

Interviews about the Practical Implementation of the Intranet in Enterprises

Technical Report ifi-2005.04

Christos Kefos, Reinhard Riedl
Department of Informatics
University of Zurich
8057 Zurich, Switzerland
kefos@ifi.unizh.ch

Abstract

We have conducted 20 interviews with the representatives from several enterprises. The purpose of the interviews was to gather the mindset of the enterprises concerning the Intranet and how they have integrated it in their activities.

The technical report is structured as follows: In the first part we give an overview of the enterprises' profile. What industries they are in, what size they have and which position our interview partner fill. In the second part we summarize the interviews and present the outcomes textually and graphically. The third part gives the full interviews with our interviewees.

Acknowledgement

My first and foremost thanks go to my thesis advisors Prof. Dr. Lutz Richter of the Department of Informatics (IFI) for both the close supervision and the countless scientific discussions which enabled me to finalize the thesis.

Further, I would like to thank also my interview partners for both taking the time to conduct the interviews and giving me the opportunity to get an insight into the practical application of the Intranet.

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1. Introduction

This technical report contains the interviews conducted with several enterprises as part of the doctorate thesis project of the first author ([Kefo05])¹. The summary of the interviews is taken from [Kefo05].

The purpose of the interviews was to gather the mindset of the enterprises concerning the Intranet, how they use it, what is important to them, and how they have integrated it in their activities. Thus, we wanted to gain an insight of the practical implementation in the industry. We therefore have conducted 20 interviews with the representatives from several enterprises.

The results of the interviews are consistently compared with the literature of corporate communication². The purpose is to find similarities and differences between the state-of-the-art in practice and the literature.

The organization of the technical report is as follows: The second chapter gives a comprehensive overview of the visited enterprises and the positions the interviewees hold. The third chapter summarizes the interviews textually and graphically and derives insights from the practical implementation in the industry. The fourth chapter gives a summary of the outcomes. Lastly, the full length of the interviews is presented.

2. Company Profiles

In the following, we will give a short overview of the interviewed enterprises, the number of interview partners, and their position in the company.

Industry/ Company name	Size	Activities	#Interview Partner	Position of Interview Partner
Automotive 1	C	International	1	IT Manager
Automotive 2	A	International	1	Manager Application Development
Banking 1	A	National	2	Webmaster and Member Internal Communication
Banking 2	A	National	1	Head of Distribution Management
Banking 3	A	International	1	Head Web Solutions and -Technologies
Insurance 1	C	International	1	Head E-Business
Insurance 2	A	International	1	Manager E-Business Development
Insurance 3	B	National	1	Member Corporate

¹ Supervised by Prof. Dr. Lutz Richter

² For an introduction to corporate communication see [Kefo05], chapter 5.

				Communication
Insurance 4	A	International	1	Project Manager of Portal Projects
Insurance 5	C	International	1	Head Web Marketing
Logistics & Transportation 1	B	International	1	Head E-Business
Logistics & Transportation 2	B	National	2	Producer Internal Communication and Head of Operations I-net
Logistics & Transportation 3	B	International	1	CIO
Pharma 1	C	International	1	Senior Manager Business Planning
Research Laboratory	B	International	2	Communications Manager and Member Internal Communication
Retailer 1	B	National	1	Project Manager Intranet
Retailer 2	B	National	1	Head Corporate Internet Business Solutions
Telecommunication 1	C	International	1	IT Support
Telecommunication 2	A	National	1	Member Media and Public Relations
Telecommunication 3	A	National	1	Head of New Media

Table 2.1 Overview of the interview data

Legend:

1. To ensure anonymity of the enterprises, all names are set together of a consecutive number and the industry the enterprises are in.
2. Size is divided in three subcategories:
 - A: Company has less than 5000 employees
 - B: Company has between 5001 and 50000 employees
 - C: Company has more than 50001 employees

Table 2.1 shows the industries: Banking, Insurance, Telecommunication, Logistics & Transportation, Pharmaceutical, Retailer, Automotive and Research.

We group these industries in following industrial sectors:

1. Financial Institutes (Banking, Insurance)
2. Manufacturing Industry (Industrial Manufacturer, Pharmaceutical, Automotive)
3. Service Provider (Logistics & Transportation, Retailer, Telecommunication, Research)

Table 2.2 shows the industries of the interviewed enterprises and their frequency in our interview portfolio:

Industry	# Companies
Automotive	2
Banking	3
Insurance	5
Logistics & Transportation	3
Pharmaceutical	1
Research Laboratories	1
Retailer	2
Telecommunication	3

Table 2.2 Interview portfolio

Table 2.3 gives an overview of the enterprises' size and their frequency in our interview portfolio:

Size	# Companies
< 5000 (A)	9
5001 – 50000 (B)	4
> 50001 (C)	7

Table 2.3 Company size

Table 2.4 gives an overview of enterprises' activities and their frequency in our interview portfolio:

Activities	# Companies
International	12
National	8

Table 2.4 Company activities

Table 2.5 gives an overview of business sectors and their frequency in our interview portfolio:

Business Sectors	# Companies
Financial Institutes	8
Service Provider	9
Manufacturing Industry	3

Table 2.5 Business sectors

3. Outcomes of the Interviews

The results of the interviews are structured in themes according to the questions posed. The main topics of the questionnaire are:

1. Function and purpose of the Intranet potentially classified by industry.
2. Change of structures and processes due to the use of the Intranet.
3. Topics and criteria for the design of the Intranet.
4. Tools and measures for quality assurance.
5. Usage of controlling mechanisms.
6. Relevance of the Intranet for the company.
7. Strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet.
8. Trend of the Intranet in the company resp. industry.
9. Where the enterprises stand concerning the Intranet.
10. What corporate goals are pursuit and how they are integrated.
11. Responsibility of the Intranet.
12. Benefits from the Intranet for enterprises and employees.
13. Conducting trainings for the Intranet.
14. What feedback do enterprises get from employees.
15. What are the most common feedback mechanisms.
16. Involvement of employees in Intranet design.

In the following, we will work out the above mentioned points in more detail, where the results are a summary of the interviews conducted. Moreover, it has to be mentioned that the purpose of the interviews was neither to see where each company stands nor to pick out an interviewee and state what she or he has said regarding a certain question. The results are also summarized in charts. It also has to be mentioned further that the interviewees were free to state multiple naming to the posed questions so that the sum of the points in the charts can exceed 20.

(1) Function and purpose of the Intranet potentially classified by industry

So far, the Intranet is used as an information medium by all enterprises. Financial institutes use it exclusively as an information medium, whereas non-financial institutes in the long run want to go further and integrate it more in their corporate activities. This means that they want to map the company's processes as far as possible on the Intranet. The trend is to transform the current information medium to a communication medium and further to an integrated work instrument, which enables information exchange, communication, and collaboration.

Other functions of the Intranet also have been mentioned. The Intranet is used as (1) an archive medium, (2) a document management system, (3) a knowledge sharing platform, or (4) an e-Learning platform. The first point is a hint that in future, the Intranet will increase rapidly in size. The third point is a starting point that the Intranet will become an important knowledge sharing and creation platform in the company.

The transformation of the Intranet will go from a working instrument to a knowledge management tool.

The purpose of the enterprises in using the Intranet is to support the employees in their daily business by providing them with relevant information and to increase the work efficiency.

The functions of the Intranet are displayed in figure 3.1. We see that the main function is the information distribution (16 naming), followed by the communication medium (6 naming), and work instrument (4 naming). In the pillar, “Other” further naming are summarized. The Intranet is also used as an archive medium, a document management system, a knowledge sharing platform, or as a support platform for the sales department.

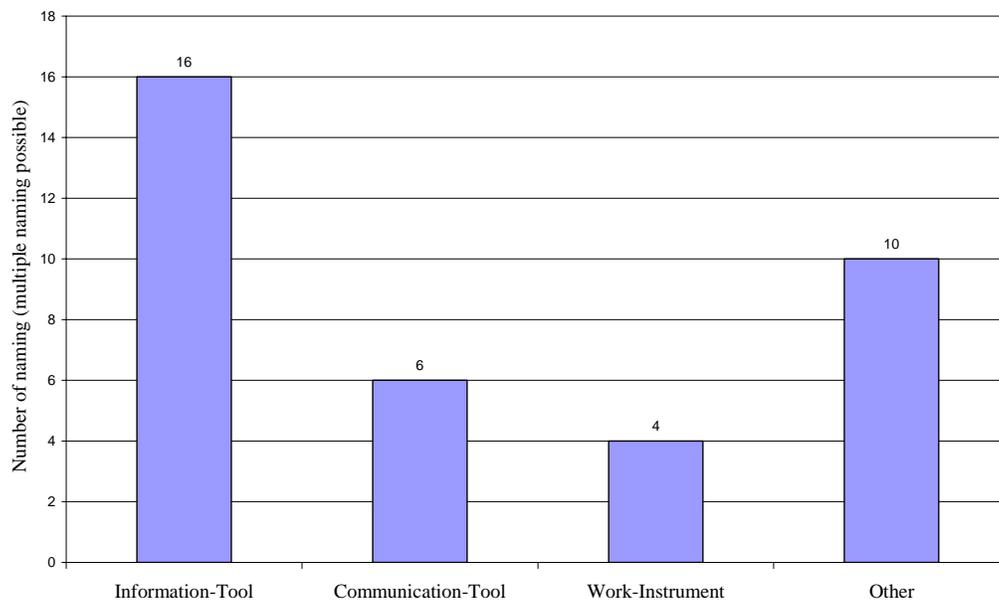


Figure 3.1 Functions of the Intranet

Figure 3.2 shows the Intranet functions sorted by business sectors.

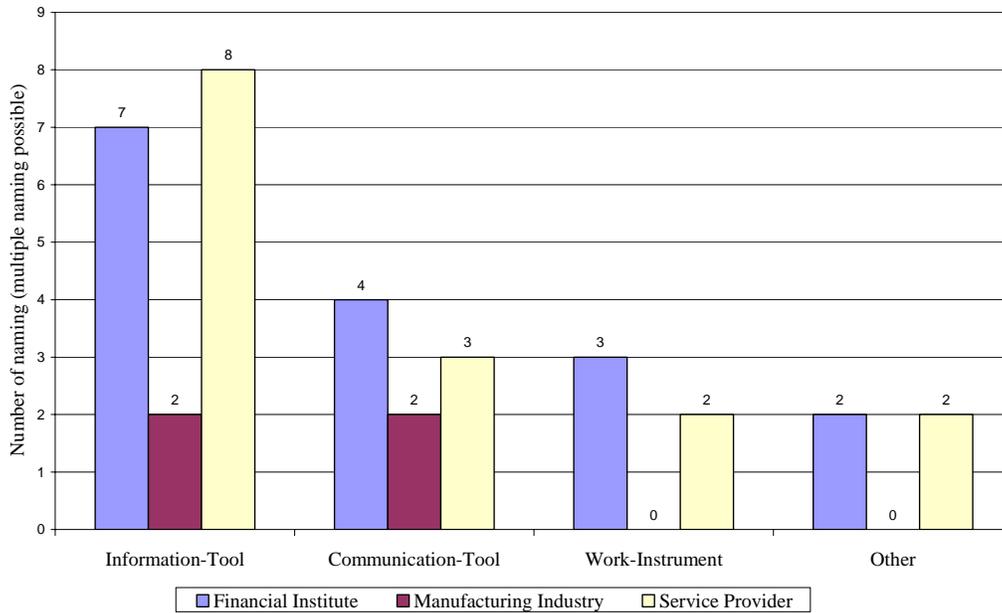


Figure 3.2 Function of the Intranet by business sectors

(2) Change of structures and processes due to the use of the Intranet

We have seen in the interviews that the Intranet is not changing the existing organizational structures. In contrast, the Intranet structure is aligned with the organizational structure. Based on our results, we object the statement of Hoffmann (Hoff01, p. 137) that the Intranet has impacts on the organizational structure. The organizational processes also have not been changed except for the human resources department which has been affected by the Intranet, and this is mentioned from some enterprises. I.e. hiring, be it internal or external, is made more and more through the web. With the increased adaptation of processes onto the Intranet, the organizational processes will change. Meier ([Meie02]) states that the introduction of new communication technologies changes the work processes, lead to new interaction situations and new communication forms.³

The communication processes have changed due to the use of the Intranet. Information is no longer distributed by email, but put on the Intranet. It has to be specified that information is put on the Intranet if it is of a corporate-wide concern. Information which concerns only a few people is still sent by email. Also, the process of how and by whom information is put on the Intranet has changed. More quality assurance has been integrated to guarantee up-to-date information. The Intranet enables also a faster communication and annuls the information asymmetry within and between the hierarchies. It is still used as an one way communication medium. For two way communication, email is used.

³ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.5.3, p.40.

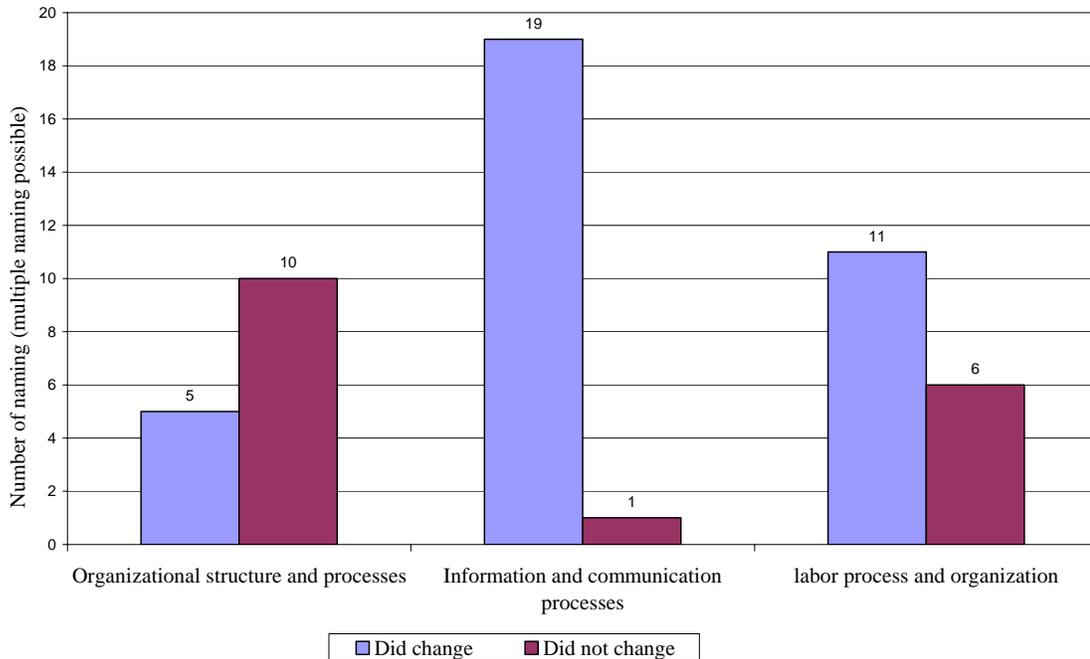


Figure 3.3 Organizational changes

First, we need to explain why multiple naming is possible. The reason is that sometimes only some parts of the company have been affected. E.g. only the labor organization of the human resources department may have changed, but not the rest of the company.

Deriving from figure 3.3, we see that in most enterprises the organizational structure and processes did not change. A statement from the interview partners was that the Intranet structure has to align with the organizational structure and not the other way round. Therefore, the organizational structure is mapped onto the Intranet. Furthermore, a not surprising conclusion is the change of information and communication processes. The one outlier appears because the IT department started to build its own Intranet satisfying its local needs. At the time of the interview, the development was still going on. The third conclusion we derive from figure 3.3 is that in some enterprises, there was also a change in the labor organization and processes. The company must be aware of that the more advanced the Intranet in the transformation phase is, the more the company has to take into account that not only information processes will change, but also labor organization and processes will have to be reengineered, in order to confirm to the new circumstances. Will the company neglect this fact, then a gap between information process and labor organization and process will occur, which could cause a logical break in the process chain. This break results in the loss of the advantages such as work efficiency, employee satisfaction, and so forth.

(3) Topics and criteria for the design of the Intranet

Depending on the company, the topics of the Intranet content vary understandably. The content is business oriented and must support the employees on their daily business. This is also a major requirement as discussed in corporate communication.⁴ We see that the enterprises hold to this point since it is a vital factor for them. Financial Institutions have a “News” category where the most accurate news are published. This “News” category, is very important for them since information is their business. For the other industries such as Retail, Transportation, etc., news are also important, but the importance is not so highly ranked as it is for Financial Institutions. The distribution of further information is target group oriented. The Intranet is divided into areas according the target groups such as sales, human resources, category management, and management. Each group gets the necessary information, e.g. product information. Further topics of the content support the corporate structure and culture and human relations within the company. These are supported by organizational charts, team presentations, contact pages, regal affairs, travel and expenses information, ongoing and completed projects. The third topic is the provision of service such as electronic phone and address book, train time-table, a platform for selling and buying of bicycles, surfboards, theater tickets, lifts, and etc. The structure of the Intranet is organization and topic oriented. The first developments of the Intranet were geared towards the organizational structure. Later on, further developments topic oriented structures were added so that one can navigate through the Intranet by organization or topic. For the next developments of the Intranet, two trends can be identifies among the enterprises. First, enterprises shift to have only a topic oriented navigation. Second, enterprises only have an organizational navigation because they say that since the organization is mapped on the Intranet, the employees, by surfing through the Intranet, have the opportunity to deal with the organizational structure and to become more familiar with it. There is one financial company, Insurance 1, which follows another way of presenting information to the users. They divide the Intranet into six main areas which are not strictly separated, but overlap one another. The 1st area is related to the organization. The 2nd area is related to the business processes i.e. everything and every process which deals with the customer. The 3rd area contains supports processes such as human resources, IT, marketing services, etc. The 4th area contains private and business services, which are made available for the employees. The 5th area contains information about key projects of the company. Each project has its own project database, which is managed by the project manager. Finally, the 6th area contains “documentation & knowledge”.

There are several points to mention on figure 3.4. First, the list is not complete. Second, the number of naming is not very precise because the interviewees mentioned a few of them and finalized with “etc.” Third, the most important conclusions which can be derived from figure 3.4 are set in the first three naming. The first conclusion is that the information provided by the Intranet must be business-oriented. The second conclusion is that each department must have its own specific area where it can publish information related to that department.

⁴. See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p.32.

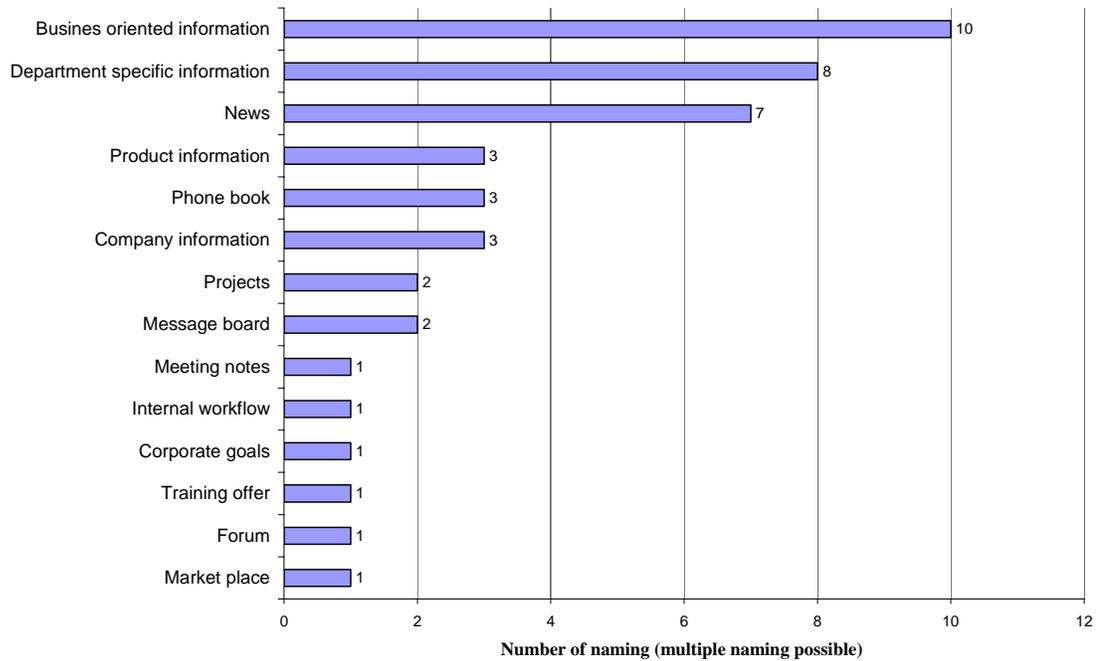


Figure 3.4 Topics and content of the intranets

The next conclusion is the importance of “news” rubric because it keeps on the one hand the employees informed and on the other hand, it ensures a high information level within the company. The second important part could be summarized as “information”. This is information on products, projects, and company information. We see that the limitation between rich and richness, discussed in corporate communication, is broken open by the new medium Intranet.⁵

(4) Tools and measures for quality assurance

In summary, it can be said that different quality assurance levels exist among the enterprises. First, most enterprises use professional content management systems (one is using front page to edit the pages) and avail the technical features these systems provide in order to assure the quality. Such features are expiry date for each page, email dispatch to the responsible person if a page expires, validity definition of pages (e.g. “this page is valid from ... to ...), versioning, and archiving. Furthermore, the enterprises have implemented a quality assurance process for web publishing. There are two processes:

1. Publishing news which is relevant for the entire company: Corporate communication (CC) is responsible for News publishing. The information comes either from management or is composed from the CC department itself. CC is afterwards responsible for the accuracy of the information. It decides if an update, a deletion, or a replacement is necessary.

⁵ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.1, p. 26.

2. Publishing information composed by different departments: Each department has the right to compose and publish information. At this level, the two or four eyes principle exists. This means that the content is looked over by the department supervisor. He can accept or refuse the article. In case of a refusal, the article goes back to the author for a revision. In case of an acceptance, the article is passed to the editor who publishes it on the Intranet. Only the editors are allowed to publish information on the Intranet. From then on, the department is responsible for the accuracy of the information. Someone of the department has to go from time to time through the pages to guarantee the quality. The company practices self-responsibility of the departments. CC goes occasionally through the web pages of the Intranet to review style, format, wording and length of the articles.

(5) Usage of controlling mechanisms

Enterprises use web tools to generate statistics such as hit rates, search words, rankings etc. These statistics are generated on a regular basis and on request of departments. Up to now, there is almost an equality between enterprises that use and enterprises that do not use further the outcome of those statistics. The results are used to improve the Intranet. An example is looking at what is accessed and what not. Based on those results, content is removed or replaced.

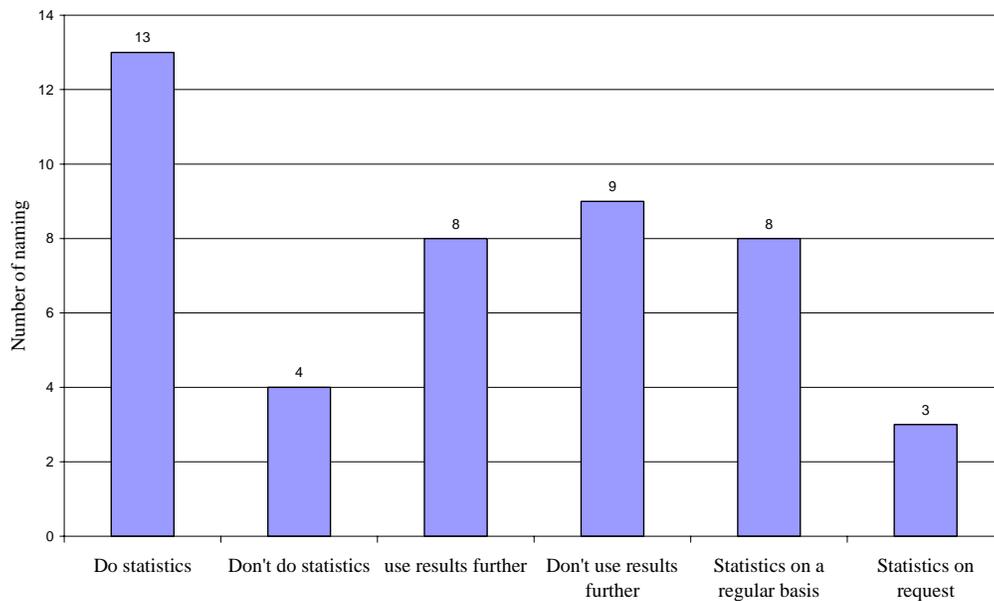


Figure 3.5 Usage of statistic tools

Although most enterprises do web statistics, we see that a lot of them do not use the outcomes to further improve the Intranet. It is an equal part of those who use it and those who do not. It can also be seen that enterprises do statistics on a regular basis.

Latter make statistics also on demand. There are three enterprises which usually do statistics ad-hoc.

(6) Relevance of the Intranet for the company

Every interview partner said that the Intranet is a benefit for both the company and the employees although nobody measures the benefit of the Intranet directly. “Directly” in this context means that there are no quantitative figures which indicate the success or failure of the Intranet. Information on this are gathered by employee surveys, web statistics and subjective interpretation.

Two trends concerning the importance of the Intranet can be identified. For the first group, the Intranet is not that important. The statement was that one should not overestimate its importance. The Intranet is a communication channel to provide information. There are more important applications for the company. For the second group, the Intranet is very important. One statement was also that the company could not survive for long if the Intranet would break down.

The difference between the two statements can be explained with the integration of the Intranet into the business processes. The Intranet of the second group is more integrated into the business process than the one of the first group. This means that applications and processes are integrated in the Intranet. For the second group, the Intranet is a single entry point. For the first group the Intranet is an instrument beside others. It is not a single entry point for applications or processes. There are also other ways to access applications.

(7) Strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet

The most common strengths of the Intranet mentioned by the interviewees are shown in figure 3.6.

We see that by far the possibility to distribute information fast within the company is the most valued strength of the Intranet. This is important because it enables a fast reaction of the company to the changing environment. This is of a vital importance nowadays.⁶ The second strength which attracts attention is the “archive medium” attribute. It can be concluded that the Intranet is used as a storage medium, which in turn leads to an increase of information content. If no appropriate controlling mechanism is implemented, the huge information will degenerate to an information overflow and latter to an information graveyard.

⁶ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p. 32.

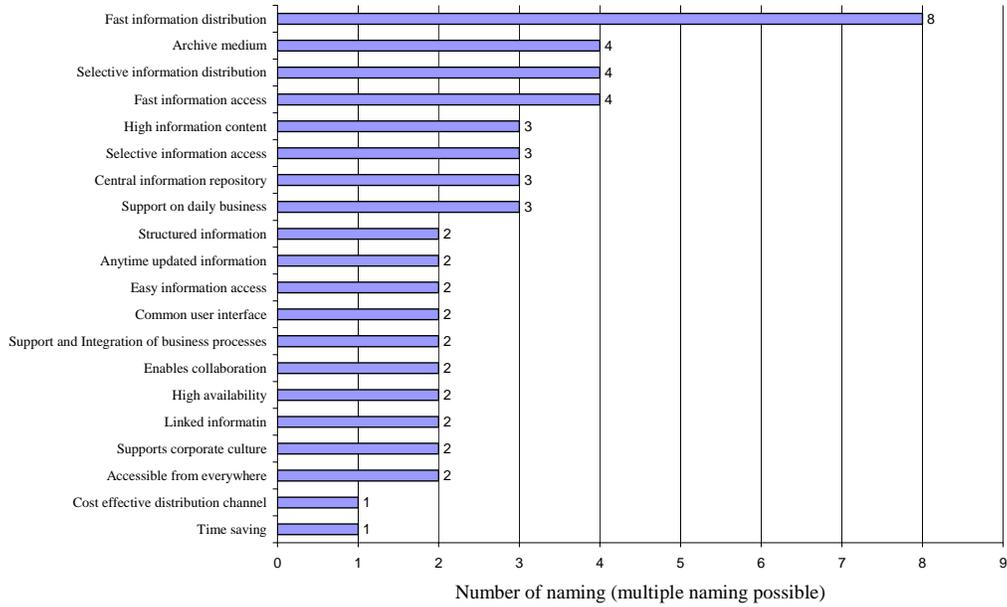


Figure 3.6 Intranet strengths

Figure 3.7 shows the weaknesses which were mentioned by the interviewees.

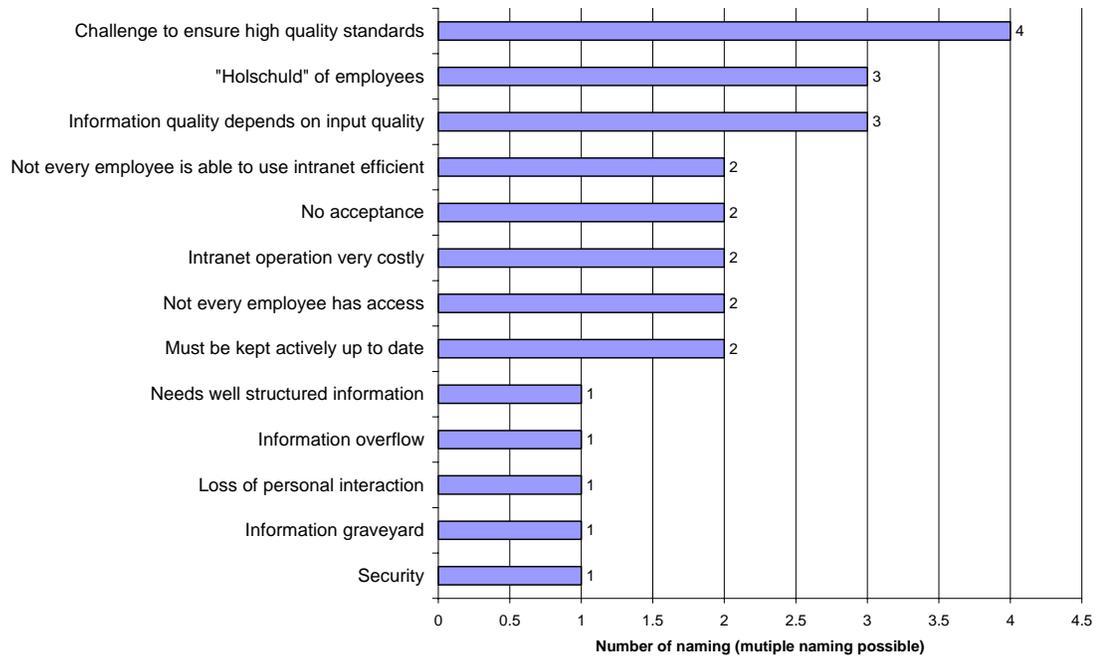


Figure 3.7 Intranet weaknesses

(8) *Trend of the Intranet in the company resp. industry*

As mentioned above, a future trend of the Intranet is the augmented integration of business applications and processes. The Intranet should become the single entry point for information, applications and processes. Some enterprises have the vision: The portal as the employee's desktop. We state that the Intranet will become a tool for knowledge creation and sharing. Figure 3.8 shows the transformation phases of Intranet development:

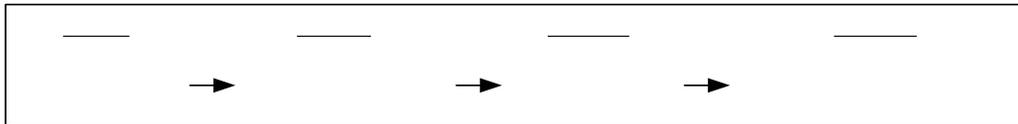


Figure 3.8 Transformation phases of the Intranet

As the interviewees stated, they foster the transformation of the Intranet from the information tool to become a work instrument tool. Hardly any got that far to mention knowledge management. The phases II and III (s. figure 3.8) also imply that the Intranet will increasingly enable collaboration between the organization members. This demands to look closer into the theories of the media usage for group work. The Media Richness Theory [DaLe86] combines the choice of the medium with the task that the organizational members have to solve together. The authors Daft et al. [DaLe86] address the issue of why organizations do process information. They state that the reasons are twofold. First, organizations want to reduce uncertainty and second, they want to reduce equivocality. Therefore, they divide the tasks in organizations into uncertain and equivocal. An equivocal task cannot be solved even with a lot of information, whereas an uncertain can be solved if all necessary information are available. The TIP Theory⁷ assumes that teams are involved in a social and organizational environment and that their behavior can only be understood in this context. The theory consists of statements concerning the nature of groups, the temporal structuring of group work, and team interaction processes. Groups fulfill three functions: (1) The production function, (2) the member assistance function and (3) the group well-being function. Group interaction processes deal with the work flow on a low level. Characteristics of the temporal structuring of group work are the chronology, the work rhythm, and the efficient assignment of time periods to actions. The Theory of Media Synchronicity [DeVa99] state that all tasks are based on two cooperation processes: Conveyance and convergence. Further, it introduces five media capabilities that are important to group work. These are: Immediacy of feedback, symbol variety, parallelism, rehearsability and reproducibility. The communication effectiveness is affected by matching the media capabilities to the needs of communication processes. DeSanctis et al. [DePo94] propose the Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) as an approach for studying the role of advanced information technologies. AST analyses the change processes from two points: (1) The types of structures that are provided by advanced technologies, and (2) the

Phase I
Information Tool

⁷ See [Schw01], p. 55. TIP stands for Time, Interaction and Performance.

structures that are emerged in human action as people interact with these technologies. Thus, there are structures in technology and structures in actions. AST states that the success of the media usage depends on complex, feedback-oriented mechanisms. If media usage leads to the intended results, it depends on the handling of the cooperation medium and if it fits to the requested task. The cooperation medium can be described with its structural features and its spirit. The structural features, or capabilities, are the functions of the medium, such as anonymous recording of ideas, periodic pooling of comments, or alternative voting algorithms for making group choices. The spirit is the intent with regard to values and goals of the underlying system. The spirit shows how to use and interpret the functions of the cooperative medium: How to design the decision making process? Which leadership style is propagated? Which significance has the efficiency?

Structural features and spirit build the structural potential of a system in which group are able to build their social structures. The authors introduce constructs and seven propositions of the AST.⁸

Kuppinger et al. [KuWo00] present the transformation of the Intranet to knowledge management by means of the Organizational IQ⁹ method. In addition, they discuss the available technologies and the necessary processes and strategies to success.

(9) Where the enterprises stand concerning the Intranet

First, the enterprises have recognized that the Intranet is no longer considered a toy of the IT department. It is, when correctly applied, an important tool for corporate communication. The Intranet has become an important player in the corporate activities. The enterprises became aware of that it is a competition factor since it fosters fast information exchange and improves work efficiency. Therefore, the responsibility of Intranet usage has shifted from the IT to the corporate communication department. However, it must be said that competition for resources Intranet projects are second choice. Management still has to be convinced to grant resources for Intranet enhancements because the benefit, in contrast to the costs which can be showed in writing, is elusive. Nevertheless, departments having recognized its value push further the Intranet developments. During the interviews, the results came out that some enterprises plan the second or third redesign of the Intranet.

(10) What corporate goals are pursued and how they are integrated

Corporate goals are published on the Intranet and serve as a clarification and legitimation of corporate activities. The management publishes the corporate strategy and explains and the reasons why the actions take place. The employees are informed about the situation and become more integrated into the company. This increases motivation and employee satisfaction which is an important point mentioned in corporate communication. The employees must be integrated in the short and long-

⁸ For further information see [DePo94], p. 127 et seqq.

⁹ This method was developed at the Stanford University, [KuWo00], p. 15.

term activities of the company. By doing so, the identification of the employee with the company increases and in the end, it has positive effects on corporate performance.¹⁰ Interview partners confirmed that the employees no longer feel excluded, but more as part of the company. Schick ([Schi02]) also mentioned that corporate Intranets act as a communication channel.¹¹ This is also confirmed by the interviewees (s. figure 3.9).

Corporate goals and how they are supported by the Intranet is shown in figure 3.9.

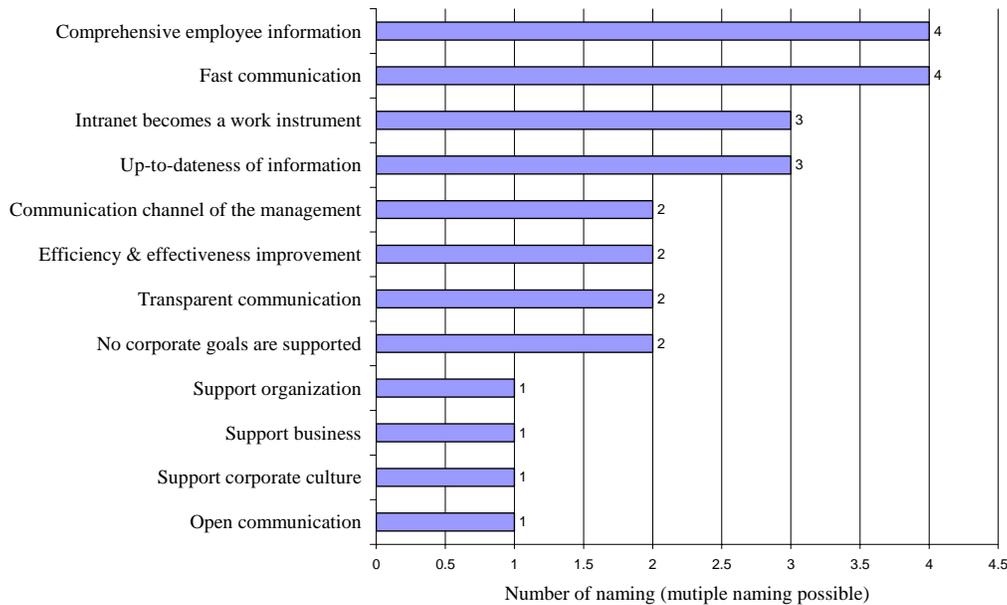


Figure 3.9 Corporate goals and their implementation

Different surveys about the goals of employee and corporate communication were conducted. The results of those comply with our results. These surveys can be checked up in corporate communication.¹²

(11) Responsibility of the Intranet

It was a clear statement from the interview partners that the Intranet is affiliated to the internal communication. Only one interview partner confirmed that the Intranet is affiliated with IT. The reason is that the IT department started to build a local Intranet to support better the needs of the local workforce than those of the global Intranet of the parent company does.

According to the interview partners, at the beginning of the Internet/Intranet hype, the Intranet was affiliated with the IT department because IT started to use it as an information tool with a sort of toy character. “It was cool to have an Intranet and do

¹⁰ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p.32.

¹¹ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.7, p.42.

¹² See [Kefo05], chapter 5.5.1, p. 33 et seqq.

fancy things with it”. Over the years, the Intranet grew and people saw that it is more than just a fancy tool. They recognized that it was an efficient communication tool. People started to ask for more information and asked to be functionally integrated into it. At that time, IT realized it neither had the skills nor the requirements asked for under its responsibility. So IT handed over the responsibility of content editing and processing to internal communication. IT is now responsible for technical development and support of the Intranet and internal communication is responsible for content affairs.

(12) Benefits from the Intranet for enterprises and employees

According to the interviews, a company benefits from the Intranet. The major benefits are shown in figure 3.10. It can be seen that Armbrecht’s view of an increased company performance can be confirmed. This statement confirms the increase in work efficiency, the cost reduction and the increase of customer satisfaction.¹³ Another benefit for the company is the fast access of information. According to Mast ([Mast02]), this is important in order to secure the competitive advantage because fast communication enables fast acting.¹⁴

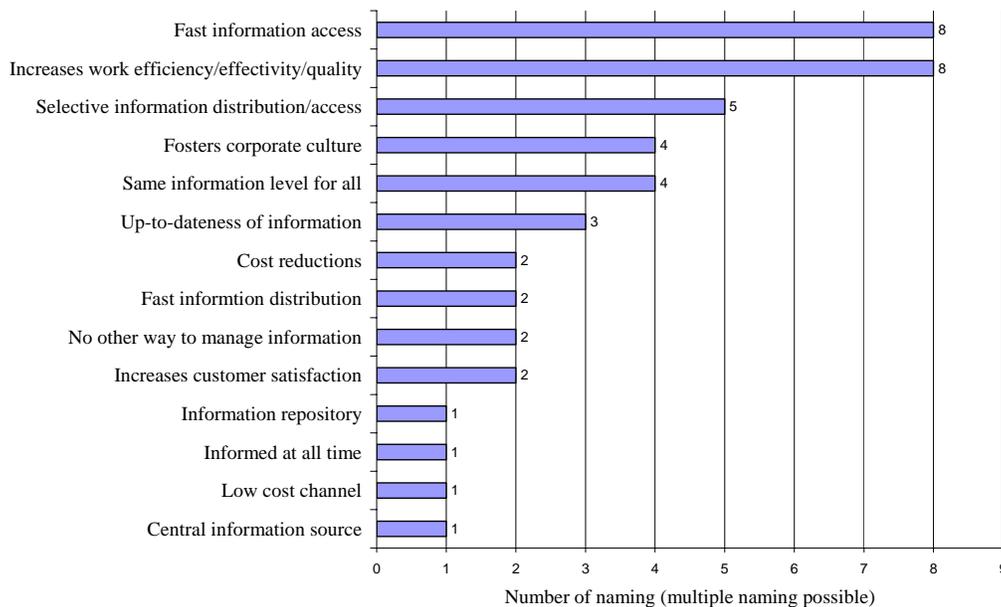


Figure 3.10 Corporate benefits from the Intranet

We also asked if the employees benefit from the Intranet. Our interview partners confirmed it once again. In contrast to the conclusion of the Intranet report of

¹³ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p. 32.

¹⁴ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p. 32.

WEBCORP¹⁵, employees have no benefit from the Intranet for their daily work. The contrary statements can be attributed to the different interview partners of the WEBCORP and our survey. WEBCORP directly asked the employees in a questionnaire, and we asked the interview partner who representatively answered on behalf of the employees. Two interview partners (Telecommunication 1 and Retailer 1) confirmed that not all employees benefit from the Intranet. The interviewee of Telecommunication 1 stated that the employees who have worked longer in the company have built their own personal relationship so that they sidestep the business processes that are mapped onto the Intranet. They know whom to call to get things done. The interviewee of Retailer 1 argued in another direction. He said that elderly employees have in some point difficulties to deal with the Intranet because they have an aversion against the Intranet. To help those employees, they conducted training sessions which in return fostered the Intranet acceptance. On a personal level, the benefit of the employee is that he also gets informed about company activities. He has the ability to look at where the direction of the company is heading towards. Also he has the possibility to get involved in the activities and get a chance to understand the action taken by the company. In turn, it results in increased employee motivation and corporate culture.¹⁶

The benefits for the employees are in figure 3.11.

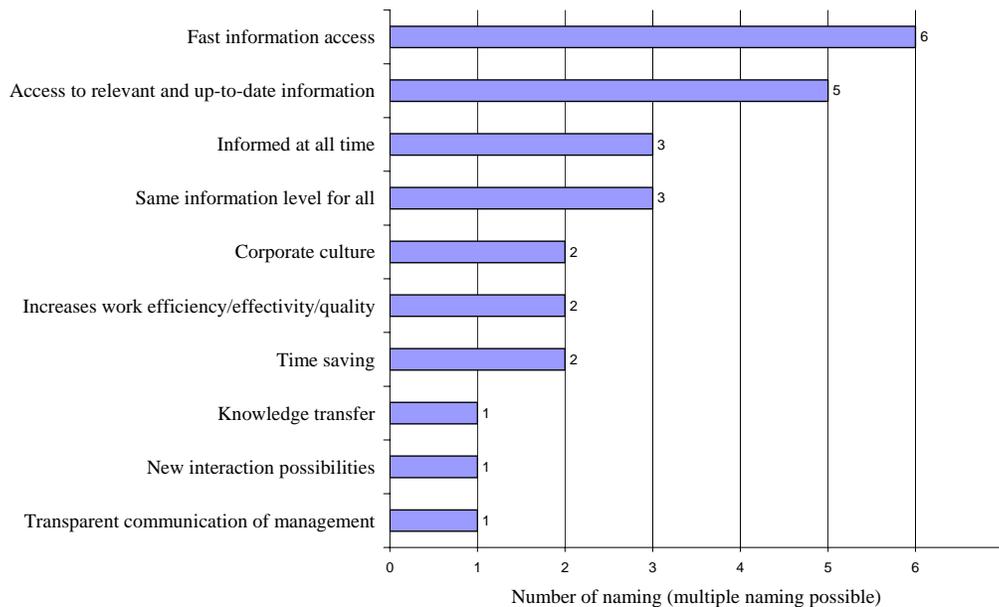


Figure 3.11 Employee benefits from the Intranet

¹⁵ Corporate name has been changed by the author. WEBCORP Intranet Report 2003, „Eine Analyse Schweizer Intranets“, November 2003, p. 36.

¹⁶ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.4, p. 32.

(13) Conducting trainings for the Intranet

Most enterprises do not conduct any training on how to use the Intranet although corporate communication states that it is important to train the employees in communicative and media competence.¹⁷ Communicative competence is understood as the general faculty of speech of individuals¹⁸ or the capability to show behavior which is not imitated¹⁹. Media competence is the capability of interaction with media and the understanding, perception, reception, processing and design of media content.²⁰ In detail, it can be said that if the Intranet is used as an information channel, then employees are not trained because the view of the enterprises is that the navigation through the Intranet should be self-explanatory. On the other hand, if workflows and web applications are integrated into the Intranet, then enterprises tend to give some training. The more workflows and web applications that are integrated, the more enterprises realize that training the employees for its use is necessary.

(14) What feedback do enterprises get from the employees

Enterprises get all sort of feedback from their employees concerning the Intranet. These feedbacks can be positive or negative, coming from satisfied or unsatisfied employees. Some enterprises get a lot, some little and some scarcely any feedback. It can be said that giving feedback or not depends on the corporate culture. One interviewee stated that if there is no feedback, then everything must be alright, which stands in contrast to another interviewee who said that if there is no feedback people got used to the deficits. Another explanation which can be extracted from the interviews is that people resign because nothing happens to improve the Intranet quality after the feedback is sent. “The department does not feel responsible for this task”, was the statement.

Almost all interviews show that much attention is given to feedback. It is gathered, sorted out and used to improve the quality. People who sent feedback usually get also feedback explaining them if their suggestion can be taken into account and what will happen.

Three enterprises stated that they actively look for feedback. They contact employees directly or through surveys which they conduct once in a while and ask them about possible improvements.

(15) What are the most common feedback mechanisms

The feedback mechanisms which the employees use to send feedback are shown in figure 3.12.

¹⁷ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.5.3, p. 40.

¹⁸ See [Hoff01], p. 70.

¹⁹ See [Baac73], p. 260.

²⁰ See [Hoff01], p. 71.

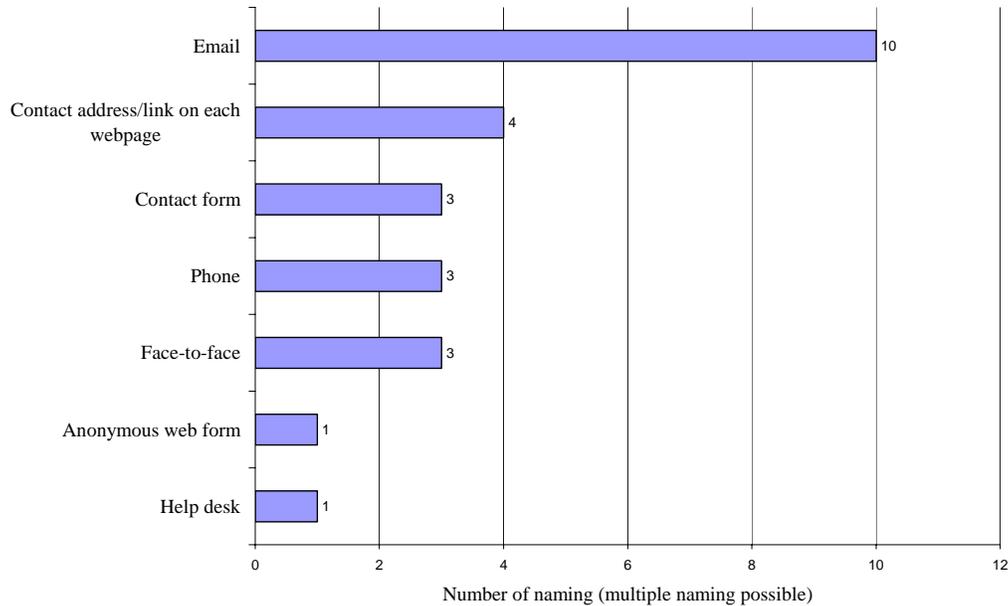


Figure 3.12 Feedback mechanism

We see that email is the most used tool to give feedback followed by the contact addresses and links which are on each webpage. A contact address has among others also a phone number of the person in charge. A contact link generates an email which is sent to the person in charge which is stated on the webpage. The contact form also usually generates an email, which will be sent with an except when the contact form is a built-in form of the content management tool (CMS). In this case, the form is handled according the rules of the CMS. Hence, clicking on a contact link also generates an email, which leads to the conclusion that contact links and forms are in fact automatically generated emails.

”Face-to-face” means that feedback is given in a meeting, during a conversation or during a coffee break, everywhere where people meet and talk to each other. It is noticeable that there is one company which only uses anonymous web forms to gather feedback from employees.

Gathering feedback from employees is important because it shows if the receiver has understood the message. This is also discussed in the theoretical part of corporate communication.²¹

(16) Involvement of employees in Intranet design

All enterprises except two involve their employees in the one or another in the design of the Intranet. One of those two said enterprises have said that the Intranet was designed from the IT and human resources department.

The extent to which employees are involved in the design is restricted by corporate guidelines, standards, styles and formats. Before starting to design the Intranet resp.

²¹ See [Kefo05], chapter 5.1, p. 25 and chapter 5.2, p. 29.

parts of it, the responsible project team first gathers employees, company needs, and requirements. In the interviews, different ways have been mentioned. Usually a team does not stick to one method, but applies a mix of methods to gather the requirements as accurate as possible. It can be distinguished between two main approaches. First, if meetings are conducted to gather information, then the project team invites people such as department supervisors, middle to top management, editor, authors, power user groups and division managers. To invite those people, it is important that they are able to give significant input not only from their point of view but also as representatives of the other employees. Second, when the project team wants to broaden the input by asking further the ordinary employees, they conduct surveys. A questionnaire is sent out or put on the Intranet and any employee can communicate his needs. In that way, the team gathers more input.

Usually, the project team combines both methods. In a first phase, power user group, managers, and editors are asked to give their input. After that a prototype is built, it is tested and released. In a second phase, employees are asked to use the prototype and give any input they have.

The outcomes show that the development of the Intranet is user-oriented. User's needs and requirement must be respected when the Intranet be of any help. Those who do not deal with customer requirements will in the long run fail to generate an added value to its stakeholders. In this case, we are positive about the fact that a competitive disadvantage for the company will emerge.

4. Conclusion

The interviews have emphasized the following trends in internal information management:

1. A broad awareness has evolved that the Intranet is no longer a toy, yet the management is not completely convinced about the possibilities of the Intranet.
2. The fostering of the Intranet as communication medium has increased labor efficiency and employee satisfaction.
3. The enterprises increasingly map their processes to the Intranet.
4. The Intranet changes the processes and operations but not the organization structure. In contrast, it adapts to the organization structure.
5. An information democracy is emerging within many enterprises. The greater the information democracy in a company is, the harder it is for the management to lead by information hiding.²²
6. There are several quality assuring processes which differ highly among enterprises, but there are few controlling mechanisms, if any, for the use of the medium itself.

We gained a deep insight of intranet's usage by the enterprises from the interviews. Among others, we got an understanding of its function and purpose as well as the goals of its usage, the organizational changes it implies, the controlling understanding of the enterprises, and the future trend of the intranet development, such as information tool, communication tool, work instrument and knowledge management tool.

Corporate communication and the interviews give us two different angles on corporate communication. Between both, there are differences and similarities as well as a disjoint view. This view gives us an additional comprehension about the usage of the Intranet in corporate communications. Because the Intranet as a communication channel is used for a short time period in enterprises, there is little research in literature about this topic.

A difference between the practical implementation in enterprises and the elucidations in corporate communication is that the introduction of the Intranet caused an organizational and labor process change in the company. We cannot confirm the change of the organization structure. Moreover, the interviewees told us that the Intranet structure is build according to the organization structure. These facts are associated with the medium as an information channel. Although corporate communication emphasizes the importance of communicative and media competence of employees, we saw in the interviews that hardly any company conducted training. The opinion by the majority was that the usage of the Intranet is self-explanatory and the corporate communication department assists for the composition of articles.

²² This does not imply that leadership per se is more difficult in a company with a well-developed information democracy.

Similarities lie in the area of communication and media competences. Both corporate communication and the interviews confirm that it is important to train the employees in this area. Another similarity is that the goals enterprises pursue with the Intranet correspond with the goals corporate communication lists. Also, the increase of work efficiency and effectivity can be confirmed, as well as the motivation of employees and their better integration in company activities. The illustrations in corporate communication state that feedback is a basic element of communication. This is supported by the enterprises. They have introduced feedback mechanism in order to gather employees' feedback. Another confirmation we got from the interviews is that the Intranet breaks open the relation between rich and richness. Fast information access enables the company to act fast and adapt to the changing environment. This is illustrated in corporate communication. The interviews show that enterprises have realized it and implemented in their corporate Intranets. Enterprises have also realized that fast acting increases competitiveness. Another similarity we gain here is that corporate communication highlights that internal communication supports corporate culture. Our interviews fully confirm this statement. A phenomenon which appeared is that Intranet fosters the information democracy in the company. This phenomenon is linked to the medium and could not be forecasted by corporate communication.

5. Interviews

In the following the interviews are listed which we have conducted with the enterprises.

5.1 Interview With Telecommunication 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It gives the possibility to use the information jointly in the company, it is an information channel. Further, it makes the information platform available and site independent. It is also used as an authentication platform, a centralized storage system and a common data channel. Legacy systems and applications are also integrated within the Intranet, in this case it is more than an information channel. It is a tool to support the employee in his work.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

The most important points to mention are the common data availability and actuality. As I mentioned above it is a sort of an archive where the data are hold centrally. I like to emphasize again the platform independency and the access from any location.

3. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

They depend on the organizational units, broken down into departments and divisions. Our Intranet is not a pure channel to present information, it is also a tool where applications are integrated. For example, an application to calculate distances, for ticketing etc. Each division has its specific services.

4. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The parent company defines the corporate criteria which we must use. It also provides the user interfaces and the tools which each country can use and enhance further.

5. *Do you have a systematic method for the design of the Intranet?*

The parent corporate provides us with guidelines which we more or less consider. The main criteria which I pay attention to are a good presentation of the information and a fast generation of the web pages. Latter to allow also a remote access with good performance.

6. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

Yes, it is. On the one hand there is a time saving and on the other hand it is an orientation help. The employee can look for more information on the Intranet if he needs to.

7. *Do you think that the employee benefit from the Intranet?*

Yes, the employees know where to look for relevant information. They do not need to search long to find the necessary information such as manuals, guidelines or documents. It is time saving for everybody.

8. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

At the moment we don't measure the benefit.

9. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees?*

At the moment we do not, but in the near futures we will do some statistics. Based on the outcomes we want to find out which content is visited, what the interests of the employees are and if it is necessary to change the content, navigation or structure to align with the user's needs. Further, we like to talk directly to employees to gather their needs.

10. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, I get feedback. Usually, it is direct feedback, face-to-face so to say. To get feedback the employees need to be motivated. Further, each feedback has to be taken positively and said directly that there is no time to change anything.

11. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Yes, requests are written in a log file which is processed further.

12. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?*

Yes and no. For the design of my personal pages I do not ask the employees. I design the pages in that way to support me at my daily work. If other departments work with my part of the Intranet then I ask them if they have some requirements and needs. We sit together and I gather their needs. After that I develop a prototype and we sit again together to discuss it.

13. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?*

This is an ongoing process because I conduct them if I see that something has to

be improved or enhanced.

14. *Which role does the Intranet play for your company in your opinion?*

The Intranet should become a work supporting tool in the company. It should be remotely accessible so that every employee is able to access necessary data from all over the world. Further, it should be a central data management tool.

15. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: The Intranet saves time and supports the daily business.

Weaknesses: The up-to- dateness is weak point. It is only up to date if it is kept up to date.

5.2 Interview With Telecommunication 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

Intranet is the main communication instrument for the internal communication. Complemented is it by email, an employee newspaper and regular management updated for the team meetings.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

On the one hand, with the Intranet one has the possibility to publish information, arranged according the importance, to all employees. On the other hand, it serves as an orientation help such as contacts, organizations, forums etc. as well as for the look up of information. In contrast to the print media which are usually disposed quickly, it is also used as an archive medium.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The Intranet should be a work instrument with all relevant information. Further, through internal communication and comprehensive employee information.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Our goal is to handle more and more processes through the Intranet. Let's take human resources for example. We have installed an employee self service where the employees can input by themselves absence, look at their vacation account or do their expenses. Also the project management is web based.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

First, information is to all employees available. Second, we are able to communicate faster.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

There is a simplification of the work flow and approval loops are automatically integrated.

7. *Do you conduct trainings in the company?*

We have workshops when a new tools is installed and we also have user and

superuser trainings.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The Intranet contains all topic concerning the company which are relevant and interesting for the employees. Including among others product news, company vision and strategy, annual goals, organization chart, forms for orders, etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We design the Intranet according to navigation and clarity, corporate design guidelines and the up-to-dateness of the news.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We have a web team which is responsible for editing and formatting of the content and the supervisor of internal communication is responsible for the accuracy of the content.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, the Intranet is an effective, low cost channel with which we reach almost all our employees. The Intranet has been established as the main communication channel among the employees and in conjunction with the email it allows a fast and comprehensive information of the employees.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes. This shows our utilization analysis. The more valuable the information for the employee is the more it gets queried.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

It's difficult to express it in numbers. But our utilization analysis shows clearly that the Intranet enjoys a high acceptance from our employees. Since the Intranet is not only used for pure information broadcast but also for ordering, IT support, HR forms etc. it leads to a considerable efficiency increase.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

We conduct utilization analysis using hit statistics on a regular basis for each web page. Thereby, we learn for example what the best day and time is to publish news.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, we get continuous feedback from the employees. Usually to sort out textual questions.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Yes, we have implemented many feedback possibilities in the Intranet.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

The Intranet-team and the internal communication are together responsible for the Intranet web pages. To publish new content the employees or teams have to fill out the publishing request form and send it to the Intranet-team. The Intranet-team decides then if something can be published or not.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Since the launch of the Intranet in 1999, we have conducted a comprehensive redesign for the first time in autumn 2003. Small adjustment are carried out continuously, usually according the needs.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

The Intranet will gain in relevance because the technical improvements lead to a simplification of its usage. Furthermore, a lot of internal tools are web-enabled and can be integrated in the Intranet.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: - flexibility,
 - speed and
 - the possibility of gradation in respect of depth and scope according to each target group.

Weaknesses: Not all employees have access from their own PC.

5.3 Interview With Telecommunication 3

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

Intranet as information channel so that the employee can do his job. We publish news, forms, guidelines etc. The Intranet is also used as 2-way communication. The main aspect is that the Intranet has to support the work. The work processes should be automated such as course management with approval, leave on vacation entry.

Automating of administrative processes.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

The information is consolidated, structured and there is always the same way of access to it. The Intranet should increase the efficiency of the users, it should be therefore fast, secure and the information always up-to-date.

3. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, they didn't.

4. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, the Intranet is the single point of contact for news. News are now published through a defined process and as yet uncoordinated per email.

5. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

6. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

First of all the Intranet must be fast. We have internal guidelines for the design. There is a central team of about three persons who are responsible for compliance of the guidelines. In addition we have decentralized the content publishers. If an employee wants to publish some thing he goes first to the content publisher. This person checks the content and if he gives the o.k. then the central team publishes the content.

Once a year there is a quality check where the Intranet is scanned. Old information is removed and each page is provided with a verify date which is valid for six months. After six months the person responsible for the content gets an email asking if the information is still accurate or if it should be archived.

7. *Do you have a systematic method for the design of the Intranet?*

Yes, we have a systematic approach which we use. But due to the high time pressure it is not always possible to follow it step by step. Therefore, we usually count on our experience.

8. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

Yes, there is a big benefit. The Intranet has a big potential but the least of it is used. The management did not recognize the benefit yet. Because it is quite complex, it needs a clear strategy for it.

9. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

Yes, most of them do. But there are also employees who do not benefit from it because the Intranet defines new processes and the employees who are longer with the company have their own personal relations. If they need something, they call a colleague to get the work done.

10. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We conduct yearly an employee survey where we have seen that the employee satisfaction has increased. We also conduct yearly usability surveys on how the employees evaluate basically the Intranet. There is a time safe through the use of the Intranet, e.g. searching for phone numbers.

Unfortunately, these are fuzzy indicators which are not heart by the management. For the future we try to show clearer the benefit of the Intranet and try to determine the ROI, e.g. the process costs or information retrieval costs. This implies also that we have very deep work analysis where we do time stopping or ask the employees to keep a list and write down the time needed for each task.

Management does not really recognize the time safe because they say that if there is a time safe then the employee will smoke a cigarette more. Thus, the employee will not use the saved time for the company but for private purpose.

11. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees?*

Yes, we do statistics. We measure the user behavior by looking at the clicks. We see which information is being used and what the paths are the user navigates through.

12. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, a lot. Mainly by email. It behooves to the person in charge if the feedbacks are accepted and improvements carried out.

13. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Each page has at the end the name of the responsible person linked to the email.

14. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?*

Yes, if we have an idea to introduce a new service then we ask a user group if there is a need for this service. If yes then we implement a prototype which is being tested by a test group.

There is also a proposal box where the employee can enter their suggestions. There is also the possibility to make suggestions when we do our three monthly quality assurance survey. New services are communicated through the news and the user behavior is being locked afterwards. So we are able to see if the service is used or not.

15. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?*

If yes, at which suggestion?

At the employee's. We do the redesigns based on the statistics or the suggestions from the surveys.

16. *Which role does the Intranet play for your company in your opinion?*

Plays a very important role and will play increasingly a more important role. The work at the work place is being supported and simplified.

The work process will be analyzed and improved on a regular basis and thus an efficiency increase takes place and in turn the company benefits.

17. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Remarks

1. The corporate strategy does not see the Intranet as a strategic factor. It is positively recognized but no more resources are given for it. As a result, the additional work has to be done along side or has to be given external.
2. Intranet is integrated in the corporate communications department.
3. We define extranet as follows: on the extranet internal employees are able to communicate with partner companies to exchange documents and other business relevant material.
4. The extranet is not used very often because it is a separate part and very limited in its use.
5. The next step of the Intranet is to be extended with communications options.

5.4 Interview With Insurance 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

The Intranet has a central communication function. We try to realize a “paper-poor” company.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

We neither had a DMS, nor a central entry point where users can search for a topic. The Intranet should become the only single entry point. We are not yet there but that’s our objective.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

We are talking here about mission statements such as “client first” or “go for top performance”. We try to support such mission statements with the Intranet. If I do not have the medium which helps me in my daily work or facilitates it then I am not able to perform strongly. “together successful” is another mission statement which we pursue with the Intranet. We follow the strategy to disclose knowledge and share it together.

We have also established a structural and textual quality assurance but we do not play the police men. We award the class winner and show people how to do something resp. how to improve it. As I mentioned above, the “paper poor” business is our main focus.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

The structures did not change but the processes did because for the first time they were properly documented and transparently presented. This means that in the past the processes were yet documented but nobody knew where they were therefore we re-documented them. By documenting the processes we got an “aha”-experience. We saw that the processes were suboptimal and before continuing the documentation we decided to look at them again. One can say that it had an indirect impact on processes.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, they did change. The process of information supply and processing has changed. There is a central CMS which bundles all channels from the information owners and makes them available. This is a transparency of information representation. This process didn’t exist, we have launched it. To be more precise, the structures and processes did not change, we have launched new ones. We try

to eliminate old ones and replace them with new ones. Our goal is to have a CMS which processes information and publishes it in the various channels where it becomes available through the single entry concept for the employees, customers and partners.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

It is the same question as 5. There are two sides of the Intranet. First, the information processing. Second, the information distribution. We have a CMS for all channels. A channel could be: 70 general agencies with their own websites, subsidiaries, other associated companies and cooperation partners. It has changed affirmatively.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

Not enough. We conduct trainings for the users of the CMS. They have to learn how to use the CMS. We conduct little training for the “common” employee. What we do is to give an introduction about the Intranet on its structure, usage etc. for new employees. We also conduct workshops where we show some tips and tricks. I wished we had good standard browser training and a good introduction to the Intranet. Further applications should be so user-friendly that they could be used without further training.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Business oriented information; processes; shops; private content; dedicated personalized user groups for whom information has been generated.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The Intranet is divided into six main areas. Each area supports a specific target group. What is the goal of our Intranet? When a new employee joins the company, he gets a brochure. With it he should be able to find his information on the Intranet. Because the organizational units are complex, the areas are overlapping. We have also multiple publications. The aim is no matter through which area an employee enters the Intranet he should get his information. The six areas we have are: The 1st area is related to the organization. The 2nd area is related to the business processes. Everything and every process which has to do with the customer. The 3rd area contains supports processes such as human resources, IT, marketing services, etc. The 4th area contains services. These are private and business services which are made available for the employees. The 5th area contains information about key projects of the company. Each project has its own project database which is managed by the project manager. Finally, the 6th area contains “documentation & knowledge”.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We have implemented a triple quality assurance process. First, the publishing process has been designed by the CMS in that way that the quality assurance is correct and the quality alright. Subsequently, we have implemented two instances which are responsible for the structural and textual quality assurance. Additionally, each piece of information which is published is assigned to an information owner. He is usually a department or section manager and is responsible that the published information is up-to-date, correct and complete.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Absolutely, but the benefit is not measurable. One can pose the question what would happen if the Intranet were turned off tomorrow. We would get a lot of phone calls and complaints. We haven't achieved the goal yet but we are close to the implementation of a central, transparent communication medium.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

I think yes. It depends also on which employees one thinks of. An employee in the dispatch department barely uses the Intranet. The transparent searchable and findable information makes the Intranet important for the employee. Each employee has the possibility to inform himself very well and get all the information he needs.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We don't measure the benefit. The normal web statistic is for me not an indication of benefit. To measure a real benefit is for us at the moment not cost-effective. We have a good feeling because after the new relaunch one and a half years ago the amount of web pages has been reduplicated and the visits have been doubled. But of course this is not a valuable measurement.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

We do web statistics. We look which areas and documents have been accessed. The textual quality assurance looks also which are the 100 best documents and which the least. Latter are those which haven't been visited. This is also not a measurement. I can make available information on the Intranet because it is important but nobody is interested. The benefit has to be visualized in that way

that if somebody needs something then he has it at one's fingertips. Important is that one finds something when he needs it and not how long the information is available and how often it has been accessed. Bad is if someone looks for something and cannot find it.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Before we did a re-launch, we introduced the six areas in a workshop and asked the participants if the areas cover their needs. Nevertheless, we got after all negative feedbacks. Mostly because of our concept of multiple allocation of information. Users didn't like that concept because they couldn't remember where they found the information.

We got bad feedback from employees and thought about what we did wrong. We sat together, they said that it was good and it would cover their need. Regardless, we got bad feedback. The conclusion is that one can not build an Intranet which covers all needs.

We conduct also surveys. There is always potential for improvements. The employees also grow with the medium Intranet and therefore the demands on the system increase. I think it is a learning process for both parties and it will never stop. We are willing to change for the better. One has to look also cost-effective on improvements – what would cost the change and what benefits do we get. As I mentioned earlier, benefits are difficult to show but the costs are huge.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We get anonymously feedback per web form which we analyze.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, we conduct workshops and do surveys. The questioning is totally unstructured. I ask best the employees because these are operational people. Operational people need information to make operations faster. It is not the department manager who once in a while queries the Intranet.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, the last one was about one and a half years ago. We did it on the suggestion and responsibility of my area eBusiness. There had to be a new approach and a new structure for the Intranet.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

For me a central role. Depending on focus and domain there are different opinions. It is an information pool at which I can read up on everything. Information and knowledge is available 7x24. Knowledge is how can I best support my customer, how can I best apply the claim process etc. We are still in a learning process.

A major problem is that employees are overstrained with many new systems (Windows XP, new legacy systems etc.). The life-cycle is highly shortened and besides the daily business they have hardly any time to acquaint themselves with these new systems. The Intranet must make available processes and knowledge so that employees are able to work more efficient. We are on the right track with our Intranet on that. What we miss are the work procedures which we need to improve in order to improve the interaction of the employees with the new medium.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: - Technological excellence.
- Information processing.

Weaknesses: - In my opinion there are no weaknesses which have to do with the Intranet as a communication medium.
We need the Intranet to optimize the processes, to process information and distribute it faster. The weaknesses of the Intranet are theoretical such as jungle of links and unstructured data.

At the moment there are only strengths because we have not tapped the full potential.

When we get there we are ready to talk about weaknesses and how to improve them.

Remarks

1. More and more web applications are integrated into the Intranet.

5.5 Interview With Insurance 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It is a tool that makes information globally available. It has been established as a news channel where the news is cross-border published. Further, it has replaced the email as a transmission medium with regard to corporate information.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

We use it as a news channel and information retrieval platform. The company has also other channels where information is available such as notes, global drives and shared drives. The Intranet is an additional channel providing transparent and structured information. The point is not to replace existing channels.

In the future we will work towards an integrated Intranet which will provide various functionalities and implement workflows like yet existing alert email for newsletters, calendar for training courses, automatic registration for training courses. The Intranet must be user oriented and add value to employees.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

Not long ago our company underwent a corporate restructuring. To reflect the new global corporate structure we mapped it onto the Intranet. So, the employees have to deal with the structure by using the Intranet. In that way, they become used to it.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, it is the opposite. Processes and organization affect the Intranet.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, information and communication from corporate communication goes mainly through this channel.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Not really, maybe in some niches. I would answer this question with no.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

We do CMS trainings though it is easy to use. We also carry out workshops each

year together with content editors to exchange experience, give feedback and suggest improvements.

8. *What are the topics and content of the Intranet?*

There are three parts. The most important part is the news channel. The second part contains everything which has to do with the setup and structure of the company such as organization charts, contact and team pages where each team has the possibility to introduce itself. The teams are free to publish what they want and as many pages they want. Standardized is only the page layout by means of templates (i.e. fonts, colors).

The third part contains information which deals with the company such as internal and external publications, internal and external presentation, meeting memos, video taped meetings and announcements.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We have guidelines but these are loose and resemble more recommendations. As mentioned above we have templates which build the framework for the pages. Besides that people are free to design their pages creatively. We think that the creativity should not be missed out although we will restrict it a bit more in the future. Not that it got out of hand but more consistency leads to a quicker information retrieval process.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

At the moment we do not do much about that. We use a CMS and have implemented a publication workflow for news. Further, only trained editors have the right to publish on the Intranet.

Corporate Communication assures quality of the news. The content editor should conduct quality assurance by thinking about what he wants to publish and how it should be presented. The departments are free to apply the four eyes principle. The Intranet community may react if wrong or inappropriate content is published.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, but it's difficult to quantify. Transparent and well structured content together with a good Intranet information architecture lead to a quicker information retrieval process. Centrally maintained documents, i.e. everybody uses the same source of information, lead to less friction and therefore reduced costs.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes, it mostly aligns with the above mentioned such as fast access to information, news, missed presentations and so forth.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We do not measure the benefit per se. We try to improve and optimize the Intranet by applying a user centric approach. That is the method we use to improve navigation, content, functionality etc.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

On request we do statistics by analyzing the log files. The statistics tool conducts automatically daily analyses . The results from these statistics are normally not used any further. So far, they don't have an influence on the further development of the Intranet.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

We get little feedback from the employees directly, but we actively look for it (user centric approach)

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We have implemented a contact button that activates the email. Further, we have the contact address of the editor at the end of each webpage. People can contact the editor directly. We have made the experience that the feedback is better when we approach people with suggestions for improvements. Which means that we actively look for improvements and then ask the employees for their opinion.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?*

How do you involve them?

We want to design our Intranet user-oriented. This ranks for us first and therefore we do involve employees, mainly editors. We meet with them from time to time to discuss the/their requirements and ideas.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?*

If yes, at whose suggestion?

Yes, at the moment we have a global Intranet project going on where the entire

website is rebuild. Because of organizational changes this has become necessary. The redesign includes improvement in usability, functionality and information architecture. In my opinion redesigns should be done every two to three years.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

The relevance of the Intranet in the company is relatively low. There are more important applications which are vital to the company. All of them are not uniquely accessible through the Intranet.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strength:- The possibility to link information

1. The possibility to structure information and save it centrally.
2. To have up to date versions (more difficult with shared or global drives).
3. Cost effective
4. Fast medium

Weaknesses: - It's difficult to keep data quality high and to avoid data graveyards.

Remarks

- The user is represented by the editor. User requirements are gathered through (i) workshops, (ii) direct contacts with editors and (iii) interviews. The input is then used for further improvement of the Intranet.

5.6 Interview With Insurance 3

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

We use the Intranet as an information channel. We publish only information which concern all the employees. If it concerns only a few employees than they will be contacted in another way. We also make available documents, forms and directives on the Intranet.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

We want to inform the employees on time and with accurate information. Further, the employees should know what's happening in the company. They should feel save, be taken seriously and involved in the company's affairs. Another point is employee motivation. As a result of this the employee is motivated and this adds to the corporate culture and identity. We also publish guidelines and directives.

3. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

It can be said that the processes did change in terms of faster and easy information procurement. The relationship between print media and online media did also change. The Intranet becomes increasingly important.

4. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

The employees get their information increasingly from the Intranet by themselves.

5. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The organizational units are free to decide their own topics and contents as long as it concerns all the employees. Again, if only a few are concerned then the Intranet is not the right place to distribute it.

6. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

According to the organization, the business units, the importance and up-to-dateness of the information.

7. *Do you have a systematic method for the design of the Intranet?*

According to the importance and relevance for the company and up-to-dateness of the information.

8. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

Yes, it is a benefit in corporate culture. Further, we notice an increase in the quality of the work and corporate identity. We also see an emanation of the company to our business environment.

9. *Do you think that the employee benefit from the Intranet?*

Yes, the employees are informed and therefore deliver a better quality of work. They are more engaged which increases the corporate culture and identity, as mentioned above. They feel comfortable and proud to work for this company.

10. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

The value can not be measured in a monetary unit. What we do are statistics. We see how the Intranet is being used, how often and what is requested. Furthermore, we do employee survey in certain intervals.

11. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees?*

Yes, we do statistics in regular intervals. The results are looked over, asked or they are integrated in employee surveys. As we mentioned, we do employee polls or we approach the employees directly.

12. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, we do.

13. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

The employee contacts by email either the responsible person for a particular content/site or the corporate communications department.

14. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?*

Yes, we do.

15. *How do you involve them?*

We get suggestions from the surveys we do and by email.

16. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?*

Yes, we do. At the corporate communications'. Starting from the necessary

improvements, usability and the suggestions from the employees.

17. *Which role does the Intranet play for your company in your opinion?*

It has a very important role and it will get increasingly more important. The sort of information on the Intranet is different than that of print media. Former is short and current, latter is more background information and thus complementary to the one on the Intranet.

18. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths:

1. Fast moving is possible, i.e. news can quickly be published.
2. The information is presented clear and user-friendly.
3. One can pick out the relevant information.
4. The big offer of information and the possibility to search for it.
5. Archiving of information is possible.
6. Changes can be done quickly.

Weaknesses:

1. There are still employees who like printed information
2. One can not take information along as a paper.
3. Long texts resp. background information are not appropriate to be put on the Intranet.

Remarks

1. Not everybody is allowed to put information on the Intranet. There is a responsible person for each division. The employee has to go to that person and this person puts the information on the Intranet.
2. *How is quality control conducted?* The content is being announced and the corporate communication looks at it. In regular intervals also random samples are carried out.
3. Old information is archived.
4. Important messages from the management are being sent electronically and written.
5. We set a high value on the interactivity between the employees.
6. The company has conducted the transformation from the push to the pull principle four years ago. It is now integrated in the corporate culture.
7. *How do you deal with information overload?* Does not necessarily exist if the information is structured properly.
8. The more information the more important is the search function on the Intranet.
9. For new employees we have a short introduction of the Intranet on the first working day.

5.7 Interview With Insurance 4

1. *What function does the Intranet have your company?*

It should offer a personalized interface to information, application and services. Further, it should facilitate the collaboration of the employees. The Intranet should be an integrated platform for all information necessary for daily business that is shared across departments.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

To improve the internal communication, the information exchange and to simplify and enhance knowledge sharing. Consistent and integrative platform with the current guidelines, documents, rules and directives. Further, to improve our processes, data and information quality to obtain time saving. Before the introduction of the Intranet platform, we had different data sources such as local drives, lotus notes, outlook public folders, etc. The same information was held in different sources and was inconsistent or outdated. The Intranet (together with an appropriate governance model) provides a single point of access to consistent and accurate information

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

None

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Organizational structures did not change. With the introduction of the Intranet a governance model has been implemented. Existing resources cope with content management functions in a more formalized manner.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

In the past, most of the communication processes took place using e-mail. Today, important news, changes of important rules and guidelines, etc. are being communicated through the Portal.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

We do not conduct periodical training for end users. After the introduction, a series of workshops has been held in several trainings to give an introduction and overview of Portal functionality. We conduct training for the use of the CMS and our monitoring tool. Training is important for those who use the tools like the content author or content managers.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The topics are to 98% business oriented which is all information someone needs such as internal and external news, legal affairs, travel information, product information, department specific rules and guidelines, etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We design our Intranet by building communities based on functions and regions. Latter because our CMS support this paradigm of implementation and we have to conform with that. Communities are divided according to our organization, i.e. department and/or geography. We have also temporary communities for e.g. ongoing projects.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We use Plumtree as a portal platform. Latter is organized according to communities such as finance, sales, etc. Within the communities there are one or two persons who are responsible for the content and quality. Contributions for each community are made by managers and authors who belong to that particular community. The content goes through a quality check workflow where a responsible person decides if the content is alright or not. If the contribution is not alright, it goes back to the composer for further corrections. Other possibilities we have to assure quality are versioning and archiving. Latter allows us to make the document searchable or not. Usually, old documents are made not searchable. Each document has also an expiry date. After three or six months there is a notification asking the responsible person if the document is still up to date or not. If it is than it has to be published again or deleted otherwise. The structure is in that way that we have a central web team, beneath community managers and further beneath different roles such as editors and authors. In all, we have a governance model implemented that defines all necessary processes concerning the Intranet.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?
If yes, which?*

Yes, we do. The greatest benefit is the one-click approach to access information. At start up of the web browser the employee is leaded automatically to the homepage of his community. There, he is able to find any information which is important for his daily work.

We follow the approach that relevant content for the employee must be pushed to him. Not everything is published everywhere because it would become increasingly difficult to find the right information. This requires that the one who publishes information must think first for whom it is for and second where to publish it so that the target group will definitely get the information. That way, starting from the homepage of his community the employee is able to find information with a few clicks. We can say that relevant content is provided to target groups.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?
If yes, in what way?*

Yes. Particularly, it is time saving for information search.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We measure it by conducting employee surveys.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes. We have implemented a monitoring platform. We want to know how the Intranet is used, by whom, when, where, how and how often. We have a lot of statistics generated from log files, different databases and from the portal itself. We have summaries of its use over a period of time, which communities have how many hits, which information have been accessed and which not, what content is looked at, what information is looked for, where the users come from (e.g. USA, Switzerland), which functions do they have and so forth. Monitoring is part of our governance model. Each community manager has a function. He controls what has been published, what content is accessed and if the employee cannot find needed information than it has to be placed somewhere else. The managers must consider how to improve the portal based on the results.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, a lot.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Yes, everywhere. By email or in meetings. There is also a feedback form on each page which is a standard template. Further, our CMS (Plumtree) provides some out-of-the box feedback mechanisms.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Partially. We involve the community managers in the functional design of the Intranet. We do not involve them in the design of the Intranet's structure like navigation or in presentation issues (styles, formats, etc.) because we have to comply to a lot of standards. We cannot leave this to the community managers or employees.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

We conduct incremental improvements since our Intranet is quite young to do a deep redesign.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

It is an important communication platform and has therefore an important role. But it is not the most important IT system because it is not business critical. The portal should be the single entry point to the information space. The goal is that the portal becomes the work place; i.e. the entry point to access all relevant applications (vision: the portal as the employee's desktop).

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: It supports the employee at their daily work.
It is consistent, transparent and integrated.

Weaknesses: If it is not tailored to the needs of its users, it will not be of any benefit for anyone.
On uncontrolled use it gets degenerated which results in old and useless information.

Remarks

1. User needs are gathered from different channels.

2. Work processes are integrated in the Intranet. If, for example, somebody does not know how to do the closing than he can refer to special eBooks which are linked together and so he is able to click through every step of the closing process.
3. The Intranet creates also transparency. Everybody has the necessary information and talks about the same thing.
4. At the moment, the Intranet is not the only way to access applications.

5.8 Interview With Insurance 5

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It is the work tool for the internal corporate communication. In the future, the Intranet should be the electronic workplace for all stakeholders. It would be the change from a communication medium to a working instrument. The main focus is the distribution of news. The minor focus is to make available all sorts of documents such as directives, guidelines, etc.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

The fast and efficient distribution of internal communication. The way we inform is business specific and –relevant. The goal is to implement a tool which supports the employee for his daily work.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The company aims for an improved, optimized and more efficient market development through the use of the Intranet. We make these corporate goals visible and give the employees an understanding of the actions taken by the company. It shouldn't be just to show what happens in the company but also why it happens. The goal is a transparent corporate management. We also want to give the employees an understanding of company values and norms. As I mentioned earlier, another company goal is that the Intranet becomes an integrated work instrument and our department tries that it gets there. The Intranet is structured according the organization. If now an employee belongs to a certain stakeholder then he gets filtered information relevant to him. That is important because the employee should not only know the corporate goals but also represent them outside the company.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

The organization structure did not change. The processes have partially changed. Human resources could be taken as an example. A lot of processes such as hiring, work development as well as agreement of objectives and performance review have been integrated in the Intranet. Before, these processes were unknown in the company and highly dependent from the manager. Today, the employees have a high transparency how these processes take place. Due to the technical possibilities some processes have changed resp. needed to be changed.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, a lot. At the beginning the focus was to look at the Intranet as internal communication channel. That means that due to the technology we left the paper and mail information and went to an everyone accessible, daily occurring information exchange. Also the communication department had to change its structure and implement new processes. The new technical medium has a huge impact on structure and processes since the communication is faster, more efficient and more focused.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

The human resources department was affected at most. In general, there were no big changes only small adjustments.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

So far only little because the Intranet is used as a communication channel. In the future, the Intranet should become an electronic work place and then we need more training to show the users how to use that tool. We pursue two aspects with the training. First, we want to provide confidence and show the advantages of the medium to the employees. Second, we want to motivate them to use this tool.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Mostly news, explaining what the company does. We have also an area which is reserved for social activities and soft factors but still related to the corporate activities. It is not an entirely private area. You won't find cinema ticket reservation on it. This would go too far. It should foster the corporate culture. Information which circulated before only on the management floor is now available on the Intranet for every employee. This has the positive effect that employees feel now more integrated and kept more up to date as before. They became a more integral part of the company. This is an important goal for us and we work on it to improve it further.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We have a tri-partition of the Intranet. The first partition is structured according to business areas. Each employee gets only the information of the department he belongs to. I.e. an employee of the business area X won't get the same information as one of the business area Y whereas the business areas are linked together. It is possible for an employee of X to get the information of Y if he needs to. In addition, once a week the most important news of all business areas are collected and the appropriate links are sent by email to the employees. The second partition is the news group. Here, the most important news are published. Finally, the third partition is the "soft area". In this area work facilitating tools are

provided such as internal phone book, bulletin boards, etc.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.
If yes, which?*

We have a team which is called the web marketing team. It consists of 3.5 people (three full-time and one half-time positions) and is responsible only for publishing. News information comes from the departments. Corporate communication is responsible for the wording and uniformity of the articles.

The publishing process is as follows: the department's supervisor elaborates the article together with the communication expert who is a member of corporate communication. If the article has sensitive content then it can be sent back for proof-reading before publishing. Upon completion the article goes to the web marketing team which publishes the article.

There is a clear split of the process: the departments elaborate with corporate communication together the contributions and the web marketing team publishes them. We have designed this process that way to ensure on the one hand a high quality of the texts and motivate the employees to read them and on the other hand to not upset people because of bad text quality.

It is communicated by the person in charge if a new text should replace an old one so that the old one is taken off and the new one is put on the Intranet. A new text which comes in with no comment will be normally published. The departments decide when information has become obsolete or should be replaced. You see that the departments are responsible to keep their areas up to date. They adhere to that because our business is highly regularized and it is in the interest of everybody to have correct and accurate information.

We use also technical features such as expiry date to assure quality.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?
If yes, which?*

Yes, the company benefits from it. One argument is that the Intranet brings corporate strategy closer to the employees. They now understand why this action and not the other has been taken, why something is done this way and not the other. It makes them feel more involved in the corporate activities and increases thus also employee motivation. Our Intranet has a social function. It links the employees together and it reduces the information discrepancy between employees and management. One can not show a monetary benefit but nevertheless it is high. Personally, I think that if the Intranet transforms from a communication medium to a work instrument in term of a desktop then we have reached the optimum of a value added.

Another point is that with the transparency that the Intranet generates like the provision of information, it allows the employee to complete his daily business

more efficiently. And this is a monetary benefit for the company.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?
If yes, in what way?*

Yes, insofar that the employees are more involved in the corporate activities. Second, it endows a social benefit and third it supports heavily the employee in his daily work by enabling a fast access to accurate data.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We conduct statistics and know the traffic we have on the Intranet. Second, we conduct weekly an employee survey.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, we conduct here also statistics on a regular basis and generate for example monthly reports. From the statistics we see how many people use the Intranet. Further, we also do surveys and ask the employees how they use the Intranet. Based on those analyses we think about the areas and structures we could further improve. Finally, we conduct once a year short usability tests with a small user group and test which information is found, if the articles are understandable and so forth. These results are then incorporated in the next enhancements of the Intranet.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes. Especially, if something is not found or not understandable. We get feedback weekly and take it serious. We sort the feedback according its topic. If a topic appears more then once we look closer to it and try to sort it out. In addition, employees get an answer which comments on their feedback.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We get the feedback by email or phone. There is no special feedback form integrated into the system.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?
How do you involve them?*

Basically yes, but it is restricted. On the one hand, there are technical restrictions which restrain. On the other hand, there are guidelines and style guides which must been considered because the website appearance must be the same world

wide. There are also some restrictions for the content. Only relevant information is permitted to be published. The current structure has been created in cooperation with the departments. The cooperation is done between the supervisor of the department and us. We gathered very detailed their needs and requests but could not implement them all because of the above mentioned limits. This implicates also that each department has its one structure.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we do redesigns. Probably, we will have next year a redesign of the Intranet because new guidelines have been developed. These must be implemented world wide to assure a unique appearance of the Intranet throughout the company. A task force of the corporate group has elaborated these guidelines. Last time we did the redesign it was more of a “may do”, this time it is a “must do”.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

On a scale between 1 and 10 with 10 maximum I would say that the relevance for the company is between 7 and 8. The relevance for the employee is between 8 and 9 because it is the first thing he sees at the workplace. It is not only an entry point but something that he perceives.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: The speed of publishing information.
An immense information flood can be sent selectively to each stakeholder.
Each employee gets only the information relevant to him but has the possibility to read up further on some topics.

Weaknesses: A certain percentage of the employees do not use the Intranet because it is not attractive enough.
We use old technology but will change to new one. This is just a matter of time.
The search engine is a weak point.
We have broken links.

5.9 Interview With Banking 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

The Intranet has two functions within our company; it is a central information channel and a support instrument for the sales and consulting division. Furthermore, each division has its documents for its daily business on the Intranet.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

To assure a fast information flow and the simplification of internal processes.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

One corporate goal in our company is the open, fast and transparent communication. Here the Intranet helps to realize this goal. The Intranet also helps to implement superior sales and marketing goals of the company.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, there were no changes concerning this. What can be mentioned is that the Intranet has been integrated in the existing organization chart and put up under the corporate communication department.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, there were changes concerning this. The internal mailing order and the email has been replaced by the information processing of the Intranet. Before that, one had to send the information targeted to an addressee or use distribution lists. Today, there is a debt of the employee to get the information. To emphasize this, the Intranet is started automatically after the start of the personal computer

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, the labor organization has changed. Documents are no longer stored physically in binders and cupboards but on the Intranet. Therefore, the Intranet is also used as an archive medium. The employees save their documents on the Intranet. The knowledge resp. the archived knowledge is faster and for all centrally available.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

Trainings are only conducted for the usage of the CMS. There are no trainings on how to use the Intranet.

8. *What are the topics and content of the Intranet?*

The content and topics we put on the Intranet must support the work of the employees. They must get the important information. That's the main focus. Apart from that, we have also implemented a bourse where employees can buy and sale things. We have also areas for events, a message board, forums, etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The structure is both topic and organization oriented, whereas it is more topic than organization oriented. The structure depends also on the department. Each department has to a certain degree the possibility to shape its department specific structure under the condition that the whole company structure has still a uniform design.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

First, we use a CMS. Second, on each page there is the responsible person for the content stated. This person is also responsible for the actualization of the pages. Further, there is a time limit given when the pages have to be reviewed. We do not have an expiry date on the pages. Every quarter of the year the internal communication instructs the departments to review their pages and if necessary to update or remove them. The publishing process is as follows: First, we have the four eyes principle for the content. The article is composed by the divisions, each division has a publisher and his deputy, they review the article and if it is ok it goes to the webmaster who puts it on the web.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, we do. First, the Intranet puts the employees fast on the same level of information. If we wanted to do that in another way, we would need a lot of resources and it would also mean an extensive effort. Second, it supports the sales and marketing team. During a sales meeting with the client the customer consultant can download the necessary documents according his needs.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes, because the employees have the information available quickly, all are on the same level of information and the Intranet helps them at their work.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We measure it indirectly by looking what is being used, how often it's being used and how many different people use it.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, we do. We conduct web statistics on a regular basis. We carry them out also on request of the departments. The insights we get from the statistics are not being used any further. We do not take any actions based of the results we get.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, positive and negative feedback over and over again.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We get the feedback by telephone or by email. There are no special feedback mechanisms implemented in the Intranet.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, we do. We meet with the different departments, resp. the responsible person, and record there requirements. After that we try to implement the requirements as accurately as possible, considering always the company guidelines.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we did a redesign. We designed a new homepage and rebuild the entire Intranet structure.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

The longer we use it, the longer it becomes an essential working tool. The relevance will increase because more applications will be linked together such as bank applications. It becomes an integrated platform from which everything is

accessible. Furthermore, it serves as an archive medium and the know-how of the bank is online available to everybody.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths:

It is a communication channel where one has not only information which concerns himself but is also able to access information from other departments. It supports the daily business and it can be used as an archive.

Weaknesses:

Difficult to keep high quality standards. One has to be aware that this is a continuous work.

To assure the security. Not everybody has the right to look at any information. The company is stipulated to introduce security processes.

5.10 Interview With Banking 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

The main focus is the information exchange within the company. The Intranet is an information platform where each department has its own area to publish information. Further, there is a common area for news which is valid for all and where among other things directives and instruction are published. The Intranet is also an entry point to access small applications. I.e. applications which are not normal bank applications.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

To distribute information to all employees Swiss-wide because doing this is with the email to much. The second purpose is to guarantee the information exchange.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

You're right, the Intranet can not be uncoupled from the corporate goals and indeed it is not. On the one hand the divisions are responsible for it by making sure that the content conforms to their goals. So that they reach their goals. On the other hand the management uses it as an information tool. The management publishes information which the company needs to advance.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

The organizational structure did not change.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, the structures and processes did change. There has been implemented an information concept where it is defined for which sort of information which channel must be used. The goal is to use the Intranet as an information tool and reduce the email. The "Holschuld" principle has been pointed out and the supervisors had the task to pay attention to this principle to their employees.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

There is no training of the employees for the usage of the Intranet. We only train the new entrants. But we conduct trainings for the editor to learn how to use the CMS.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The Intranet has three different segments. We publish whatever is important from the point of view of sales on those segments. One level below the segments are all our products and further each division has its own pages.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The structure of the Intranet is organization oriented.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? I.e. correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, because it wouldn't work otherwise. First, information is for the bank vital and in today's fast moving time there is no other way to manage this. Second, everybody in the company gets the same information.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

For basic information yes. They can look for information, get informed about responsibilities etc. What they don't get is deep information, the Intranet does not substitute the comprehension and understanding. They have to learn by themselves.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

You can't do a cost-benefit analysis. You can show where the information and the process would lack if there was no Intranet. You can also argue about the errors which would happen if there was no access to information.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

We have a basic analysis tool with which we do some statistics. This tool is rather simple that's why we do our analysis manually at the moment, but we will switch to a professional one in the near future.

We have analyzed the results and discussed them with the editors. We have seen what people are interested in and what not. Based on this insights we have worked out some suggestions for improvement which were the erasure of documents or their movement to improve the access.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, the feedback we get is direct and very open. A few months ago we have conducted a survey and we do user group workshops once or twice per year. In that way we get feedback also from the employees which do not work in the head quarter.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We get feedback by email. Further, we have implemented a contact form and there is the name of the person in charge on each page.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, for our last redesign of the Intranet we have composed a project team with people from all the divisions. What we didn't do was to talk to end-user like the employees in our different branches including people at the cash desk. We only talked to supervisors from each department.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we just conducted it lately. Now, we think about how the Intranet should look in the years 2005 to 2007. Mainly, we need to solve technical problems because now we have an old CMS and need to complete our backup systems. Usually, the departments initiate the redesign unless it is a big project where the informatics committee must approve it.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

We shouldn't overestimate its importance. It is a tool for the employee to get relevant information but the employee must take the initiative himself. Some do it, some don't. The colleagues at work are still asked where an information can be

find and it will stay like this.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: - There is a platform to deposit information. It no longer would be dealable on paper form.
- For the trained user it is easy to find information.

Weaknesses:- Information overflow because there is no consideration on how to structure information or if it is necessary to put information on the Intranet.
- One has to take into account that not all can deal with the medium equally good.
- Not everybody knows how to use the search engine.

5.11 Interview With Banking 3

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

The function of the Intranet is to distribute information. First, we have a news area, called “*Company* weekly newsletter”, which is designed like a newsletter. The *Company* weekly newsletter enables the top-down communication of the management. Through the Intranet the management can distribute information on ongoing project and hot topics. Second, it has also the function of a document management system. Documents are put into the Intranet and employees have the possibility to access them. We have product information, directives, human resources handbook, etc.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

The purpose is to distribute information besides email and the file system. It is another way to broadcast information.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The corporate goals must be considered and we do consider them.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, they didn't.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes. Important project and business unit information are edited and published now through the *Company* weekly newsletter by corporate communication. Before that it was decentralized and sent by email. Otherwise, there are no other changes.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

We do not train the users on how to use the Intranet.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The topic and content of the Intranet is business unit oriented. Each business unit has its specific information. Overlapping topics which are for all valid are group

services, marketing, human resources, etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The default of the browser is the document management system. It is document oriented. The page has directories which are alphabetically sorted. The content of the directories has human resources handbook, product overview, etc. It is difficult to search for information and the approach to find a document is rather trial and error. The weekly newsletter has another content structure. On the one hand, there we show the personal mutations, the entries in and exits of the company, it is also a market place for private ads. On the other hand it is an editorial area.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

The newsletter is centrally managed by the corporate communications. Corporate communication is also responsible for the quality management. The DMS is managed by 40 editors which have the right to publish onto the Intranet. There is no standardized quality process in the business units. Each one is self responsible for quality assurance with the result that the documents in the DMS are no longer up to date or relevant. A main person in charge is missing that could delete, remove, update or archive the documents.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, but it is not easy to quantify. For our business information is important. An efficient, fast, consistent and selective information exchange is vital. The Intranet supports that and furthermore allows the integration of business processes. Further benefits are in the domain of administration and logistics. A killer application which shows the benefit of the Intranet is the electronic phonebook.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes, because the employee gets his information fast and up to date without having to invest a lot of time for information search. Further, the Intranet increases the employee satisfaction, establishes resp. supports the corporate culture and fosters the identification to the company.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

At the moment we do not measure the benefit. But this will be a topic for the development of the new Intranet. I can only argue at the moment how it would be without Intranet, and I can say that it would be bad. We try to show the benefit by using quantitative arguments because the infrastructure and its operation cost and we need to show that benefits are really bigger than the costs.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, we do web statistics. This is more an ad-hoc rather than a continuous process. With the new Intranet we will introduce a continuous web statistic process to see how the applications are used, how the accesses are and what people interests. The insights shall help us to improve the Intranet.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

We get less feedback because people get used to the deficiencies. If we get feedback than usually informal or by email.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanism resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

No, we have no feedback mechanism implemented. There is no structured process for this and there is also no “rate this page” button. This is something to consider for the future Intranet.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, we do. For our new Intranet development we conduct interviews with people from the different divisions. We try to involve all divisions though we do not want to be too broad. In the first phase we limit to the middle to top management. Important is that the involved person is able to make a statement not only from his point of view but also from the one of his coworkers. In the second phase, the conceptual design and implementation, we will involve the employees. In the actual operation of the Intranet the business units will be responsible themselves for the composition and publication of the content.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we are in the act of doing a redesign of the Intranet. The suggestion comes from the needs of all the users who think that it is time to do a redesign.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

It is not as important as it will be in the future when the Intranet will be used as a working platform. The lock-in of that medium is not yet that big because the communication is still done over email and other media. The new Intranet shall be the central entry point for the provision of information. Then the "email to all" will be reduced because the employee wont know how to get else to his information.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strength: - Easy handling and no previous knowledge necessary.
 - From everywhere accessible.

Weaknesses: - Extensive in its operation.
 - Design capabilities restricted due to the technology.

Remarks

1. The Intranet consists of common web pages. The documents are loaded trough links from the DMS.

5.12 Interview With Automotive 1

1. *What function does the extranet have in your company?*

Information medium and platform for the entire cooperation with the retail.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the extranet?*

We want to give to the dealers structured and current information. Press information is also available so that they get the information at the same time as the journalists. Furthermore, we integrated applications in the extranet for the dealers to order replacements and cars and to configure them as well. Dealers also have the possibility to exchange information and problems through the platform.

3. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the extranet?*

The new function of the extranet agent has been created. This person is responsible for the maintenance of the content.

4. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the extranet?*

The generation of documents and the release of information have changed compared to the previous activities which were once weekly written information. Information can be effected faster but could cause quality defects. That is why the new process established plans to first draft the content and the determination of the publication form (permanent extranet content, a circular letter or news mailing). Afterwards, the extranet agent carries out the realization.

5. *What are the topics and contents of the extranet?*

They are oriented according to the needs of the dealers in order to help them to have the job done in a professional manner.

6. *According to what criteria do you design the extranet?*

Each employee has a role and is assigned to a department. According to the role and the department each employee has a personalized websites so that he gets his relevant information first. The same applies to the dealers too.

If there is a need for more information outside the department anybody is free to navigate.

Other criteria are simple templates, three languages and that confidential information is addressed to the right addressee.

7. *Do you have a systematic method for the design of the extranet?*

Systematic method in that way that a first version is made and afterwards discussed with the users. Based on the feedback of the users a second version is made. When all needs are captured and the necessary structures implemented then this is the base to build on.

8. *Do you think that the extranet is of any benefit for your company?*

Sure, it is. The benefit is difficult to measure but it can be seen if one thinks what happens if the extranet would not exist. In the past, we handed out printed documents, a circular, to the dealers. If the receiver was on vacation or on a business travel, the documents remained in the mailing. One could not check if an employee e.g. in the service division got the brochure within a reasonable time. Now, the whole distribution is target group oriented. We achieve a big customer benefit but it is difficult to measure.

9. *Do you think that the suppliers and partners benefit from the extranet?*

Yes, they do through time saving and accurate data. We try to avoid information overload through personalization of the sites.

10. *How do you measure the benefit from the extranet for your company?*

The benefit is hard to measure. One monetary benefit that can be easily measured is the decrease of paper.

11. *Do you know how the extranet is used by the employees?*

The usage of the extranet is task and work oriented.

12. *Do you get any feedback from the partners concerning navigation, content and usability of the extranet?*

The feedback we get is usually not concerned with the extranet itself such as navigation or usability. The main feedback is work-oriented. The dealers send us feedback concerning experience made with the new car model or solutions to new problems. But depending on the functional area the feedback differs. In the technical area there is a sort of forum where users can enter their experience and solutions to problems. It is a sort of exchange of experience which also can be published international if it is of high importance.

Concerning the extranet we get feedback from the IT. What is used on the extranet and what is not is seen from the clicks. If there is a field which is of no interest and we have no explanation why it is like that then we contact directly the dealer and try to find out the reason for that. For our statistics we use a tool.

13. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the partners?*

We get feedback by email. If there is a serious problem then they call us. We have no feedback mechanism implemented in the extranet. What the dealers want is the possibility to exchange among each other.

14. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the extranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

We have a test group who tests the prototype. This test group is every year new selected. Only the dealers get into the group.

15. *Do you conduct re-designs of the extranet?*

Yes, at our and the dealers suggestions.

16. *Which role does the extranet play for your company in your opinion?*

17. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the extranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: 1. The speed with which information can be provided.
2. The reliability to get the right information.
3. Has a positive effect on the employees.
4. The expectations of the user that all information is put on the extranet.

Weaknesses: It depends strongly from the discipline of the person who delivers information. One can not expect that the receiver gets accurate information when the sender does not send the message on time.

Remarks

1. Not everybody is allowed to publish. We have the four-eye principle. Only if the e.g. service leader gives his o.k. then the information can be published in the service area part of the extranet.
2. Responsible for publications on the Intranet is the human resources department.
3. *How do you avoid information overload?* In the content management system there is a function “publishing from, publishing to”. In that way the information is removed automatically when the time has come.
4. There is a content owner per division with substitution.
5. Quality assurance is a staff function at the IT department. There are regular scans of the extranet and interfered if required.
6. The management has recognized the benefit of the extranet.

5.13 Interview With Automotive 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It is used as the communication channel No. 1 between the management and the divisions and the employees. It serves as an entry point for applications like “who is who”, web mail client or statistics.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

See point 1.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

There are no corporate goals presented on the Intranet. The only corporate goal which is pursuit with the Intranet is a good communication and that important information is available to the user, as up to date as possible.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, they did not change.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes. Instead of sending everybody mails with huge attachments to, such messages are now distributed through the Intranet.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, there was no change.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

There is no training for the Intranet. There was a short introduction for the division secretaries. Questions are answered by the person in charge for the Intranet at the IT department.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The main topics are:

Downloads of documents; blackboard (documents to look at); news of the departments; academy is an internal training offer; market place to buy and sell;

quality management directives; internal electronic phone book and miscellaneous for topics which do not fit into a rubric mentioned above.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We use as much dynamic content as possible which is generated from a database. Further, we have a hand book. Other criteria are that it should be simple to use and easy maintainable. The departments are responsible for the support of the content.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.
If yes, which?*

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?
If yes, which?*

Yes. Fast information flow. Each division can give its input. Documents and links are fast and easy to find and at any time up to date.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?
If yes, in what way?*

Yes, because all employees have the same level of information.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We do nothing of that kind.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

No, we do not know and we have no mechanisms implemented.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Since we do not get any complains it must be good. It is easy to use for any division supervisor.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

There is only a link to the human resources department for modification proposals. This department does not care about its role. Any other message comes

via the help desk or the person in charge for the Intranet.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?
How do you involve them?*

No, the Intranet was implemented by the IT and the human resources department.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

No, because so far we had no change request except for a new or changed link.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

see point 1.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

The only weakness I see is that the employee must start the Intranet and check if there are any news.

5.14 Interview With Retailer 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

To provide our three core businesses with relevant, purposeful information. Our three core businesses are: sales channels, category management and management.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

As I mentioned above to provide relevant, purposeful information.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The corporate goal is to organize the processes more efficiently. The Intranet supports this goal by making information available to the user ad-hoc. Information which once was made available by fax or email, like action plans every 14 days, is now distributed through the Intranet. The sales outlets have defined times to look at the Intranet and get their information.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, the Intranet is structured according the organizational structure.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, in most cases we have now two channels to communicate with. The company has implemented clear communication concepts which define for what purpose to use which channel. I.e. when do I have to use the email, when the Intranet, when the corporate newsletter. Of course, this concept is adapted from time to time, if necessary.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Difficult to say. I know that it changed for the sales insofar that certain information are published only on Intranet. When we do our next relaunch of the Intranet some labor processes will change.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

We do trainings for the administrators, editors and gatekeepers. For the authors we have online learning subject matter. Everybody can be an author in our company.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

We have a three pillars principle: sales, category management and management. We provide relevant information to each specific target group mentioned before. Apart from that we have also an area which is build upon a topic structure. In this area an employee can found any information and tool he might need for his daily work. Further, the management informs also through the Intranet if all employees should be reached. If only part of the staff is concerned then the information flow is through the supervisor or email.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We changed our Intranet from an organization oriented to a topic oriented structure. We have guidelines for graphics, corporate identity and corporate design, colours, fonts, etc.

Further, we have a defined process for the authors, gatekeepers and administrators. This process defines for example how to check the content, the length of articles, or what are the formal things which must be checked.

One important instrument for us is news. We have clear guidelines how to compose news, short, lean and clear.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We have a four eyes principle. The author composes the article and is responsible for it. Each article contains the name of the author so that everybody can contact him if necessary. The gatekeeper reviews the article on formal correctness, if he is able also on textual correctness. After that the gatekeeper publishes the article. The author makes a first choice on where to publish the article. The gatekeeper confirms it and passes the article to other gatekeepers from other departments if he thinks that it could also be important to them.

The gatekeepers have some time quota per week assigned to this job. This is necessary to keep the quality high.

In order to keep the quality high, we have defined an author process which leads the author through the composition of a text and we have also a gatekeeper process that leads the gatekeeper through this tasks.

Our work is supported by a CMS. Other actions we take to assure the quality is to give a time limit to publications. We can say how many hours, days, weeks or months an article should stay online or if it should stay online forever. We have guidelines for the publications. News for example stay for 24 to 48 hours online, operational rules stay always online.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, I am convinced about that. The working environment should be made available with one working tool. This is the Intranet with its information and web applications. The employee gets his information fast, accurate and on a daily of even hourly basis, if necessary, without having to phone or fax within the company.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

This is a generation question. We have seen that elderly employees have at some point difficulties to deal with the Intranet. The younger employees accept it easier and faster. We have also seen that if we train the elderly employees then they accept the Intranet better and learn also to deal with it. They also see the benefit of it.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We rarely measure it. In the context of the Intranet relaunch we will incorporate this but we don't know how to make it measurable. We think about doing surveys or meet with the gatekeepers and discuss possible enhancements.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, we do web statistics on a regular basis. We see divisions where a lot is being done and others where the Intranet is neglected. I.e. in some divisions the information is up to date, in some it is not the case. This means that either the demand is lacking or the responsible person does not pay attention to the Intranet. When we see such a behaviour we approach the responsible persons and try to motivate them to pay more attention to their domain and keep it up to date.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, we get feedback. It is sent to the responsible domains so that they can answer directly to users or if we see that a problem occurs many times we meet and discuss possible action to get rid of it.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

We have implemented contact links on the web pages which activate an email.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

We do not build the Intranet from the point of view of communication or informatics but from the one of the users. What they do is to look for information or access web applications. Therefore, we involve the user partially which means that we involve a few power users who represent them. We conduct also interviews, we use the experience from external companies or our own experience.

Since we are rebuilding the Intranet, we have built a working group who gathers all this information and tries to implement it.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?*

If yes, at whose suggestion?

Yes, we are going to do a re-launch of the Intranet. We are also doing redesigns from time to time concerning the content. This time we are changing the entire structure and therefore we carry out a complete redesign of the Intranet.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

It has a great importance because we are able to publish targeted information. I see the Intranet as an integral part of a working environment which allows the well directed support of the employee at his work. In the future the Intranet will be more than just an information carrier. One part of the Intranet will still deal with information and one part will have mapped processes and integrated web applications. It will then be an integral working environment to support the employee at his work.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strength: - Fast and targeted information spread.
- The corporate culture and the “we feeling” can be identified

Weaknesses: - Intranet shouldn't be used to make available information only to one person.
- Content must be up to date otherwise the interest declines.
- The controlling instruments for the operation of the Intranet are very expensive.
- Much effort is necessary in order to reach resp. keep a high quality standard.

5.15 Interview With Retailer 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It is an information carrier on two levels: On the first level are corporate information and news which are published by the corporate communication. The second level is information retrieval from data warehouses and processes. Business processes are mapped on the Intranet. The main focus is to gather all information from the various processes and distribute them suitable for each target group.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

First, information transparency. Second, to make information available at any time in the right format for the specific target groups. Third, to map all business processes on the Intranet.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The Intranet should support corporate culture and corporate philosophy. Moreover, it should inform the employees about corporate policy, label information and the various company engagements. Priority is the announcement of the corporate goals by means of the internal communication. Further, directives and instructions from the management are published on the Intranet.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, the organization processes have changed. Since the information should be made transparent from top to down, some administrator positions are no longer needed. Particularly, in the marketing department which had the supervision of certain information. These information are now extracted from data sources, processed and presented directly to the groups.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, they changed too. As mentioned above, data is gathered automatically from different data sources, processed and displayed accordingly to the users.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

See remark 4.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

Only for the IT systems like SAP. For the usage of the Intranet we do not train people.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

The topics and content are divided into news, organizational units, links to various projects and the different head offices such as finance, human resources etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

On the first level we have corporate related information. On the second level we have project and topic related information.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? I.e. correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We have a central editorial department, residing at corporate communication, which is responsible for all information on the first and second level. I.e. current news and basis information about the different head offices, departments and contact persons. They put this information on the Intranet, review it ongoing and update it if necessary.

On the first level, corporate communication is responsible for the correctness of the information. On the second level, the two or four eyes principle holds depending on the importance of the information. Responsible for that are the departments or project groups which compose the information.

The publishing process is as follows: each department has its own editor who has access to the CMS and the right to publish information on the Intranet.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

Yes, I do. Most important is the information flow. The right actions and the technological resources can advance the company.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes, they get their information faster.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

First, we conduct web statistics and see how many hits, visits, etc. we had.

Second, we do half-yearly to yearly employee satisfaction surveys. We see what is used and what not, if the employee gets his information, if the system works, if we have broken links, if the user is satisfied, etc.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, we analyze the log files and the results are used for the further development of the Intranet. They build the foundations for the further development and optimization of the system. Of course, they are also made available for other departments.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, from those who are not happy. We collect the others at the employee satisfaction survey.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanism resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Each page has a feedback link which activates an email. Further, we have on most pages a masthead which contains the responsible person for the content, the one for IT etc. Thus, the user can contact the person in charge directly.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, we have created a questionnaire for the employees which we distribute through the Intranet. The employees fill out the questionnaires thereby we collect important information for our development. We want to make sure that the needs of the users are taken into account. Further, we also pay attention to usability as much as possible.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we are doing a redesign of the Intranet at the moment. The initiatives to redesign the Intranet came from the employees and the departments. Both saw that there was time to make a change. IT was also an initiator because it saw the huge diversity of the different web presentations from the divisions. The diversity results from the different requirements the division had over time which IT gathered and implemented. Now, IT will reduce the diversity of web presentation without neglecting the user's requirements and without losing the corporate identity and design of each division.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

It has today a high importance as an information retrieval tool. It will have a higher importance in the future as a working platform. This platform will have integrated internal processes, business applications and the possibility for the employees to collaborate.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strength: - It is a working platform which enables collaboration.
- Integration of internal processes.

Weaknesses: - The employee has a "Holschuld"²³.
- The personal communication gets lost.

Remarks

1. To questions 4-6: Since mid of the year, we have centralized our merchandising management and introduced SAP. This project has changed most sustainable organization and processes such as order, delivery, sales etc. Data of these processes are now available centrally. Also the information of the cash desk systems is collected centrally. The impact is following: data is gathered centrally, processed and distributed according to the needs of each target group.

²³In our context Holschuld means that the user is responsible and obliged to get the necessary information himself.

5.16 Interview With Research Laboratory

1. *What function has the Intranet in your company?*

It is an information (news and services, projects, people) and communication (lotus notes, sametime) tool. Further, it is a knowledge management and a participation (surveys, world jam) tool. It also has the function of an eLearning tool (e-University).

2. *What purpose do you pursue with the Intranet?*

The main focuses are the increase of the efficiency and the knowledge transfer in a systematic form. Further, we want to provide a framework for the generation of a parallel universe and a company community. We will also standardize internal procedures. Another point is that everybody should be embedded and reachable through this tool. We aim to make the “on-demand world” reality – to make information available at any time and any place. People should be able to work around the world and through all times.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

We show the company goals on the Intranet. One goal is, as I mentioned above, to render possible the on-demand business. And the Intranet is essential to achieve this goal.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

New virtual teams such as task forces, communities of purposes, new groups were created within the company. The team members are no longer on the same site but all over the world.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, they did. In the first place the processes have changed. Due to the enormous change of the processing and communication rate also the demands on the communication partners have increased in so far as the reaction rate is concerned. We have also a heavy trend to reduce paper.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Some meetings don't take place as often as it was usual in the past. Due to collaborative tools which facilitate the access to data, projects and the like have

certainly changed the labor organization. It reduces the necessity of exchange. Further, the work processes are supported heavily. The labor organization has also changed because of budget cuts. Conference calls, interactive communication in the Intranet and the watching of an on-line presentation are the consequences.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

We have little training. The IT department conducts trainings for the usage of tools. These are more on demand training on site for a specific IT service.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Organizationally, the separation is in two large areas which are corporate issues and corporate research. Among others we have news, events, services, projects, company strategy, people which is very important because each employee has its own profile.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

The design is specified by the parent company. There are a corporate structure, identity, graphics etc. – one is very limited in this regard. The structure is neither organization nor topic related but in terms of on-demand can be personalized to a certain extent. There is the requirement that within the personalization the global content is always present.

The design is predefined on the first level but on the second, local level it is more flexible. On the second level it is differentiated by department and services incl. human resources.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

One has to distinguish the different contents. We (corporate communication) guarantee for the news. Before publishing the news we go through the content and talk with the author. A further quality assurance is that news are provided with an expiry date. When the date elapsed the news is taken off the Intranet.

Only the communication department, the web master and the department secretaries are allowed publishing content on the Intranet. The process for publishing is as follows. First, the employee can publish the content on this personal webpage. Every employee has the right to create his own personal webpages and publish content on it. If he wants to publish it centrally then he has to contact corporate communications and the web master will publish it.

Content is seen through in irregular intervals. The information universe has grown to such degree that a systematical control is difficult. As mentioned earlier, we just guarantee for the news. The departments are responsible for their content. We

just go through to check if the stuff is outdated or no longer aligned with corporate strategy. If it is the case we approach the person in charge and ask him to take appropriate actions.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?
If yes, which?*

Yes, a big one. It has become such a self-evident means for work that it is no longer possible to dispose it. There are a lot of things which are on available on the Intranet and no longer in paper form.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?
If yes, in what way?*

Yes, mostly for knowledge transfer. The Intranet is self-evident, it only tracts attention when it is no longer there.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We don't measure the benefit. We conduct surveys but in my opinion that's not of much use what we find out. To the information overload adds the survey overload from which we suffer strongly at the moment.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

For a certain content, yes.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

The employees have the possibility to criticize or to apply their needs.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanism resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Internally, it goes over email. From extern we have forms which can be filled out.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?
How do you involve them?*

Since the employees design to the bigger part the pages themselves, they are automatically involved, of course in line with the guidelines. For a new design a task forces from each department is build to discuss and decide on content and

layout.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

We are just doing a redesign at the moment where graphics, colors and fonts are changed. In the news area now first the research news appear and then the local news. Further, there is the possibility to subscribe for additional news areas.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

It is very important, fundamental, and central. The first people do when they arrive in the morning. As I mentioned above, a lot of information is archived in the information universe and no longer available without access to the Intranet because it no longer exists in paper form.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: - Enormous information quantity.
- The Intranet allows a controlled button-up process in a controlled manner such as the participation of people on a grand scale.

Weaknesses: - The uncontrolled growth.
- The information boast and the huge amount of information which also scares.
- The search is not trivial.

5.17 Interview With Logistics & Transportation 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It is a world wide information hub for the organization.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

Fast and accurate information.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

See above.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, these are determined by the implementation with process optimization tools and if necessary adjusted.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, there are more information from and through the distribution center.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, see point 4.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

Yes.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Corporate news and products, organization and responsibilities, locations, access to downstream applications for the daily business.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

The responsibility lies at the departments. The contents are published with a time limit so that after the expiry a reminder asks the person in charge to review the content according to some defined criteria such as up to dateness, relevance etc.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Faster information about upcoming actions for the entire organization with the same information value and therefore a faster reaction if necessary. This results in savings through the avoidance of information deficits. Further, there are no double information paths which results in savings of media costs and work labor.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

see point 11.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

The very fact that the same information is available in the entire organization can be rated as positive. We have not tried to measure the benefit in monetary values. Surveys of employees and regular control of the usage show that the Intranet has a positive impact for their daily work. At the same time our Intranet supports a social component because it allows also the distribution of “human to human” information.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

Yes, see point 13.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, see point 13.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

Yes, see point 13.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. parts of it?*

How do you involve them?

The information retrieval takes place with the division's management. Because each division has its own needs and suggestions a mean value is taken for the implementation of the requirements.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Redesigns are driven by technical enhancements and the requirements which converge at the implementation and support team.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

See point 1-3.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

See point 1-3.

5.18 Interview With Logistics & Transportation 2

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

It has three functions: First, it is a fast communication medium. Second, it has integrated many applications and third, it has a documentation function.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

We have no defined strategy in this regard. Fast information delivery and integration of many applications should be made possible by the Intranet. We have 28'000 employees of which only 15'000 can be reached with the Intranet. So we have here a limitation which means that not everything can be distributed through the Intranet. Besides the Intranet we have other communication media as well, such as newspapers, and bulletin boards. We have integrated various applications in the Intranet which support the employees at their work and with the goal to replace the paper form with electronic reports. With 15'000 employees in 600 locations the Intranet has also local tasks. If somebody at a location needs to do something only for his needs then he can do it.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

The corporate goals can be check up on the Intranet but we do not support them with special instruments. We try to use the Intranet in that way that is supports the corporate goals. One corporate goal is to increase the productivity. We use the Intranet to achieve this goal by mapping increasingly workflows and processes onto the Intranet.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, they didn't change.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes. They changed since most of our employees have now access to information. Simultaneously to the development of our Intranet we had a company restructure which changed the entire communication flows. How big the influence of the Intranet was or is, is difficult to say. What can be mentioned is that due to the introduction of the Intranet the leadership communication has suffered. Because the Intranet is a democratic medium that distribute information evenly, the availability of information for our employees has been enhanced and thus weakened the leadership structure.

6. *Did the labor organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

They have been optimized.

7. *Does the company conduct trainings?*

There are no trainings for the end-users of the Intranet. New entrants have one day to make themselves familiar with the Intranet. Training is conducted for the authors.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Mainly news, then information about projects going on and work related information. Further, there are also services such as electronic phone book etc.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

We have a topic and organization oriented approach. Both entries lead to same target pages. The organizational navigation requires the knowledge of the organization structure. We cannot demand from our employees to know the entire structure to be able to navigate through the Intranet. Further, the divisions have also technical separated Intranet which must have the same layout.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? I.e. correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

Concerning the content it is in the responsibility of the departments to incorporate the four eyes principle except for news. The four eyes principle is mandatory for news. The authorization structure is as follows: the author informs the supervisor when a text is ready to be released. The supervisor reviews the text and accepts or rejects it. If it is accepted, it is put on the Intranet. But this quality process is not mandatory. There are parts of the Intranet where content can be published without going through any quality assurance. It has to be said that only the author has the right to publish. Each division has a content manager who takes samples and he is authorized to correct textual or formal violations. He is usually also the contact person for the authors in technical or textual concerns.

We also use a CMS, have automatic archive function after a certain time and expiry dates on each page.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes, better informed and therefore more motivated employee. Through the

integrated applications the workflows can be simplified and thereby the productivity increases. It can happen that the employee cannot find what he is looking for or he finds too much and gets distracted from his work. But the benefit prevails.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes. Now he knows what the company is doing. Further, he has interaction options which he hadn't before with the result that he sees his supervisor less. This is a drawback.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We do surveys but we don't have any question concerning the Intranet. We ask about the working tool and the level of information. If there is an improvement, we cannot say if it is because of the Intranet.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

We do statistics to find out the behavior of our users. If we see that pages aren't accessed then they will be removed. The finding also leads to further investments.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes, we get feedback from our employees.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

There is always a contact available for news. For the other web pages it depends on the divisions. Usually, on the pages is the contact of the editor who can be contacted via a contact form. This form initiates an email. There is also the possibility to place a remark on the Intranet.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it?*

How do you involve them?

We do usability tests for the web presentation. We also do surveys to collect the needs and remarks of the employees whereas only the content managers are asked. We cannot afford to ask the entire staff. One outcome was that people wanted to go off the organizational navigation and foster the integration of applications.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, we do. Everybody who dealt with the Intranet was convinced that a redesign was required. The problem was to convince also the upper management that a redesign was necessary.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

We did a survey in our newspaper asking what the preferred communication channel is. In the first place with 80% was the newspaper, in the second place with 47% was the Intranet. The rest was clear behind. The importance of the Intranet will increase with the increase of the integration of applications.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strength: - The biggest strength is the speed.
- Data is not multiplied because one must communicate only once.
- Availability from every location.

Weakness: - In our company we will not achieve that every employee has access to the Intranet.
- We cannot force someone to look into the Intranet because it is not a portal.

5.19 Interview With Logistics & Transportation 3

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

The Intranet is an information media where we publish relevant information. We also use it as a so called *eRoom*. There we publish current project information such as reporting, ticketing and troubleshooting to share it with all the project coworkers.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

A pure information media.

3. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, the organizational structure did not change.

4. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, worldwide relevant information is now put on the Intranet and no longer sent by email. The employees are informed at any time whereas the communication is mostly done by email.

5. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

They depend on the organizational units, they are free to put their own information on the Intranet. Usually it is guidelines and directives.

6. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

On the top level it is structured in organizational units. One level below there is the “workbenches” and the “work pools”. A kind of place where employees can exchange information.

7. *Do you have a systematic method for the design of the Intranet?
If yes, which?*

Except of the training of the authors we do not. Mostly it is based on experience of the authors which means also that the look and feel of the various sites is different. The content management system gives some guidelines and we have also some basic guidelines concerning the design. Another point is that the business units can determine their own content.

We have no controlling mechanisms concerning the various designs of the sites.

8. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?
If yes, which?*

We do not measure the benefit of the company because it is not possible to measure it properly. In my opinion a benefit is that there is a central repository to put information on it. Problems arise for the company when it must be decided what to put on the Intranet and what on the file server.

9. *Do you think that the employee benefit from the Intranet?
If yes, in what way?*

Yes, the employees are informed at all times.

10. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

Not directly.

11. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees?*

Yes, we have tracking tools which we apply. The results are open for everybody to be seen but they are not pursued further. We do not generate improvement actions based on the results. We track the hits and that's all.

12. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

13. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanism resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

I am not sure if there is feedback but I do hope that there is some. We have not implemented a systematic feedback mechanism. The employee sends usually a feedback when he thinks that now it's time to say something.

14. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. parts of it?*

If the employee sends feedback by email or contacts the author directly than he will be involved in a redesign.

15. *How do you involve them?*

The employee can suggest new rubrics, navigations to the author which he will then implement. But the author decides at the end if the suggestions will be accepted or not.

16. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet?
If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, once in a while. But we want to limit it as much as possible.

17. *What role does the Intranet play for your company in your opinion?*

The Intranet does not play an important role in our company. Communication is conducted mainly by email. We think that the importance of the Intranet is overestimated.

18. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths:

1. A common user interface which can be further developed by oneself.
2. Possibility for workflow implementation: automating of internal processes.

Weaknesses:

1. If the goal is to increase efficiency then more strict guidelines must be given.
2. There is always a trade-off between flexibility and strict guidelines.

Remarks

1. The extranet is used as distribution channel: business-to-consumer.
2. Responsible for publishing are the authors. Only they are allowed to edit the Intranet and they also decide what to publish and what not.
3. *What happens with old guidelines and directives?* Old information should be removed and new added. But this does not happen always. It happened that two directives with two different version numbers were found because they were put on different places which were not linked together.
4. New information on the Intranet is communicated by email.
5. News are published either by the internal communication, if they concern everybody, or by authors, if they concern only the business unit.

5.20 Interview With Pharmaceutical 1

1. *What function does the Intranet have in your company?*

We have two intranets in our branch. A global one and a local (Swiss-related) one. The global one has more global information whereas the local one is more tailored to our local needs. We use the Intranet as an information channel. We communicate infos, memos etc. through it. I need to emphasize that the Intranet is an equal channel among others. Important messages are still sent by email.

2. *For which purpose will you pursue with the Intranet?*

We want to provide information to our internal employees and to our field staff.

3. *How are the corporate goals integrated into the Intranet management resp. what corporate goals does the company pursue?*

We put information about internal news and products on the Intranet to keep the employees informed.

4. *Did the organizational structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

No, it did not change. The only thing is that we have added a webmaster to our organization. The Intranet is a support system.

5. *Did the organizational information and communication structures resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Yes, it did. We use a CMS with a workflow, and information is put and approved through the workflow. An editor puts information on the Intranet after a supervisor has looked over them.

6. *Did the labour organization resp. processes change due to the usage of the Intranet?*

Tendential yes. A reason is that the documents are now on the net and they don't have to be copied from a dossier or send around any more. Somebody who needs a document looks at the Intranet, fills it out or prints it out.

7. *Do you conduct trainings in the company?*

Yes, we train the authors on how to use the CMS. We do not train people on how to use the Intranet. This should be self-explanatory.

8. *What are the topics and contents of the Intranet?*

Information about internal and other relevant news, about products and also about internal workflows.

9. *According to what criteria do you design the Intranet?*

At the moment according the organizational structure. This is currently under review.

10. *What tools do you use and what steps do you take in order to ensure the quality of the Intranet? i.e correct and up to date content, removal of old or wrong information etc.*

If yes, which?

We have a defined workflow for putting infos on the Intranet where the supervisor looks over the content and gives his ok. This applies only for news which are seen by all employees. Otherwise, we don't have any other quality control mechanism.

11. *Do you think that the Intranet is of any benefit for your company?*

If yes, which?

Yes. The information is available at any time and the news have a relative high up-to-dateness.

12. *Do you think that the employees benefit from the Intranet?*

If yes, in what way?

Yes, the employees have access to the newest information. They use the Intranet according their needs. It depends therefore on the actual work they do at that moment.

13. *How do you measure the benefit from the Intranet for your company?*

We don't measure it but it would make sense to do so.

14. *Do you know how the Intranet is used by the employees? Did you implement a controlling mechanism?*

No, we don't have any controlling mechanism. We do not analyze the log files for example.

15. *Do you get any feedback from the employees concerning navigation, content and usability of the Intranet?*

Yes. If something is wrong or not correct than people speak out. The feedback we

get is by email or by normal conversation. Be it at café break or in a regular meeting.

16. *Do you have implemented feedback mechanisms resp. how do you get feedback from the employees?*

No, we don't have any feedback mechanism. As I mentioned above either through email or face-to-face conversation. We get feedback when we do an employee survey.

17. *Do you involve the employees in the design of the Intranet resp. in parts of it? How do you involve them?*

Yes, insofar that the author represent the employees and their needs. We work together with the authors to implement the demands. We have also external authors who are responsible for the news.

18. *Do you conduct re-designs of the Intranet? If yes, at whose suggestion?*

Yes, at the moment we are working on a complete restructuring of the Intranet. Small redesigns are conducted by the webmaster. But these affect only the subject area for which he is responsible. It has no influence on the representation for the entire Intranet.

19. *Which relevance has (resp. will have) the Intranet for your company in your opinion?*

The Intranet has a high relevance as a communication media. We have realized that and do therefore a redesign of the Intranet to strengthen its possibilities.

20. *Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the Intranet as a communication media?*

Strengths: Availability and connectivity of the entire system represent a strength of the Intranet. Another one are the possible enhancements such as closed user groups and collaboration. The last one I like to mention is the Intranet as an archive medium.

Weaknesses: The Intranet is not interactive, at least not yet, and it must also be well structured. If the structure is bad it becomes boring and complex.

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