewees and 2) the amount of information obtained for data analysis which could be an impediment for generalizability of the study; however, this is not the intention. Yet the data gathered from the interviews shed light on how the actors’ preferences and needs can be met via internal corporate communication.

Future studies could utilise a quantitative approach to extend the sample size which would probably yield a larger amount of information to provide a more reliable and valid result.

From these research findings, suggestions for future research are:
• How to handle their role as an organisation with a mission from the government and at the same time satisfy the service customer needs and demands.
• How to handle the provision of services that compete with local developed products by the universities and university colleges.
• Identification of the communication actors to be able to respond to their needs and demands.
• A comparative study in internal corporate communication strategies with other NRENs in Europe and worldwide to attest to the differences or similarities to develop a comprehensive framework of internal corporate communication.
• Investigate the different internal corporate communication preferences of different types of employees and their specific attributes.
References


Smith, L. (2005) Effective internal communication, United Kingdom: Kogan Page Ltd.


Appendices

Appendix A - Interview guide

Appendix B - Letter to interviewees

Appendix C - Breakdown interview structure
Appendix A - Interview guide

Introduction to the interviewee

- Self-introduction, and thank the interviewee for volunteering to be a part of the research study
- Explain the purpose of the study- To understand the importance and role of communication in strategy implementation.
- The interview would be recorded and transcribed but would be destroyed once the analysis is completed. All data would be treated as confidential and protected.
- The interview time frame will last for about one hour. Record date and time

Interview questions (Inter and Intra)

- What is your current position within the organisation?
- For how long have you been working at your current position?
- Are you familiar with SUNET’s strategy plan?
- If yes, in what way were you involved?
- How did your contribution to the strategic plan have any impact on its implementation?
- For Board members: In your meetings with SUNET, is strategy a part of the agenda?
- Are you familiar with SUNET’s goals?
- Are you familiar with SUNET’s vision?
- Have you been involved in the strategy/vision communication planning?
- If yes, how has the strategy/vision plan been communicated?
- Are you satisfied with the outcome of the communication of the current strategy/vision?
- What are the main communication activities for implementation of the strategy/vision?
• What medium/channels for communication are used at present?
• What challenges are there to develop concerning communication of the strategy/vision?
• Do you have any recommendations on improvement of the strategy/vision communication?
• What would be your preferred communication medium/channel for the future?
• What kind of information do SUNET communicate to you?
• Are you satisfied with the information received?
• How frequent is the information provided?
• With whom do you communicate most with within SUNET?
• What is the intensity of the communication with that person?
• From what communication medium/channels do you receive information from SUNET at present?
Appendix B - Letter to interviewees

Dear Sir/Madam,

The KTH Royal Institute would like to invite you to participate in a research project that will examine the role that communications play with reference to strategy implementation by the Swedish University Computer Network (SUNET). The project is being conducted by Annika A Stenmark and Wesley George from the department of Applied Mechanical Engineering.

The objectives of the project are to: (i) understand the role that internal corporate communications have on strategy implementation (ii) to identify the preferences and needs of actors that collaborate with SUNET, and (iii) identify ways in which the current communication methods can be improved to meet the needs of stakeholders.

We believe this research is important and timely for the organisation as it is currently seeking to improve its communication plan to foster and maintain value-enhancing inter-organisation relationship. This research is important and timely for the organisation to assist in its upcoming strategic planning.

What makes this research unique is that we will be looking at the role you and your organisation play in SUNET’s strategic implementation.

Participation in this research will therefore involve the following:

• Semi-structured interviews with you, which would last around 30 minutes. The interview would be centred on your present communication with SUNET and if there is a gap that can be filled to enhance the relationship.

Confidentiality will of course be assured. Permission is requested to record and transcribe the interviews. A copy of the transcript would be sent to you to attest to the truthfulness of its content before proceeding with the research. With reference to ethics, I guarantee that all research findings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Anonymity is assured. No source will be identified or comment attributed without express permission of the originator. The outcome of this section of the research will aid SUNET in its continuous improvement to serve your needs better. We look forward to speaking with you about your involvement in this important research.

Thanking you,

Annika and Wesley

Master students, Project Management and Operational Development
KTH Royal Institute of Technology
# Appendix C - Breakdown interview structure

Table C.1: Interview breakdown structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Position &amp; Organisation</th>
<th>Communication channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project Manager, Swedish University of Technology</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CIO, Swedish University of Technology</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CIO, Swedish University of Technology</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SUNET Board member</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Employee - SUNET</td>
<td>Face-to- face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SUNET Board member</td>
<td>Face-to- face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SUNET Board member</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Employee - SUNET</td>
<td>Adobe Connect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>